

HE
REWARDS
THE
SEEKERS



ontrack devotions

FEBRUARY

2022

HEBREWS & JAMES

MONTHLY PRAYER SHEET

"...The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective." James 5:16

Who I Will Reach	How I Will Do It	How It Went

Other Requests	Date Answered	How It Was Answered

MONTHLY COMMITMENT SHEET

Name: _____

This sheet is designed to help you make personal commitments each month that will **help you grow in your walk with God**. Fill it out by determining

1. What will push you
2. What you think you can achieve

If you need help filling out your commitments, seek out someone you trust who can help you. Share your commitments with those who will help keep you accountable.

Personal Devotions:

How did I do with my commitment last month? _____

I will commit to read the OnTrack Bible passage and devotional thought _____ day(s) each week this month.

Church Attendance:

How did I do last month with my attendance? _____

I will attend church _____ time(s) this month.

I will attend small group _____ time(s) this month.

I will attend _____ time(s) this month.

(List any other activities you will participate in this month—Bible study, church events, etc.)

Bible Memory:

How did I do with Bible memory last month? _____

I will memorize _____ verse(s) this month.

Outreach:

How did I do last month with sharing Jesus? _____

I will share Jesus with _____ this month.

I will serve my local church this month by _____

Does it matter if Jesus is God or not? What if Jesus Christ was just a higher form of an angel and not really equal with God? If Jesus is just a higher angelic form and not fully God, then one of the most important actions He took would not have been possible. The writer of Hebrews demonstrates Jesus Christ is not an angel, but is far superior to the angels. He first reminds us that, in the Old Testament, God spoke to people directly. But in the New Testament, He chose to speak to man through Jesus. He tells us that Jesus is superior to the angels because He created the universe. He is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of God. Consequently, this means Jesus is exactly like God in every way because He is God. As a result, He provided justification for our sins, which would not have been possible if He were merely an angel. After He paid the price for our sin, He returned to heaven and now sits at the Father's right hand, a position no angel can occupy. Jesus Christ came to earth to pay the price for our sin. We must respond to Him as God and receive by faith the gift of eternal life He offers. Have you?

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING

HEBREWS 1

HEBREWS 2:5-18

WHO IS JESUS...CONTINUED

SAY WHAT?

What temptations are you now facing?

SO WHAT?

In what ways are those temptations similar to what Jesus faced?

NOW WHAT?

How did Jesus respond to His temptations?

THEN WHAT?

Write out a prayer asking Jesus to help you be successful in the areas of temptation that you face.

Yesterday we learned that Jesus Christ is God. But why did He have to become a man? Why is this important? In today's reading, we are given some key reasons. One of those is found in verses 9 & 17. Jesus Christ became a man so that He could die for the sins of all mankind. He paid the price for our sin so we do not have to pay it ourselves. Another reason is given in verse 14. Jesus Christ became a man to destroy Satan, who had the power of death, so we could be free from the fear of death. The third reason, in verses 17-18, is key for daily living, but few seem to realize it is true. Jesus Christ became a man to become a merciful and faithful High Priest. Verse 18 tells us that since He was a man, He is able to help us when we are tempted because He faced the same temptations. Since Jesus became a man, He not only knows all about temptations, but is able to help us resist our temptations. Use the questions to help you better apply this truth to your life. In what ways are the areas you are tempted in similar to what Jesus faced?

EXTRA READING
HEBREWS 2

Have you ever known someone who at one time in their life followed Jesus, but now is far from Him? Have you ever wondered how that happens? Ever wondered what we can do to prevent it from happening? The answers to these questions are in today's reading. The author tells us, in verse 12, that one turns away from God after he first has begun to develop a sinful, unbelieving heart. His point is that you do not go to sleep at night following Jesus and wake up the next morning in total rebellion. It's a process that begins with developing a sinful, unbelieving heart and ends with us turning away from God. How do we help each other avoid this? According to verse 13, it is by encouraging one another daily. When we see something in someone's life that concerns us, we need to speak up. If we are watching out for each other daily, we won't be very far from God before someone seeks to encourage and help us. Do you encourage daily? When is the last time you encouraged someone in their walk with God? Isn't it time you began?

