

Name: \_\_\_\_\_



# JAMES

## ***A Faith That Works***

Weeks 5-9 of the 9-Week Series

4G Series - 2022 - [cbcfamily.net/4g](http://cbcfamily.net/4g)  
Calvary Baptist Church  
[cbcfamily.net](http://cbcfamily.net) / 512.303.1697 / [office@cbcfamily.net](mailto:office@cbcfamily.net)

## Introduction to the series:

### *James – A Faith That Works*

Suffering. Oppression. Poverty. Hardship. The people in James' day faced serious problems. James wrote to the early Christians scattered throughout the Roman Empire encouraging those who claimed the name of Christ to put their faith into action – even when life is hard!

As we will see, James is a "tell it like it is" kinda guy who covers a variety of topics. Phrases like, "Faith without works is dead" (James 2:26), are meant to challenge us. And while works are not the way to salvation, they are most definitely the result of it. Let's accept the challenge today to be doers of God's Word, and not hearers only. Our compassionate God is with us, and He blesses the steadfast!

Alison Shaw,  
4G Guide Contributor

### Introduction To The 4G Guide

#### *GATHER – GOD – GROUP – GIVE*

It's important that we *GATHER* each week as a church family. Still, God wants us to take what He's teaching and apply it to our daily lives. This is the heart of the 4G Guides. These guides are written to encourage you in your personal *GOD TIME* and in your small *GROUPS*. They are designed to help you understand what God is teaching and apply it to your life. This understanding through application enables you to take what you are learning and *GIVE* it to others.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture references are from the *Christian Standard Bible* (CSB Text Edition: 2020).



## USING THE 4G GUIDE

Each week is divided into four sections:

### Gathering Time



On Sunday mornings we gather (in person or online) to worship, hear God's message, and be challenged to apply His word. You'll find the weekly Gathering Time sermon outlines in this booklet.

If you need to join us online, go to [cbcfamily.net](http://cbcfamily.net) and click "Watch Live"

### Group Time



We learn from one another! 4G Groups meet to dig deeper into the weekly material. Group Time outlines are simple enough for anyone to facilitate. In addition, links to short video guides, sermon recaps, and other helpful resources are posted on our 4G web page.

### God Times



Personal worship is vital to the Christian walk, so we've provided five daily devotionals for each weekly topic. This is your time to meet with God one-on-one in a guided devotional format. Once your God Time is finished, pray, seeking direction for the day.

### Family Time



Family worship glorifies God. To help, we have created simple Family Time devotionals. In addition, to help get the conversations flowing, video or story guide links may be posted on our 4G web page.

[cbcfamily.net/4g](http://cbcfamily.net/4g)





Gathering Time (Sermon Outline)

Gathering Notes

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

James – More Than Belief

True \_\_\_\_\_ Is ...

• Seen

*<sup>14</sup> What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but does not have works? Can such faith save him? <sup>15</sup> If a brother or sister is without clothes and lacks daily food <sup>16</sup> and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, stay warm, and be well fed," but you don't give them what the body needs, what good is it? <sup>17</sup> In the same way faith, if it does not have works, is dead by itself. James 2:14-17*

• Active

*<sup>18</sup> But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without works, and I will show you faith by my works. <sup>19</sup> You believe that God is one. Good! Even the demons believe—and they shudder. James 2:18-19*

• God Focused

*<sup>20</sup> Senseless person! Are you willing to learn that faith without works is useless? <sup>21</sup> Wasn't Abraham our father justified by works in offering Isaac his son on the altar? <sup>22</sup> You see that faith was active together with his works, and by works, faith was made complete, <sup>23</sup> 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. <sup>24</sup> You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. <sup>25</sup> In the same way, wasn't Rahab the prostitute also justified by works in receiving the messengers and sending them out by a different route? James 2:20-25*

A \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Faith

*For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead. James 2:26*

Horizontal lines for taking notes.



Group Time

ENCOURAGEMENT 1-on-1 (See last page for directions)

Y / N   Y / N   \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_   \_\_\_\_\_

LOOK BACK:

Point: What you value matters. Value faith!

- What did you need to stop or start doing?

Question: Finish this idiom: The proof is in the \_\_\_\_\_.  
What does it mean?

LOOK UP: Watch this week's video on the 4G web page.

Recap: As James continues his proof of faith statements, we know that good works do not save but are what saved people do. Such faith is visible, active, and God-focused. It's what oozes out of a faithful believer.

Faith cannot be separated from works any more than a coin can be separated heads from tails. And just like our faith should be on mission, so should our works. On-mission to giving life to those who have yet to find it. Allow your faith to come to life!

LOOK IN: Discussion

- Review James 2:14-17. We see here that empty words are not faithful works, but can words also be works? What about when those words point to eternal life (a.k.a. evangelism)?
- Analyze this statement: Faith without works is dead, but works without words is like giving a blind man sight in a pitch-black cavern. He still needs directions to the light.
- Make a group list of hindrances to doing good works and showing God's love (e.g., lack of time, expectations, etc.)
- Make a group list of how one might deal with each hindrance.

LOOK FORWARD: Application

Point: Faith always leads to works.

Allow Your Faith To Come To Life

- What hindrances are keeping you from doing the works God has called you to?

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- What can you do to specifically deal with one or two hinderances this week?

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- Share how you know the good works you are doing by faith are leading to life. (Matthew 28:19 may have a hint.)

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God Time Day 1: More Than Mere Belief



Read John 5:24.  
*Truly I [Jesus] tell you, anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not come under judgment but has passed from death to life.*

Underline the words “hear” and “believes.”



Circle the phrase “has passed from death to life.”

Jesus makes it clear that faith in God, hearing and believing in the good news of the Gospel, is all a person needs for salvation.

But, as James will remind us, the word “believe” means more than simple knowledge. It’s a belief that requires trust leading to visible application.



Pray, giving thanks for God’s salvation through faith. Ask for God’s help to have the kind of faith that believes and trusts.

God Time Day 2: True Faith Is Visible



Read James 2:14-17 on page 4.

Underline the word “faith” in the passage.



Circle the word “works” in the passage.

Yesterday, we began by first establishing that we are saved by faith alone. We ended with the thought that faith is a “belief that includes trust.” Belief without trust is the kind of belief that never moves beyond academic knowledge.

When belief includes trust, academic knowledge becomes applied knowledge – applied to how we live.



