

# Lesson 2

## James One

The first chapter of James is unlike other New Testament epistles. There is no greeting, only a short introduction of the author in verse one. After this, James begins addressing the Christians and their various problems.

I find it interesting to note some statements found in chapter one that can be expanded and explained in more detail in the rest of the letter. It is as if chapter one serves as a “preview of coming attractions” on some subjects! Examples of this include:

Faith	1:6	2:14-26
Rich/Poor	1:9-11	5:1-9
Tongue/Speech	1:19, 26	3:2-12

As we study this first chapter of James, allow the words of truth to instruct us on how we ought to live as Christians in a world of wickedness.

### James 1:1

*“James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.”*

How does James introduce himself? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Name other writers  
who used a similar description. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What does this say about James’ attitude if he be the brother of Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_

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On whom is James focused? \_\_\_\_\_

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To whom is this epistle addressed? \_\_\_\_\_  
Name other writers who addressed their epistles so generally.

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### James 1:2-12

*“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways. Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted: But the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away. For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways. Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.”*

Why did James tell the Christians to count it a joyous thing to fall into “*divers temptations*”? \_\_\_\_\_

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One commentator says, “These would include not only allurements to sin, but trials or distresses of all kinds” (*Jamieson, Fausset and Brown*, p. 484). Put simply, James 1:2-12 have reference to *outward* temptations (trials) Christians face on earth.

Therefore, if any lack wisdom (in trying to understand the source of their temptations, v. 5), who were they to ask? \_\_\_\_\_

How was this one to ask? \_\_\_\_\_

One who doubts is said to be \_\_\_\_\_.

The word “*driven*” has reference to things from without, while “*tossed*” has reference to things from within. Compare this verse to what Paul said in Ephesians 4:14. \_\_\_\_\_

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What does the term “*double-minded*” mean? \_\_\_\_\_  
How is a “*double-minded man*” described (Jas. 1:8)? \_\_\_\_\_  
Compare the statement in James 1:8 with 1:6. What similarities do you see? \_\_\_\_\_

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What makes the “*double-minded man*” unstable? \_\_\_\_\_  
Why would it be that he is unstable in “*all his ways*”? \_\_\_\_\_

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What does the term “*low degree*” mean in verse 9? \_\_\_\_\_  
What reason might a brother of “*low degree*” have for rejoicing (Jas. 1:9)? \_\_\_\_\_  
Why would the rich rejoice for being “*made low*” (v. 10)? \_\_\_\_\_

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To what is the man with great possessions compared? \_\_\_\_\_  
Why is this a fitting description? (hint: I Jn. 2:17) \_\_\_\_\_

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Who is it that shall receive the crown of life? \_\_\_\_\_  
What other writer(s) talked about the crown of life going to those who love God? \_\_\_\_\_

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### James 1:13-15

“*Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God*”

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*cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."*

Why should one not say that he is tempted of God when tempted?  
\_\_\_\_\_ When does  
temptation come? \_\_\_\_\_  
What is the ultimate result of temptation and sin? \_\_\_\_\_  
Is it possible that one inherits sin from his parents or from Adam?  
Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ What phrase in this text shows that one's sin is his/her personal responsibility? \_\_\_\_\_

### James 1:16

*"Do not err, my beloved brethren."*

*"Do not err, my beloved brethren"* (KJV) is a valid and needed warning. Some versions record this verse as, "Do not be deceived" (ASV, ESV, GNB, ISV, RV). Others say, "Do not be led astray" (NET, LIT, YLT). These statements are not contradictory. Instead, they focus our attention in different areas. Being "deceived" is where problems begin, while "erring" or being "led astray" is where it ends! Thus, this warning is valid. In reading James 1:16, we see:

- Some had already erred or would err. Name some examples of people who fit this description. \_\_\_\_\_
- Man has a choice as to whether or not he will err from the truth.
- Christians can fall away from the Lord. Name some examples of those who fell. \_\_\_\_\_
- We need to be on our guard (I Pet. 5:8; Gal. 6:7)!

## James 1:17-18

*“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.”*

What does “with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” mean? \_\_\_\_\_

How are we “begotten”? \_\_\_\_\_

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## James 1:19-21

*“Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.”*

Please read verse 19. What three things ought every man be? \_\_\_\_\_ If everyone did these things, what would be the result? \_\_\_\_\_

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What does the wrath of man do (or not do)? \_\_\_\_\_ Therefore, name the things a Christian must lay aside and must receive. \_\_\_\_\_

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## James 1:22-25

*“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect*

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*law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.”*

What is the difference between a “hearer of the word” and a “doer of the word”? \_\_\_\_\_

What purpose does a mirror serve – physically and spiritually? \_\_\_\_\_

### James 1:26-27

*“If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridled not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man’s religion is vain. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.”*

What can make a man’s religion vain? \_\_\_\_\_

What two things are necessary for having pure and undefiled (holy) religion? \_\_\_\_\_

Notice that “*pure religion*” demands that our duties begin first with others and then ourselves! The word “visit” in this verse means:

- “comfort ... voluntarily” (*Bengel*, Vol. 2, p. 702)
- “in sympathy and kind offices to alleviate their distresses” (*Jamieson, Fausset and Brown*, p. 486)
- “to look upon or after, to inspect, to examine with the eyes” (*Thayer’s*, #1980, p. 242).

I believe the best Biblical definition for “visit” is found in Matthew 25:31-46. In Christ’s description of the day of Judgment, those who were commended and condemned for their visitation of Christ responded by saying, “*when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and \_\_\_\_\_?*” (v. 39), and, “*Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in*

*prison, and did not \_\_\_\_\_?” (v. 44). This is the Biblical definition of the word “visit.” It means *action!**

The word “unspotted” means “unblemished ... without spot” (Strong’s). And “spotless ... free from censure, irreproachable ... free from vice, unsullied” (*Thayer’s*, #784, p. 81). It is expected that Christians are to live pure lives upon this earth (I Tim. 5:22b).

Finally, notice that the commands given in chapter one are directed toward the *individual* and not the church as a collective group. While it is clear that the work an individual does and the work of a local church overlaps at times, this chapter stresses the responsibilities an individual Christian has toward God, his fellow man, and himself!

- Jarrod M. Jacobs