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING

HEBREWS 3

HEBREWS 4:1-7

PERSONAL RESPONSE

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

Why couldn't some of the people of Israel enter the Promised Land? The answer to that question is important and helpful to us in making sure we do not miss out on heaven the way some missed out on the Promised Land. According to verse 2, people were excluded from the Promised Land because, although they had heard the message, they did not combine it with faith. They believed it intellectually, but they never accepted it by faith, personally. As a result, instead of obeying what they had heard, they acted in disobedience. It was possible to have seen all the miracles, have actually heard God speak directly, and still miss what God had for them. They did not respond by faith to what they had heard and did not live in obedience to the message they received. The truth is, this happens all the time. It happens to people who attend church. They hear the Gospel, but they do not take the next step of living in obedience to what they have heard. Tragically, they miss heaven because they are like the children of Israel. Are you just believing what you hear and not obeying? Are you following Jesus?

EXTRA READING
HEBREWS 4

HELP!

Can Jesus Christ really understand what you are going through? Does He really know how you feel when you face temptation? Since He is God, can He identify with us in our moment of crisis? In today's reading, we have what may be one of the most encouraging sections of Scripture. It shows us that the answer to those questions is a definite YES! We have, in Jesus Christ, someone who knows exactly what we face in this culture. Verse 15 tells us that He was tempted in every way like we are and He is, therefore, a sympathetic High Priest. He faced what we face every day. However, He went through it with one major difference—He did not sin. He knows not only what we are going through, He knows how to help us go through it successfully. How should we respond to such truth? Verse 16 tells us that, because all this is true, we should approach God's throne in prayer with confidence. Why? Because Jesus Christ alone understands what we face, and He knows how to help us be successful. It is at His throne that we receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. What circumstance are you currently facing that you need to talk to God about? Remember that He is always ready to help!

HEBREWS 4:14-16

SAY WHAT?

What specific temptations are you facing?

SO WHAT?

How does it help to know that God is a sympathetic High Priest?

NOW WHAT?

Write out a prayer asking Him for help in your current circumstance.

THEN WHAT?

What personal commitment can you make in light of today's passage?

EXTRA READING

HEBREWS 4

PROVERBS 2

The book of Proverbs was designed to help us in "gaining wisdom and instruction; for understanding words of insight; for receiving instruction in prudent behavior, doing what is right and just and fair; for giving prudence to those who are simple, knowledge and discretion to the young." As you read through this chapter, write down the verses that are most significant to you in your present circumstances.

VERSE | WHAT TRUTH IT COMMUNICATES | HOW IT IMPACTS MY LIFE

This passage gives us some vital information we must understand in order to become more like Jesus. The author confronted the Hebrews because they were not becoming more like Jesus like they should have been. He told them that by this time they ought to be teachers, but they were still like infants who needed milk. When someone grows, they move away from milk and into solid food. Solid food is for those who have trained themselves to distinguish between good and evil. In this passage, we find that milk is truths from the Bible that we accept intellectually. Solid food is truths from the Bible that tell us how we ought to live. We do not grow simply because we are gaining knowledge, but we grow when we take that knowledge and apply it to our lives. Spiritual maturity is based on how we act, not on what we know! How mature are you? Are you taking what you know and applying it to the decisions you make and the way you live?

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING

HEBREWS 5

HEBREWS 6:13-20

PROMISES

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

How confident can we be in God's promises? Could you bank your life on them? Today's passage confirms the answer is yes. To help us with our confidence, let's look at what God did for Abraham to help him develop confidence. In Genesis 15, God had Abraham take animals, cut them in half and place each half on opposite sides creating an aisle to walk through. Why? Because in Abraham's culture, when two people made a commitment to each other, they walked through halved animals together. It symbolized that the one who was responsible for breaking the promise should be cut in half. Abraham finished arranging the animal pieces, but God caused him to fall asleep. God passed between them alone. This illustrated that the fulfillment of the promises God made depended on Him alone and Abraham had nothing to do with it. That same commitment is made to us. According to verse 18, if our hope is placed in God, we will be greatly encouraged. Why? Because the fulfillment of His promises depends on Him alone, not on us. How amazing to know that the promises of God cannot be broken! Do your actions demonstrate you believe that?