Reread James 2:17.  
*In the same way faith, if it does not have works, is dead by itself.*

If we have faith – a belief that includes trust – and that belief is applied to our lives, it becomes visible in our behaviors and choices.



Pray for God to reveal how your faith is visible in your life.

God Time Day 3: True Faith is Active



We have been exploring what it means to have faith. We began with the understanding that faith is first a belief that includes trust. Then, we discussed how *trust* means that faith is applied and visible in our lives.



Now, read James 2:18-19.  
<sup>18</sup> *But someone will say, “You have faith, and I have works.” Show me your faith without works, and I will show you faith by my works.* <sup>19</sup> *You believe that God is one. Good! Even the demons believe—and they shudder.*

As James goes on, he digs even deeper and looks at what it means to have “belief” that is only knowledge-based. He reminds us that “*even the demons*” have such belief.

Draw a box around the phrase, “*and they shudder.*”

You might say that God is the Lord of your life, but let’s assess that belief with a few questions:



○ When good things happen, is your first instinct to give God glory or take pride in your own accomplishments?

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○ When faced with trials, do you surrender to God’s will, or do you want Him to bend to your expectations?

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○ When facing a choice, do you first consider what God’s will is, or the path that will get you what you want?

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Unfortunately, many claim to be followers of Christ but spend most of their lives ignoring God and pursuing selfish ambitions. And they do so without a single “*shudder.*”

Knowledge is not enough! Having faith means we should fully trust God and allow Him to have an active role in our lives.



Pray for God to show you how He wants to be actively involved in your life today. Ask for humility to trust in His Lordship in all things.

God Time Day 4: God Focused



Read James 2:20-25 on page 4

Underline the word “faith” in the passage.



Next, circle the word “works” in the passage.

Now reread verse 22.

*You see that faith was active together with his works, and by works, faith was made complete.*

As we look at this passage, we begin to see the importance of both faith and works. In both stories mentioned by James, the people were obedient to God’s will, knowing that it could cost them greatly. Despite the risks involved, they put their trust in the goodness of God.



As we have been looking at faith for the past few days, we know that faith is more than knowledge or belief. Rather, faith means having trust that moves you to visibly apply the knowledge you’ve gained. Faith also means focusing on God’s will over our own. It means trusting that God wants what is best, even if we don’t fully understand how.

Having faith that is active and God-focused should be a part of our everyday lives. Listening to God’s voice, hearing what God wants for us, and then acting on it should be a regular, normal practice.



When was the last time you experienced something or encountered a situation where you felt like you should act, but instead you ignored it?

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What excuse did you use for not acting?

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Alternatively, what might have resulted if you had acted?

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Pray for God to give you the boldness to step out in faith.

God Time Day 5: A Life-Giving Faith



Read James 2:26 on page 4.

Now read John 10:10.

*A thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come so that they may have life and have it in abundance.*

This week we have been talking about having faith that is visible, active, and God-focused. Works do not save us; we are saved by the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ. But our faith in God should be obvious by our works. In other words, faith is like sunblock: it has no effect if you do not apply it.



People most often struggle with taking their faith beyond belief and into a world of applied activity because they believe that being obedient to God means missing out on the “good things” of life. But is that true or false?

Underline the word “life” in John 10:10 above.



Circle the word “abundance” in John 10:10 above.

You may have heard the saying, “He who dies with the most toys, wins.” The reality is that he who dies with the most toys is still dead and is going to face judgment before God. Do you really think, at the end of your life, you are going to wish you had sinned more, been more selfish, or ruined more relationships in the pursuit of your own ambitions? Living a life of faith is not about denying yourself the good things of this world. Instead, it’s about embracing the better things that God has for us.



What sin has God been asking you to let go of?

\_\_\_\_\_

What is one way God has been calling you to apply your faith and put it into practice?

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What is the first step you need to take toward living a life of true faith?

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Family Time



Main Idea:  
True Faith Is...



Key Verse: Hebrews 11:1

*Now faith is the reality of what is hoped for, the proof of what is not seen.*



Set it Up:

You will need a balloon, an empty and clean soda or juice bottle, baking soda, lemon juice, and a straw.



Experiment & Family Discussion:

Fill the bottle with ¼ cup of water.

How do worries and fears keep us from growing in faith? Does Jesus understand how all of our day-to-day worries affect us?

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Sprinkle 1 tsp. of baking soda into the bottle and stir with the straw. Pour in the lemon juice. Quickly stretch an uninflated balloon and place it over the mouth of the bottle.

We don't see anything inside the bottle, do we? But we have faith that there is something in there.

Watch as the balloon inflates.



See, we can't see the gas, but we know that it's in there. How does this remind us of any of the miracles that Jesus did?

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What earthly things crowd out God and leave little room for His power to work in our lives?

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Can you think of something you might have to give up so that faith can grow in you?

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Our experiment is a fun way to remember that although we don't see faith, we can trust its power to connect to God.



Gathering Time (Sermon Outline)

Gathering Notes

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

James – Watch Your Mouth

Words \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>1</sup>Not many should become teachers, my brothers, because you know that we will receive a stricter judgment. <sup>2</sup>For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is mature, able also to control the whole body. James 3:1-2

Our Words...

• Set Our \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>3</sup>Now if we put bits into the mouths of horses so that they obey us, we direct their whole bodies. <sup>4</sup>And consider ships: Though very large and driven by fierce winds, they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. <sup>5a</sup>So too, though the tongue is a small part of the body, it boasts great things. James 3:3-5a

• Have \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>5b</sup>Consider how a small fire sets ablaze a large forest. <sup>6</sup>And the tongue is a fire. The tongue, a world of unrighteousness, is placed among our members. It stains the whole body, sets the course of life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell. <sup>7</sup>Every kind of animal, bird, reptile, and fish is tamed and has been tamed by humankind, <sup>8</sup>but no one can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. James 3:5b-8

<sup>9</sup>With the tongue we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in God's likeness. <sup>10</sup>Blessing and cursing come out of the same mouth. My brothers and sisters, these things should not be this way. <sup>11</sup>Does a spring pour out sweet and bitter water from the same opening? <sup>12</sup>Can a fig tree produce olives, my brothers and sisters, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a saltwater spring yield fresh water. James 3:9-12

• May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, Lord, my rock and my Redeemer. Psalm 19:14

• A good person produces good things from his storeroom of good, and an evil person produces evil things from his storeroom of evil. Matthew 12:35

Horizontal lines for gathering notes.



