

**QUESTIONS TO PONDER AND PERSONAL APPLICATION**—What was your most interesting discovery this week?

**1. Sunday, Jan. 8; James 2:14-18; Incomplete Faith.** In your own words, summarize what this passage is saying. What is the basic “action” each person must take to be saved (14)? (*Heb 11:6 “And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.”* *And Acts 16:31 ““Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.”*) Are any works necessary to be saved? (*Eph. 2:8-9<sup>8</sup> For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—<sup>9</sup> not by works, so that no one can boast.*) So if being saved takes nothing more than believing in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, what is James’ concern (15-17)? Why does James say “faith by itself is dead”? Does the good news of Jesus Christ spread if you or I know it and believe it yet keep it to ourselves? How is this an “incomplete” faith? How does a person have complete faith (18)? How much more effective is vertical + horizontal faith put into practice? Draw a diagram of that. **Personal Application:** Write a few sentences about incomplete or complete faith as you have experienced it. How would the Lord have you put “hands and feet” on your faith today?

**2. Monday, Jan. 9; James 2:19-26; The Dynamic Duo—Faith + Deeds of Faith.** What is James’ point in verses 19-20? If demons believe in God, do they have a True Faith? According to James, with what must True Faith be paired (21-26)? Recount others in scripture who paired faith with action (David confronting Goliath, etc.). How do our own deeds of faith credit our lives as righteous (23)? Why is incomplete faith powerless, while complete faith (faith + deeds of faith) is full of power? **Personal Application:** Write about pairing faith + deeds of faith in your life. What new or continued deeds of faith is the Lord asking of you? (I call these “assignments”.)

**3. Tuesday, Jan. 10; James 3:1-2; Being Responsible to Others. Verse 1:** Reflect on the ways you or I “teach” others (parent, grandparent, boss, co-worker, friend, etc.). As Christ-followers, what responsibility do we have to interact well in these relationships? Consider how you reflect Christ and how that teaches others about who He is. **Verse 2:** What does James mean by the word “stumble”? What are some areas of life that “trip-up” you or me? How has your tongue tripped you or me up lately? How does being diligent over our tongues show the fruit of self-control in our lives? **Personal Application:** Reflect on and write about who you teach and how they see Christ in you. How would greater self-control over the tongue enhance your life or mine?

**4. Wednesday, Jan. 11; James 3:3-8; Taming the Tongue.** How is the tongue like a wild horse or tossed ship (3-4)? What restraints are put on horses or ships? What restraint can be put on the tongue? Make a list of ways the tongue can damage a life (boasting, denying, lying, etc.). According to James, left to its own devices, what is sure to happen with an untamed tongue (7-8)? Can you or I tame our own tongues (8)? Whose help must we enlist to tame our tongues? (*John 14:26 “But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”*) How has the Holy Spirit reminded you to “hold your tongue” lately and what was the result? **Personal Application:** Write a few sentences about the state of wildness or tameness of your tongue or mine. In what relationships or at what times do you or I need a tamer tongue? How will the Holy Spirit help you and me have victory in this area?

**5. Thursday, Jan. 12; James 3: 9-12; Twisted Tongue Syndrome.** What is a horrifying thought concerning our tongues (9-10)? For several days keep a heightened awareness of the twistedness of your tongue or mine. How do you or I both praise and curse God by the things we say? Should you or I allow this habit to continue (10b-12)? What is the cure for twisted tongue syndrome? Which attitudes or relationships will see improvement as twisted tongue syndrome is eliminated from your life or mine? **Personal Application:** Write a confessional prayer about your own case of twisted tongue syndrome. How will you or I turn our tongues over to the Holy Spirit’s control?

**6. Friday, Jan. 13; James 3:13-16; Heavenly Wisdom versus Earthly Wisdom.** What does it take to be wise and understanding in the Lord (13a)? What is James’ definition of living a good life (13b)? Summarize verse 13 in your own words about how to live a good life now. What attitudes show that we are not wise and understanding (14)? Give your own definition for bitter envy and selfish ambition (NIV). James asks us to examine ourselves for this type of behavior

(14b). From where does this type of behavior come (15)? What is the result of bitter envy and selfish ambition (16)? How does bitter envy or selfish ambition deceive a person? **Personal Application:** Confess (“do not deny the truth” vs. 14) any bitter envy or selfish ambition in a written prayer. Recommit to receiving and heeding heavenly wisdom (13).

**7. Saturday, Jan. 14; James 3:17-18; Godly Wisdom Defined. Verse 17:** What is the first and foremost sign of wisdom from heaven (17a)? Does any thought of our own to commit sin come from God? Why not? Under the heading PURE, list all the other characteristics of godly wisdom. As you and I look at our lists, would the voice of God tell us to start a fight, leave a mess for others, insist on my own way, harbor hate, have a sour attitude, discriminate, or use another person for my own gain? Make your own list of other behaviors that are opposite of these pure qualities of wisdom. How may you and I use this list as we determine godly responses and answers to our myriad of daily life questions? **Verse 18:** Do you or I consider ourselves to be peacemakers? Why or why not? What does it mean to “sow in peace”? Think of ways you and I “sow in peace” each day. How do the traits of godly wisdom aid us in being peacemakers? What is the reward for those who sow peace? What is righteousness? **Personal Application:** In prayer and on paper, pour out your heart to God concerning appropriating godly wisdom and being a peacemaker.

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