EXTRA READING
HEBREWS 6

This chapter is an incredible section of Scripture! Although it may seem complicated and difficult to understand, there is much here to motivate us. Let's take a closer look. The author portrays a superior office and a superior system. Jesus Christ, the High Priest, and the New Testament system are superior to the Old Testament high priests and the Mosaic Law system. Under the old system, a priest served only for a period of time. Jesus Christ is our Priest forever. The old system required that the priest offer sacrifices for sins. Jesus Christ is our sacrifice. The old system merely covered sin. Jesus Christ washes sin away. We have a High Priest who can save us completely. Since He will never die, this new system will not change and will live on forever. Jesus Christ is all we need, and He has become our Priest. He has given us access to God in a way that no other priest before Him could. Have you taken advantage of what Christ has done for you under this new system? Have you asked Him to be your Savior? Have you taken advantage of the direct access you now have to God? Do not allow yourself to live under the new system and not use all it provides for you.

SAY WHAT?

What does it mean to have access to God?

SO WHAT?

How would your life be different if you were living under the old system?

NOW WHAT?

In what ways are you taking advantage of the new system?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment should you make?

EXTRA READING
HEBREWS 7

HEBREWS 8:1-6

SAT DOWN

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

Why did the author tell us that our High Priest "sat down" at the right hand of the throne? Is this significant to us? It is if you understand the Old Testament system of law. Under that law, a priest never sat down. In fact, there wasn't even a place in the tabernacle for the priest to sit down. His job was never finished because the sacrifices he made for the sins of people were not sufficient to cover all of their sins. When they sinned again, the priest had to offer sacrifices again. Jesus Christ is different. Just before Jesus died on the cross, he said "It is finished." The sacrifice for sin was paid. There was no need for any other sacrifice or payment for sin—not for any sin you have committed or will commit. Our High Priest, Jesus Christ, sat down because His work was finished. He sat down because everything that needed to be done to enable us to have our sins forgiven was completed on the cross. There is nothing you or I can or need to do beyond what Jesus Christ already did on the cross. How should we respond to the One who provided this for us? With hearts filled with gratitude, every minute of every day that He gives us. Is that how you are living your life?

EXTRA READING
HEBREWS 8

Is it possible to live with a clear conscience? Is it possible, even after having done something horrible, to not feel guilty forever? Yes, if we understand what the New Testament system we are learning about has done for us. This is one of the greatest passages we can use to give hope to people. The author explains that the gifts and sacrifices under the Old Testament law were not able to "clear the conscience." Can you imagine that? When a sin had been committed and the blood of an animal applied, it did not clear the conscience of guilt. The sin was covered, but not taken away. But we can have our consciences cleared. We can live guilt free. Verse 14 tells us that because of what Jesus Christ did for us on the cross, His blood can cleanse our consciences, not just cover our sin. We can have the burden of a guilty conscience removed. If a heavy conscience is haunting you, Jesus Christ can wipe it clean—not just cover the sin, but take it away. Do you realize that God can cleanse you and wash your sin away? Who can help you apply this passage to your current circumstances?

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING

HEBREWS 9

HEBREWS 10:11-18

FORGIVEN!

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

How do you feel when you have done something wrong? How do you feel after you seek forgiveness and it has been granted? Imagine what it would be like to feel guilty forever. In today's reading, we are given the amazing truth of what Jesus Christ has done for us. This chapter, like yesterday's, emphasizes that Jesus Christ paid the price for our sins once and for all. We are reminded again that in the Old Testament, the priest had to continually offer sacrifices for sin. However, our priest, Jesus Christ, made the final sacrifice and then sat down because it was finished. What does that mean for someone who follows Jesus? We are forgiven once for all. There is nothing else we need to do to take care of our sin. In fact, God says in verse 17, our sins will be remembered no more. They are not only forgiven, but set aside and not remembered. What an incredible truth! Does guilt plague you? Do you want to live guilt free? Who can you talk to about this today?

EXTRA READING
HEBREWS 10

The book of Proverbs was designed to help us in "gaining wisdom and instruction; for understanding words of insight; for receiving instruction in prudent behavior, doing what is right and just and fair; for giving prudence to those who are simple, knowledge and discretion to the young." As you read through this chapter, write down the verses that are most significant to you in your present circumstances.