**WEEK 6: WATCH YOUR MOUTH**



**Group Time**

ENCOURAGEMENT 1-on-1 (See last page for directions)

Y / N    Y / N    \_\_\_\_\_

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**LOOK BACK:**

*Point:* Faith always leads to works.

- What did you faithfully do this past week that led to life?

**Question:** Have you ever known someone who had a lack of discipline with their mouth to have good discipline in all other areas of their life?

**LOOK UP:** Watch this week’s video on the 4G web page.

**Recap:** Most often, what comes out of our mouths is a good reflection of what is in our hearts. James addresses this in two instances. First, those who want to be teachers and want to profess the words of God without the responsibility of being a good steward of the Word. Second, our words have power. They affect others for both good and bad and we need to be careful how we use them.

We all know the adage, “If you can’t say anything nice, don’t say anything at all,” but we need to be intentional with our words. We need to use our words to give life, affirm, gently correct, and give testimony as God’s people.

**LOOK IN: Discussion**

- Describe someone you’ve known who “knew best” but didn’t follow their own advice/teaching. What were others’ opinions of that person? How did those around them view them?
- Read James 3:9-12. Then reread James 3:9. What are some tricks or tips you’ve used to try and control your tongue? (E.g., count to three, etc.)
- How can we speak “words of life” in difficult situations and still be totally sincere?

**LOOK FORWARD: Application**

*Point:* Your words reveal your heart.

*Speak Words Of Life*

Reread James 3:9-10. Keep track of your words this week. Record all instances of using your words for “blessing” (life-affirming) and “cursing” (negative/judgmental) – this includes politics.

<u>Blessing (Positive)</u>	<u>Cursing (Judgmental)</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

What do you need to do to fix the cursing situations and speak more words of life?

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## WEEK 6: WATCH YOUR MOUTH

### God Time Day 1: Watch Your Mouth



You have probably heard the phrase, “Sticks and stones will break my bones, but words will never hurt me.” While it was a cute rhyme when we were kids, we know that it is not true. While sticks and stones can break our bones, words can cause serious emotional damage that could require years of therapy.

This current age has a multitude of mediums for communication (phone, text, social media apps, video platforms, etc.). It has become ever clearer that while all this technology was intended to connect people, it often does more to divide and hurt. It is even being weaponized and used intentionally to “cancel” people. But keep in mind, this is not a new development.



Read Proverbs 12:17-19.

*<sup>17</sup> Whoever speaks the truth gives honest evidence, but a false witness utters deceit. <sup>18</sup> There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing. <sup>19</sup> Truthful lips endure forever, but a lying tongue is but for a moment.*

In these verses, underline the positive attributes of words.



Next, circle the negative attributes of words.

The problem is not one of technology, laws, controls, or even education. The problem is a matter of the heart. For as long as people have been broken and sinful, the struggle over the destructive power of words has existed.

Read Matthew 15:18.



*But what comes out of the mouth comes from the heart, and this defiles a person.*

Reflect on the “words of your mouth” and consider what they might indicate about your heart. What is God telling you?

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Pray for God to be reflected in your words and to use your words for His glory.

### God Time Day 2: Words Matter



Reread James 3:1-2 from page 14.

As we discussed yesterday, words can be damaging and destructive. One of the problems faced by the early church was persons desiring to be teachers merely because of the prestige and influence it would give them. But they had no consideration for the damage they could cause through their misguided teachings. Anyone in a position of authority should have a healthy and godly respect for the power and influence they have as a leader.

While James is writing specifically to address leaders in the church, everyone has influence over others as a parent, friend, coworker, or even on the Internet.



Pray for God to help you use your words to bless and uplift those around you.

### God Time Day 3: Words Set the Course



Reread James 3:3-5a from page 14.

James uses the image of a horse and a boat, both powerful and large in their own regards, but they are guided by small means. James uses these images to help us understand that while our mouths and words might seem small, they reflect the direction of our lives.

Reread verse 5a again: *So too, though the tongue is a small part of the body, it boasts great things.*

Underline the word “boasts.”



Write down three things in your life in which you take great pride. Then consider, when you speak of those things, do your words give glory to yourself or God?

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\_\_\_\_\_ SELF / GOD

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What can you do about the ones you circled “SELF?”

What do you think God wants you to do?

God Time Day 4: Words Have Power


Reread James 3:5b-8 on page 14.

 Circle the word “*tongue*” in these verses.

Underline the last sentence in these verses.

As James continues to explore the destructive capabilities of words, he describes how our mouths, while small, have the potential to cause serious harm. He uses the image of a small spark which then builds into a fire. The truth is that words can be difficult to control. After all, have you ever said something in the heat of the moment, only to find that the words that came from your mouth were not what you would have originally intended?


Speaking out in anger, bitterness, or even in haste, requires no effort. It is easy to do but it often requires great effort to clean up the resulting mess. Hurting people, tearing people down, or even leading people astray with our words is surprisingly easy. Yet, considering just how destructive our words can be, it is interesting how often people tend to be very flippant about the things they say.

 Have you ever been on the receiving end of someone’s “*poisonous tongue*?” What were some of those words used against you, and how did they impact you?

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 It is easy to think of times when words have hurt you, but James is challenging us to consider our own words. Whether intentional or accidental, describe a time when your words were “*poisonous*.”


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 Pray for God to forgive you for the harm you caused. Ask Him to show you how reconciliation and healing are possible.

Day 5: Speak Words of Life

 Over this week, we have spent a lot of time considering the destructive capabilities of our words. But God is all about transformation and healing. As we finish this week, let us consider how we might control our words.


 Read James 3:9-12 on page 14.

Underline the word “*bless*” in the verses.

 Circle the word “*curse*” in the verses.

As you might recall from Day 1, what comes from our mouths reflects what is in our hearts. James seems disturbed, and rightfully so, that people can speak such blessings and praises to God and yet produce such cursing against people who were created in God’s image.

James has repeatedly said that “*no one can tame the tongue*.” If that is true, what hope do we have? The hope we have is that salvation is not dependent on our abilities and skills, but rather on trusting in God’s provision. While no one can tame their tongue, God has the power to change our hearts, which in turn will change the words which come from our mouths.

 So, what are some practical ways in which we can allow God to begin transforming our hearts?

Here are a few suggestions:

- **Pray daily** for God to help you be mindful of your words. Try praying Psalm 19:14 every morning.
- **Learn to filter** by eliminating influences we allow in our lives that may pollute our thoughts and get in the way. (Ex. Internet and other media content that is negative and destructive.)
- **Learn to listen better.** Hurtful words often come quickly and without hesitation but learning to be a good listener slows things down and often gives you a chance to think, empathize, and consider, before you speak.

## Family Time



Main Idea:

Our Words Matter

**Key Verse: James 3:9-10**

*<sup>9</sup> With the tongue we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in God's likeness. <sup>10</sup> Blessing and cursing come out of the same mouth. My brothers and sisters, these things should not be this way.*

**Set it Up:**

We should always use our tongues for helping others instead of hurting them, for telling the truth instead of lies, and for sharing the Gospel instead of spreading gossip. The power of the tongue can be destructive and it's important to know how to handle it when we start to lose control of our tongue and our words.

**Read:**

Acts 27:13-26

**Ask:**

- Where was Paul in the story? What happened while he was on the ship?
- How did Paul respond to his enemies? Do you think you would have responded the same way?

**Say:**

Too often, we speak WAY before we think! More often than that, the words we speak do a lot of damage to others. Many people use their words to hurt people, spread lies, and share gossip.

How we use our words is VERY important. We can use words to hurt people or lift them up. Learning to control the tongue is one of the hardest things we can learn.

**Ask/Discuss:**

- How do you usually use your words?
- Do you think you have a hard time controlling your words?
- How do you normally respond to people who hurt you?

**Pray:**

Pray for your child if they have had a hard time controlling their tongue. Pray that God will show them how to use their tongue to help others instead of hurt them. Have your child write down some ways they can use their tongue the right way this week (i.e., compliment someone, tell the truth, tell someone about Jesus).



Gathering Time (Sermon Outline)

Gathering Notes

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

A \_\_\_\_\_ For Unity

The Source Of Conflict

• Selfish Passion

<sup>1</sup> What is the source of wars and fights among you? Don't they come from your passions that wage war within you? <sup>2</sup> You desire and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and wage war. You do not have because you do not ask. <sup>3</sup> You ask and don't receive because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures. James 4:1-3

• Friendship With The World

<sup>4</sup> You adulterous people! Don't you know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? So whoever wants to be the friend of the world becomes the enemy of God. <sup>5</sup> Or do you think it's without reason that the Scripture says: The spirit he made to dwell in us envies intensely? <sup>6</sup> But he gives greater grace. Therefore he says: **God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.** James 4:4-6

• Self-Exaltation

<sup>7</sup> Therefore, submit to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. <sup>8</sup> Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. <sup>9</sup> Be miserable and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. <sup>10</sup> Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you. James 4:7-10

• Judging Others

<sup>11</sup> Don't criticize one another, brothers and sisters. Anyone who defames or judges a fellow believer defames and judges the law. If you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. <sup>12</sup> There is one lawgiver and judge who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor? James 4:11-12

Horizontal lines for taking notes.

\_\_\_\_\_ In Purpose



**Group Time**

ENCOURAGEMENT 1-on-1 (See last page for directions)

Y / N   
 Y / N   
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**LOOK BACK:**

*Point:* Your words reveal your heart.

- What did you need to fix and how are you fixing it?

**Question:** What do we call those people who have an opinion about everything, but do nothing?

**LOOK UP:** Watch this week’s video on the 4G web page.

**Recap:** What we value and where, or with whom, we make our allegiances matter. Passion for self and friendship with the world will always lead to conflict in the church. It leads to self-exaltation and judging of others. Alternatively, passion for God along with friendship with those who are like-minded leads to eternal value.

Where we find peace is in purpose, purpose from God, and working in unity with one another. It can be called “Living On Mission.” It’s living with intentionality as a community for His Kingdom to come, for His will to be done. But this unity can be fragile and our enemy will do everything he can to stop us. We must keep our focus.

**LOOK IN: Discussion**

- Share some examples where something truly petty caused serious rifts in a community, business, or church.
  - Which four sources of conflict (page 24) were involved?
  - If the rift was resolved or the entity restored, how was it resolved or restored? What was the driving factor?
- Why is change one of the leading factors in creating a rift?
- What is Calvary’s purpose/mission? (Hint: put on your 3D glasses)
- How can we stay focused and demonstrably measure our mission successes?

**LOOK FORWARD: Application**

*Point:* Unity is coming together in diversity to live on mission.

*Let Us Commit That We Keep Our Purpose In Focus*

What are you doing to live On Mission? Assess how you are doing in each area of Calvary’s 3D Mission Statement:

**Demonstrate God’s Love:**

- As a Church:
- As a Group:
- As an Individual:

**Declare The Good News:**

- As a Church:
- As a Group:
- As an Individual:

**Make Disciples Near and Far:**

- As a Church:
- As a Group:
- As an Individual:

**WEEKDAY MORNINGS @ 7:30**

Tune In Live or Later: [Facebook.com/CBCBastrop](https://www.facebook.com/CBCBastrop)



*"It's The Best Way To Start Our Day"*



# **ON-RAMP**

## **DINNER**

**Sunday, July 17, 4:00 - 7:00 PM**

**Bastrop Campus**

On-Ramp Dinners are offered quarterly for anyone to:

- Apply For CBC Membership.
- Discover How To Serve.
- Understand The CBC Vision To Impact Our World For Jesus As...

***ONE FAMILY IN MANY PLACES.***

This dinner will be held at the Bastrop campus but is open to anyone from any campus.

The On-Ramp Dinner is free, but preregistration is required. Childcare is available; registration DEADLINE for childcare is July 10.



## WEEK 7: A PASSION FOR UNITY

### God Time Day 1: Source of Conflict: Selfish Passions



Read James 4:1-4 on page 24.

It's easy to have arguments over little things that have no eternal significance. Disagreements over carpet colors, decor styles, and coffee flavors are sad realities that exist within many churches. Often, what starts as something minor ends with hurt feelings and damaged relationships. But it doesn't have to be this way. James explains to the church that when these fights and quarrels happen, it is because our passions are at war against us. (James 4:1) We will be looking at the remedy to this problem throughout the week.