VERSE | WHAT TRUTH IT COMMUNICATES | HOW IT IMPACTS MY LIFE

SAY WHAT?

Which one of those five do you need to work on the most? Why?

SO WHAT?

What will you need to do to begin working on it today?

NOW WHAT?

What kind of plan can you create to see it happen? Who can help you?

THEN WHAT?

What personal commitment can you make in light of this passage?

How should we respond to the kind of truth we read about yesterday? The passage we are reading today answers that question. It gives to us five challenges all beginning with the words "let us." First, we are to draw near to God. We can do this by reading our Bible and spending time with Him in prayer. Second, we are to hold unwaveringly to the hope we have. God is faithful, so we should not doubt or lose our confidence. Though it may not appear as if He has control at times, He does. Third, we are to consider how we can spur one another on toward love and good deeds. That is, how can we challenge others to follow Jesus? Notice he uses the word "spur." Spurs are not very comfortable when applied. Sometimes doing this for each other may not be very comfortable for us or them. Fourth, we need to make church attendance a priority. Meeting together as a body is not optional. Finally, we are to encourage each other. We should pray for and encourage each other daily. In light of all God has done for us, what else would we do? Use the questions to help you begin.

EXTRA READING
HEBREWS 10

To help you to think through the next two chapters, keep this outline in mind. First, we see a definition of faith (11:1-2). Second, we see what people who have faith can do (11:3-40). Third, we realize what we need to do in order to become people of faith ourselves (12:1-3). Finally, we realize what God will do to help us (12:4-13). What exactly is faith? According to verse 1, faith is being sure and certain. Faith is not hoping that something will work out. Faith is being sure and certain it will. Do those two words describe your faith? According to verse 6, faith is being sure that God rewards those who earnestly seek Him. What are we certain of? That God exists, even though we cannot see or touch Him. It is only when our faith becomes something that we are sure and certain of that we can expect to be like the men and women in this chapter. They could not have done it based on a "I hope so" kind of faith. Are you sure that God rewards those who diligently seek Him? Are you certain that God exists? Does your life show it? If not, start asking God to give you a heart of faith that is sure and certain.

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING

HEBREWS 11

HEBREWS 11:23-28

LOOKING AHEAD

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

What is the most important thing in the world to you? Hopefully, it is the same thing that was important to Moses. He was able to enjoy everything the world has to offer. As the grandson to Pharaoh, he had fame. Many would have wanted to be with him and have him as a friend. He had money—all the wealth of Egypt. He could have bought anything he wanted. Yet those things were not important to him. Although the world could never understand, he chose to be mistreated rather than to experience the pleasures of sin. He thought it was better to suffer persecution for being a child of God than to have treasure. Would you do the same? If you were sure of what you hope for, and certain of what you cannot see, you would. Like Moses, you would be looking ahead to the reward you know that God has for those who diligently seek Him. You would be sure it is far better than anything the world could ever give. So, are you doing what Moses did? If not, what next step do you need to take?

EXTRA READING
HEBREWS 11

Who is the cloud of witnesses talked about in vs. 1, and how do they help us? The cloud of witnesses are the people listed in chapter 11. They encourage us by demonstrating that it is possible to live a life of faith and influence your world. They give us hope by showing us it can be done! How do we become people of faith? First, by throwing off everything that hinders. That includes those things that are not sin, but slow us down and entangle us. Secondly, we must get rid of any sin that is in our lives. We cannot tolerate any sin, large or small, and expect to become people of faith. Third, we need to run with perseverance, realizing this journey is a long distance race. Fourth, we focus on Jesus Christ. He needs to be our priority and the only one we seek to please. Verse 4 says that we can be encouraged knowing that, whenever we get off track, God will discipline us to get us back where we need to be. We must not fight against the discipline, but allow it to train us. You see, it is possible to become a person of faith. You do your part and be confident that God will do His.

SAY WHAT?

Of the four steps listed in this passage, which one is the most difficult for you? Why?

SO WHAT?

What would it take for you to have success in that area?

NOW WHAT?

What are two steps you can take this week to become a person of great faith?

THEN WHAT?

What personal commitment can you make in light of this passage?