Think of a time when you experienced disunity and broken relationships over something that started as relatively small and insignificant. Have you ever been hurt that way?



Spend time in prayer for our church. Ask God for unity to begin with you.

### God Time Day 2: Other Sources of Conflict



Carefully reread James 4:1-4 on page 24.

Not only are selfish passions the root of fights and quarrels, but friendship with the world is, too. James calls this "adultery." This worldliness results in disunity with our siblings in Christ because we care more about the things of the world than we do about godliness. How can we expect peace when we pursue our own way?



James 4:9-10 reminds us to "*mourn*" (repent/turn from sin) and humble ourselves. Why? Because disunity also happens when we exalt ourselves— putting our needs and desires first. And James 4:12 reminds us not to judge others. Why? Because judging divides people into categories (e.g., the wealthy, the uneducated, etc.). These practices create division and conflict.

How often do you give in to worldliness, pride, or judging others? What effect can this have on our church?



Again, ask God for unity to begin with you.

### God Time Day 3: Peace in Purpose



We've looked at how disunity in the church develops. But, what's the flip side? Today we'll look at how we can create unity by finding peace in our purpose.



Read James 4:6-8 on page 24.

When we submit to God, draw near Him, and purify our hearts, we set before us the eternal mission of the church. This allows a natural sense of prioritization to happen. But what is the eternal purpose of the church? Why does the church exist?

- A. To give me coffee on Sunday?
- B. To give me a feel-good sermon?
- C. To glorify, exalt, and share Christ?



Read James 4:11-12 on page 24.

When we are busy doing the negative things that James mentions in these verses, we are wasting the time that could be spent on the positive things listed in point C above.

Reread verse 11. Underline what James warns us against.



Why should we not be acting as a judge?

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The reason that James warns against this is given in the latter part of the verse. When we speak evil against others, we deem "*the law*" (God's instructions) as unimportant. We take God's place and become our own gods!



Reread verse 12. Circle how many true lawgivers and judges there are. Underline what He can do.

So, rather than think we know better than God, we do well to humbly pursue unity with other Christians by focusing on the eternal mission of the church. We should be teammates dedicated to living like Christ and making Him known!



Pray over what you need to do in response to today's verses.



God Time Day 4: Remember How Blessed We Are



Rewrite James 4:7-8 on the lines below.

Five horizontal lines for writing.

A faith that stays on mission is one that keeps God in focus, submitting and drawing near to Him. When we look at what God is doing, has done, and wants to do, we can't help but remember our blessings. Looking for God's blessings isn't a natural thing to do, but it is a wonderful spiritual exercise.



What good things has God done in our church over the past few years?

Three horizontal lines for writing.

What good things has He done in the past few months?

Three horizontal lines for writing.

What about in the past few days?

Two horizontal lines for writing.

Unity and growth go together. Growth within the church often awakens the devil – and he will attack. We do not need to be caught off guard; we simply need to draw closer to God. When we draw near to God, the devil will flee! Counting our blessings is a great way to keep our focus on God.

God Time Day 5: Keep the Purpose in Focus



Read Isaiah 26:3 (NLT).

*You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you!*

The Believers in James' day were about two short decades away from a major war: the Jews against the Romans. Jerusalem would be sacked in the year AD 70, and as we've learned, this letter was written around AD 45. James didn't know exactly what the future held, but like everyone else, he could easily look around and see the tension. Sadly, the tension outside of the church often finds its way inside.

As we discussed on Day 1, it's easy to let petty arguments feel important. Add to that the tension we carry in from outside the church and it's almost like we're facing two wars. One is with the enemy, and the other is "friendly fire." We can, and need to, do better!



What will you do today to pursue peace? (E.g., forgive, let go, confront, be more gracious, etc.)

Two horizontal lines for writing.



Who do you need to talk to?

Two horizontal lines for writing.

What do you need to start or stop doing to pursue peace?

Two horizontal lines for writing.



Spend time in prayer over what you've written down.

Then do what you've written.

It's important to know that reconciliation and restoration take two, so if the other party is not ready, these may not happen. Yet, forgiveness is always a necessary step to pursuing peace.



Unity is fragile. Our enemy is happy when it breaks. Focus on the eternal purpose and pursue peace today.



Family Time

Main Idea:  
God's Strength In Us



Key Verse: James 4:6

*But he gives greater grace. Therefore he says: God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.*



Set it Up:

You will need 3 pieces of paper, one glass jar, a coffee can, or similar item.



Experiment:

Wrap one piece of copy paper around the jar and tape the ends together. Pull the paper cylinder off the jar. Do this a second time with another piece of paper. Now you have two paper cylinders.

Set the two cylinders 4 to 5 inches apart from one another. Place the third piece of paper on top of the cylinders.

Set the coffee can on the paper between the two cylinders. Before letting go ask the kids what they think will happen when you let go of the can. Let go of the can and see if they were right.

Now take the piece of paper that was sitting on the cylinders and fold it back and forth to corrugate it. Make the folds 1/4 to 1/2 inches in width.

Put the corrugated piece of paper back on top of the two cylinders so that the pleats are going from one cylinder to the other. Set the can on the corrugated paper between the cylinders. Before letting go ask them the question of what they think will happen this time when you let go of the can.



Discussion:

Something was added to the paper when it was folded back and forth. What do you think was added to the paper? (Strength)

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Read James 4:6 again. In your own words, what do you think this verse means?

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What do you think represents "the proud" in our experiment? (The Can)

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What represents God's grace? (The corrugated paper)

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The straight paper did not have the strength it needed to hold up the can, just like we need God's grace and strength to be able to make it through each day. Let's pray today that God will give us His strength and grace each day to not be proud.



Gathering Time (Sermon Outline)

Gathering Notes

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

James – BIG Plans

<sup>13</sup> Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will travel to such and such a city and spend a year there and do business and make a profit." <sup>14</sup> Yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring—what your life will be! For you are like vapor that appears for a little while, then vanishes. <sup>15</sup> Instead, you should say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that." <sup>16</sup> But as it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. <sup>17</sup> So it is sin to know the good and yet not do it. James 4:13-17

The \_\_\_\_\_ With Tomorrow

- Tomorrow Is \_\_\_\_\_
- Tomorrow \_\_\_\_\_
- Tomorrow Reveals My \_\_\_\_\_

Look To The Future And Live In The Present

- Seek God's Plan Moment By Moment
 

*He is before all things, and by him all things hold together.*  
Colossians 1:17

*For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do.*  
Ephesians 2:10

- Do Now What You Know To Do

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**Group Time**

ENCOURAGEMENT 1-on-1 (See last page for directions)

Y / N   
 Y / N   
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\_\_\_\_\_   
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**LOOK BACK:**

*Point:* Unity is coming together in diversity to live on mission.

- How did you measure up?

**Question:** What is meant by the idiom, “The best laid plans of mice and men...?” (If you’ve never heard it? Look it up.) How about, “Hindsight is 20-20?”

**LOOK UP:** Watch this week’s video on the 4G web page.

**Recap:** In Chapter 4, James is going to address a problem with tomorrow. It has to do with our arrogance. That somehow, if we just work out all the angles, we can control tomorrow. But those angles are never certain and may never happen. We need to understand that, unlike God, we can never know everything and therefore can’t plan for everything. However, we can plan for some things.

If we work God’s plan, we have a much better chance of the angles working in our favor. Working God’s plan requires a relationship with Him that looks to the future, but lives/works in the present. That relationship requires that you know Him and yourself and how He has created you for His good works.

**LOOK IN: Discussion**

- Share a ministry experience where you planned out everything to a “T”, and it all fell apart.
- Share a ministry experience where there was little to no plan (not because you didn’t want one) and you had to just trust God, and everything went beyond your wildest dreams.
- Is there a medium between the two where we can/should be? How can we use our skills to plan and yet, “stay in our lane?”

**LOOK FORWARD: Application**

*Point:* Do what you know God is calling you to do!

**Do Now What You Know To Do**

- A. What are you doing now and how is it serving God’s plan? If you are not sure, continue to part B.

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- B. Determine how God is gifting you for His plan in three steps:

**Step one:** Take the Personality and Spiritual Gifts Inventory Assessments. Pick up a *Remarkably and Wondrously Made* booklet at your campus foyer or click “Know Your Strengths” at [cbcfamily.net/go2](http://cbcfamily.net/go2).

**Step two:** Ask those close to you how they see God gifting you and record their responses.

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**Step Three:** Armed with this information, discuss with our CBC staff or ministry leaders how you can best be plugged into God’s plan for Calvary.

**God Time Day 1: Big Plans & Tomorrow is Unknown**



Everyone makes plans. Some of us make detailed plans and know our schedules months in advance. Others of us are spontaneous and like to fly by the seat of our pants. But we all have ideas of what we want tomorrow to look like— of how we think it should go.



List one or two of your “big picture” plans.

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Now list some of your mundane plans for tomorrow.

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Read James 4:13-15 on page 36.

James tells us in this passage that there are some problems with planning for tomorrow. The first is that tomorrow is unknown. Yet, we can get arrogant and think we have things all figured out... that by our own ambition, apart from God, we can be successful. The truth is that God is always in control; He knows what tomorrow holds. We should hold our plans loosely, submitting them to His will.



Look carefully at verse 13. James was directing this to Christian merchants. Circle what the merchants want.

The profit that these business owners were seeking wasn't the problem. James does not tell us that we shouldn't make money. Instead, the problem was the boastful, arrogant attitude of control, when tomorrow is only known to God.



Read James 4:16.

*But as it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.*

How does God feel about such boasting?

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Spend time in prayer, asking God to help you remember that only He controls tomorrow.

**God Time Day 2: Tomorrow May Not Arrive**



Read James 4:14 on page 36.

According to that verse, what is our life like?

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Another problem with planning for tomorrow is that tomorrow may not arrive. In the grand scheme of time, we aren't here long. This sounds very pessimistic, but it's our reality. While we are here, we need to embrace the way that God has made us and the time that He has given us.

The prayer of Psalm 90:12 says, *“Teach us to number our days carefully so that we may develop wisdom in our hearts.”* What a good thing for us to pray!



Knowing that our time here on earth is limited, what should you be doing differently today?

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**God Time Day 3: Tomorrow Reveals My Ignorance**



Read James 4:15 on page 36.

As we've discussed, as much as we plan and prepare, there is so much that is outside of our control. There is also so much that we don't know. We can look back at 2020 for just one example of how, in our ignorance, all humanity was caught by surprise.

Corrie ten Boom was a Dutch woman who hid Jews in her home during WWII. She eventually was caught and put in a concentration camp. Corrie famously said, *“Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God.”* There is great wisdom in that!



Other than the COVID pandemic, has there been a time when “tomorrow revealed your ignorance?” How did it teach you to pray, *“If the Lord wills...?”*

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**God Time Day 4: Seek God’s Plan Moment By Moment**



The passage of James that we are studying teaches us to seek and submit to God’s plan each moment of each day. Though we don’t know what tomorrow holds, we know the one who holds tomorrow!



Read Colossians 1:17.  
*He [Christ] is before all things, and by him all things hold together.*



The verse above is about the preeminence (superiority) of Christ. Write the end of the verse here: by him...

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Sometimes, we want to make plans because we feel like it gives us control. We must remember, though, that Jesus Christ Himself holds all things together. Even when it feels like the world around us is spinning into chaos, we can be assured: Jesus is holding it in His hands. Since He holds all things together, it only makes sense that we should seek His plan. But how do we do this?



Read Ephesians 2:10.  
*For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do.*

Underline what God prepared “*ahead of time for us to do.*”

God is a personal God. He desires a relationship with us! He has good works prepared for us to do. Therefore, we ought to seek the plan He has. We do this by cultivating our relationship with Him – submitting to Him, obeying Him, spending time with Him in prayer and His Word, and so on.

Many times, we want to know God’s plan for us without getting to know God better. It doesn’t work this way! As we seek Him, He reveals His plans.



How would you like to see your relationship with God grow over the next month? What will you do to cultivate it?

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Consider joining a Men’s Fireteam ([cbcfamily.net/men](http://cbcfamily.net/men)) or Women’s Agape Group ([cbcfamily.net/women](http://cbcfamily.net/women)).

**God Time Day 5: Do What You Know To Do**



Read James 4:17 on page 36.

This is called the “sin of omission,” which means not doing the thing we should do. For example, in the story of the Good Samaritan (see Luke 10:25-37), the priest and the Levite committed the sin of omission when they passed by an injured man without offering help.