EXTRA READING
HEBREWS 12

HEBREWS 12:12-17

SEE TO IT

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

How important is it for us to be involved in the lives of others? According to today's reading, it is very important. This passage is a call to be hard at work in three areas. First, we are to work hard to live in peace with all men. We are to do whatever we can to avoid being a part of division or conflict. Secondly, we are to work hard to be holy. We are to do our best to keep ourselves from sin. Thirdly, the author tells us that we are to work hard to see to it that no one is involved in the following four areas: missing the grace of God, allowing a bitter root to grow, practicing sexual immorality, or being godless like Esau of the Old Testament. You can't fulfill your responsibility to see to it if you sit on the sidelines worrying only about yourself and not getting involved in the lives of others. How active are you in the lives of the people around you? Are they avoiding sin? What are they struggling with? Do they have any bitterness in their hearts? What would it take for you to be able to answer those questions? Who might need your encouragement today?

EXTRA READING
HEBREWS 12

If you could have anything in the world that you wanted, what would make you the happiest? What would it take for you to be content? The author, in today's reading, says something related to this question. In verse 5, we are told to keep ourselves from the love of money and be content with what we have. Why shouldn't we seek money? Why should we be content with the amount of money we have or make? According to verse 5, it is because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." Do you realize what you are being told? To be discontented with what you have is to say that God is not enough and we need more than Him to be happy. The love of money and discontentment has a direct correlation to how important God is to an individual. Our lack of contentment demonstrates that God is not enough to cause us to be happy. We should be able to live without extra and still be content knowing God is with us. Check your level of contentment. What does it tell you about how important God is to you?

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING
HEBREWS 13

JAMES 1:12-18

AVOIDING SIN

SAY WHAT?

Read the following verses and write down what they say about how to stop my evil desires from dragging me away and enticing me. Romans 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Matthew 26:41; Romans 6:1-14

SO WHAT?

Read the following verses and write down what they say about how to stop desires that have dragged me away and are enticing me. 1 Corinthians 10:13; 2 Peter 2:9; 2 Timothy 2:22; Hebrews 4:15

NOW WHAT?

Read the following verses and write down what they say about how to stop desires that have already enticed me and are ready to result in sin. Philippians 4:8; Romans 12:2; Ephesians 4:20-24

THEN WHAT?

What personal commitment should I make in light of this passage?

Is it possible for you to resist temptation? The answer is yes, and today's reading has some very helpful insights on how to do that. James tells us, in verse 12, that the person who perseveres under temptation and does not give in is happy. In fact, he tells us that there is a crown awaiting those who have successfully resisted temptation in their lives. He then goes on to describe the steps that temptation takes before it becomes sin. First, it begins with an evil desire. Second, that evil desire drags us away. It causes us to be distracted or lured away from safety. We become curious and let down our guard. Third, we are enticed. We are now away from safety and ready to take the plunge. Those desires are conceived in our mind and are all we think about. At this point, sin is just around the corner. All we are waiting for is an opportunity to sin, and an opportunity will come. However, if we stop the temptation at any point before that, we can resist sinning. How often do you stop the process of temptation before it becomes sin? Use today's questions to help you.

EXTRA READING
JAMES 1

What is the difference between a listener and a doer? It may not be what you think it is. James explains the difference in today's reading and admonishes us not to only be a listener. A listener is someone who hears the Word of God. The word James used here means stopping and actually seeing what is there. In fact, he says the listener looks closely enough to be able to see himself as he really is. The problem is that he then walks away and doesn't change what he sees. A doer is someone who also hears, but his look is different from the listener. What he has seen is so shocking and moving to him that he can't forget it. The result? He walks away determined to do something about it. He is so moved that he can't forget it and makes the necessary changes in his life. Which one are you? What are you working to change based on what you have recently heard from God's Word? Don't walk away and forget what needs to change!

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING

JAMES 1



JAMES 2:8-13

FAVORITISM

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

Why are you guilty of violating the whole law if you violate just one area? Doesn't that seem extreme? Not when you understand James' point. The example James uses is showing favoritism. It is wrong to treat people differently for any reason. God expects us to treat everyone the same. James then says, if we do show favoritism, we are judged as though we have violated the whole law (vs10). That seems unfair. It seems that way until we read Matthew 22:37-40. In this section of Scripture, Jesus says that the entire law hangs on two commandments. One of these is to love your neighbor as yourself. You see, if we show favoritism, then we violate one of the foundations of the law. If we really loved others as ourselves, we would never show favoritism. What follows in verse 13 is even more sobering. Did you see it? James tells us that God will not be merciful to us if we show favoritism to others. If God were to treat you the way you treat others, what would it be like? Are there areas where you show favoritism? What needs to change?