We tend to overcomplicate things. We pray, asking God to reveal His specific will for our lives. We want all the details for exactly what it is that we should do. Should we try for this career or that one? Should we seek marriage or remain single? Should we start doing this, stop doing that...? And on and on it goes. We seem stuck in the asking.

But there is a place to start: **We start by doing what we know to do.**

This is where the priest and the Levite went wrong. Instead of offering help to someone in need, they kept walking. Not doing what we know we should do is a sin. God is in control, so we need to submit to seeking His plan and then just do what we know to do. If we don’t, we are being arrogant and/or foolish.



Make a short list of things that you know God wants you to do. Here are some starters:

- |             |             |                 |
|-------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Love God    | Pray more   | Show compassion |
| Love others | Be merciful | Forgive         |

How would it look to add a few of these things into your plans? Try it. Just add an actionable step, like this: Show compassion to so-and-so. Or: Pray about this-and-that. (If you keep a planner, keep these things recorded.)



What do you know you should be doing, but you aren’t?

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Commit to changing that today! “I will...”



**Family Time**

**Main Idea:**  
**My Plans or God's Plans**



**Key Verse: Ephesians 2:10**

*For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*



**Set it Up:**

You will need to get a set of dominoes or blocks for this week's family devotional.

**Work it Out:**

Stand up a row of dominoes (just far enough apart so that they will all fall down when the first one is tapped). Tap the first domino to see what happens.

Optional Idea: If you do not have dominos, you could build a tower with blocks. After building the tower, ask one of the kids to pull out one of the lower blocks. (The tower should come tumbling down.) Do it again.



After doing this several times, ask:

**What happened when we tapped the first domino** (or what happened when we pulled out the block)? (The whole thing fell down.)

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One thing caused another. There are results when we do certain things. Sometimes we call these results consequences.



Read the story of Adam and Eve in Genesis 3.

**What were the results of Adam and Eve's sin?** (They hid from God instead of wanting to see Him; they had to leave the Garden of Eden; they were punished by God, etc.)

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**What happens when we sin?** (Bad things happen—now or later)

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**What are some consequences when we sin?** (We feel guilty; we may be punished; others may not trust us if we lie to them.)

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Sin is a terrible thing, and there will always be bad results when we sin.

**Consequences** are not always seen right away. But even if we do not get caught, there is the tendency to think we can get away with sin, and that is definitely a bad consequence.

Pray as a family that God will help you have His plan for your life and not your own.



Gathering Time (Sermon Outline)

Gathering Notes

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

James – The Danger Of Wealth

*<sup>1</sup> Come now, you rich people, weep and wail over the miseries that are coming on you. <sup>2</sup> Your wealth has rotted and your clothes are moth-eaten. <sup>3</sup> Your gold and silver are corroded, and their corrosion will be a witness against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have stored up treasure in the last days. <sup>4</sup> Look! The pay that you withheld from the workers who mowed your fields cries out, and the outcry of the harvesters has reached the ears of the Lord of Armies. <sup>5</sup> You have lived luxuriously on the earth and have indulged yourselves. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. <sup>6</sup> You have condemned, you have murdered the righteous, who does not resist you. James 5:1-6*

Warning To The Rich

- Your \_\_\_\_\_ Is Temporary
- Your \_\_\_\_\_ Is Temporary
- Your \_\_\_\_\_ Is Temporary

Learn To Invest

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WEEK 9: THE DANGER OF WEALTH



Group Time

ENCOURAGEMENT 1-on-1 (See last page for directions)

Y / N   Y / N   \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_   \_\_\_\_\_

LOOK BACK:

Point: Do what you know God is calling you to do!

- What are you doing to serve God’s plan?

Question: Consider the phrase, “Money Talks.” Do you view it as good or bad, a bit of both?

LOOK UP: Watch this week’s video on the 4G web page.

Recap: In James 5:1-6, James lays into those with money, the rich, and the wealthy. He pulls no punches – it’s an all-out slugfest. He uses words like misery, rotten, corroded, fattened, and self-indulgent to describe their behaviors. But as we look closer, it’s not wealth so much as what is done, or better yet isn’t done, with wealth. Wealth becomes a problem when it is used to run over or ignore others less fortunate. Wealth can make us easily focus on self and this world rather than on God, others, and things of eternal significance.

Any good financial planner will tell you that to keep what wealth you have you need to invest it. And the same is true for anything of value – like the Word of God and His will for us and others. We need to invest in activities and ministries that will have an eternal significance leading to an eternal dividend.

LOOK IN: Discussion

- Make a group list of practical eternal investment ideas. Try to be as specific as possible.
- Then, come up with a list of practical eternal investments that can be done as a group.
- Commit to one as a group. Make an investment plan.

LOOK FORWARD: Application

Point: Life is short; invest in eternity; invest in people.

Bolster Your Eternity Portfolio

What are you doing now that is an investment in eternity?

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How does your financial investment portfolio compare to your eternal investment portfolio? How much time, talent, and treasure are you putting into each?

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What, if anything, do you need to change? How will you change it?

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## WEEK 9: THE DANGER OF WEALTH

### God Time Day 1: The Danger of Wealth



Read 1 Timothy 6:9-10.

<sup>9</sup> *But those who want to be rich fall into temptation, a trap, and many foolish and harmful desires, which plunge people into ruin and destruction.* <sup>10</sup> *For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and by craving it, some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.*

Underline the results of wanting “to be rich.”

There are many other passages in the Bible warning against the dangers of wealth and how it can pull our hearts away from God. While it is good to want the security of having “enough,” contentment only comes from God. It is not dependent on how much stuff one has.

It is no accident that the Ten Commandments start with putting God first and end with the command to “do not covet.”



Pray about the kind of wealth you are pursuing.

### God Time Day 2: WARNING: Comfort is Temporary



Read James 5:1-3 on page 46.

James gives us a hindsight view of what happens with the wealth many have stored up for themselves and its value when life on this earth comes to a close (“*the last days*”).



Read James 5:4-6 on page 46.

James is now addressing those who have explicitly cheated others out of what they deserve and those who have gained wealth at the deliberate expense of others.



Circle what will become of *wealth* and *clothes* in verse 2.

Underline what will become of *gold* and *silver* in verse 3.

As we know from the story of the widow’s mite (Mark 12:41-44), God looks at wealth as relative. It’s not how much we have, it’s what we do with what we have.



What have you “*stored up*” and what will its value be in “*the last days*?” Share this principle with someone today.

### God Time Day 3: Stuff and Control are Temporary



You may have heard the story of Job, a man who lived long ago and endured the complete loss of his wealth, family, and health as part of a test God allowed the enemy (Satan) to bring. Despite his loss, Job had this to say:



*Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I will leave this life. The Lord gives, and the Lord takes away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.* Job 1:21b

Job had the wisdom to know that any possessions or power we have in life are fleeting, held only as long as God allows.

Thousands of years later, the apostle Paul writes about the temporary nature of things we can see and measure – including suffering – and how there is no comparing them to what will last forever.



Read 2 Corinthians 4:17-18.

<sup>17</sup> *For our momentary light affliction is producing for us an absolutely incomparable eternal weight of glory.* <sup>18</sup> *So we do not focus on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.*



List the 4 activities which consume the most time and attention of your day (not counting sleep). Then, rate the activity as focused more temporarily (T) or eternally (E):

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

Some activities which require a large time investment (like a job) cannot be replaced by another activity, but we can still ensure that there is a WAY to spend that time, or at least some of that time, focused on eternal (E) purposes.



What can you do to adjust your T’s to E’s?

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\_\_\_\_\_

God Time Day 4: Learn to Invest



Read Matthew 6:20-21. <sup>20</sup> But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves don't break in and steal. <sup>21</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

When we truly accept the fleeting, temporary nature of comfort, wealth, and power, we can better intentionally invest in things that last and are eternal. This doesn't mean we won't pay any attention to money! Rather, we seek ways to use it for God's purposes and not just for ourselves.



Here are a few questions to help you evaluate if you are making wise investments in what God has given you:

1. **Are you giving back?** We are to be active in giving our time, talent, and/or treasure to ministry without expectation of personal reward.
2. **Are you managing your resources well?** God calls us to be intentional in the management of our finances, even to avoid penalties and unnecessary interest.
3. **Are you being generous with people?** We should never be known as stingy or heartless in business because we drive such hard bargains. This also applies to how we pay, evaluate, and compliment others.



Another way to evaluate our spiritual investments is to compare how much time we put into helping others versus making ourselves more comfortable. If someone close to you were to make a list of your positive impact on others, what would they list? (Not sure? Ask them.)

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What changes can you make today to invest more of your yourself where God's heart leads?

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God Time Day 5: We Have More Than We Realize



Sometimes we catch ourselves grumbling about people being unworthy of charity or blame the poor for being poor. We often expect them to "lift themselves up by their bootstraps." This only reveals an underlying belief that we, and they, can achieve our own successes rather than depend on God for the blessings we have. We have greater faith in ourselves than God!

It's in these moments that we forget how greatly we have been blessed. And with these blessings we are to be the hands and feet of God to bless others.



Read James 2:15-17. <sup>15</sup> If a brother or sister is without clothes and lacks daily food <sup>16</sup> and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, stay warm, and be well fed," but you don't give them what the body needs, what good is it? <sup>17</sup> In the same way faith, if it does not have works, is dead by itself.

Realizing where our blessings truly come from reinforces the understanding that anything good comes from God and is to be shared. It keeps us from thinking, "If someone else has it good, it means I am missing my fair share." Instead, it moves us to be more generous and we never have to worry that there won't be enough to go around.



Read Psalm 37:25-26. <sup>25</sup> I have been young and now I am old, yet I have not seen the righteous abandoned or his children begging for bread. <sup>26</sup> He is always generous, always lending, and his children are a blessing.



Plan for how you will be generous with what God has given you – even if all you can offer is a cup of water or a kind word. Be specific! To whom will you give? When?

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Family Time

Main Idea:

Learning Contentment



Key Verse: Philippians 4:11-12

*11 I don't say this out of need, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I find myself. 12 I know how to make do with little, and I know how to make do with a lot. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being content—whether well fed or hungry, whether in abundance or in need.*



Set it Up:

What is something you would like right now as a gift? (A toy, doll, motorcycle, clothes, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_

Where did you learn about this cool thing you want? (Probably on TV or from friends.)

\_\_\_\_\_



Discussion:

There is nothing wrong with wanting cool things like toys, bikes, and clothes. But when we want things too much, it can lead to problems.

What does the Bible say about contentment? Contentment means learning how to get along happily with little or much. It's the "being full" feeling, instead of feeling empty. Can you think of a time when you felt this way?

Look up contentment in the dictionary and talk about what it means. Ask: How does contentment help us at home? (We learn to be happy with what we have and thankful for it.)



Activity:

Get a can of fruit, can opener, bowls, and spoons. Pass around the can of fruit and call attention to the "content." It might say "24 ounces of peaches in their juice." Food products are required to have the content description on them.

What would you think if we opened this can of fruit and instead of fruit there were snails in the can?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What if it was only half full?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Open the can. Show that the contents of the can are full.

We are content when we are full. But when we focus on what we have, we sometimes end up feeling half full. We are not content; we are whiny and want more things. Instead, we need to focus on God. He will keep us full and content in all things.



## The 3-Step "1-on-1 Encouragement" Process

*Let us hold on to the confession of our hope without wavering, since he who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to provoke love and good works, not neglecting to gather together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging each other, and all the more as you see the day approaching.*

Hebrews 10:23-25

1. Partner-up: Partners should be of the same gender. If there is an odd number three is okay, but work swiftly.
2. Partners ask each other these five questions:

	1) Did you spend specific personal time in the <b>BIBLE</b> <u>each day</u> this past week?	These are "Yes" or "No" questions.
	2) Did you spend specific time in <b>PRAYER</b> <u>each day</u> this past week – not just for meals?	Any hesitations or "Well..." responses are circled "No."
	3) Did you do something specific to show Godly <b>LOVE</b> to someone this past week?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If so, the partner briefly shares the encounter(s) with their partner and, on the provided line, writes the name(s) of the person(s) they showed love to, shared the gospel with, or disciplined.</li> <li>• If not, leave the line blank.</li> </ul>
	4) Did you intentionally share the <b>GOSPEL</b> with anyone this past week?	
	5) Did you <b>DISCIPLE</b> anyone this past week? (Ex: Sharing with others from any of the Gathering, God, Group, or Family Times)	

3. Each partner prays for the other: No matter how or what the partner has done over the past week, this is an intentional prayer of **encouragement** for the coming week!