EXTRA READING
JAMES 2

James asks a very important question in verse 14. He asks if a person's faith without actions can save him. In other words, if someone says he follows Jesus, but his behavior doesn't demonstrate it, does he really follow Jesus? As you read through this section, it becomes obvious that James' answer is no. He is telling us that it is possible to have a faith that does not save you. Faith that does not change behavior is as useless, according to James, as a person who does not meet the needs of people when he becomes aware of them. Likewise, this kind of faith is also useless in meeting our need for salvation. According to James, it is just dead faith (vs17). Is just believing in Jesus enough to get you to heaven? According to James, it isn't (vs18-19). If you have the kind of saving faith seen here, you will demonstrate it by the way you live. As you examine your behavior, what do your actions tell you about your faith? Do they tell you that your faith is true saving faith or have you deceived yourself? Use the questions to help you determine what kind of faith you have.

SAY WHAT?

What evidences would you see in the life of someone who follows Jesus?

SO WHAT?

What behavior could deceive someone into believing he is saved when he is not?

NOW WHAT?

What evidences do you see in your own life that you follow Jesus?

THEN WHAT?

Based on your answers above, what kind of faith do you have? Saving faith?

EXTRA READING

JAMES 2

JAMES 3:1-12

THE TONGUE

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

What do you want to do in your future? Could God have a ministry teaching role in your future? James tells us that teaching is not for everyone. In fact, those who teach will be judged by a stricter standard than others. That is a sobering standard when we think about the sin in our lives. What makes it even more serious is that teachers have to deal with their tongues and the danger they present just like everyone else. However, if you are going to be a teacher, you must realize that your tongue may be a small thing, but it can cause great damage. Like teachers, we must all realize that the tongue can do irreparable damage. We must also realize that only through the power of God can it be tamed. All of us must learn to control our tongue. Is your tongue being used by God to show Jesus to those around you, or is it being used by Satan to hurt and discourage them? What can you do to better use your tongue?

EXTRA READING
JAMES 3

How can we tell if we are using God's wisdom or our own? According to today's reading, we simply need to look at the results in our lives from the choices we make. Knowing whether or not we use God's wisdom is very important. We read in chapter one that if we ask God for it, He will give it to us. But we also know that our selfish pride can often get in the way of using God's wisdom. We can easily allow our selfishness and pride to influence our decisions. James tells us that we can distinguish between those who are using godly wisdom or worldly wisdom by the results in their lives. Decisions made with worldly wisdom produce bitter envy, selfishness, disorder, and evil. We see an amazing contrast between those traits and the description of the results of godly wisdom. God's wisdom produces peace, consideration, sincerity, and mercy. James ends this chapter with a great promise. He tells us that those who seek God's wisdom and peace will reap a harvest of righteousness. What a great motivation to use God's wisdom and never our own worldly wisdom. As you examine your life, whose wisdom are you using? Take a close look at your life. What characteristics do you see?

SAY WHAT?

How are the results of worldly wisdom revealed in your life?

SO WHAT?

How are the results of godly wisdom revealed in your life?

NOW WHAT?

What steps can you take to make sure you are using godly wisdom in the choices you are making?

THEN WHAT?

What commitment should you make in light of this passage?

EXTRA READING

JAMES 3

JAMES 4:13-17

DECISION MAKING

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

Do verses 13-17 mean that we should not plan for the future? James' point is that there are many people who make plans for their future without ever considering God and what He might have planned for them. They have decided what to participate in in high school, what college to attend, where to work, who to marry, when to start a family, any summer plans, etc., without ever considering what God would have them do. James is making the point here that we do not know what will happen tomorrow, so how can we make plans without considering God? Instead of making our own plans, we should seek His direction for our lives. Verse 17 takes it even a step further. To make plans without considering God is not only a bad idea, but it is sin. Someone who knows that he ought to seek God's direction in making decisions and doesn't do it, sins. What plans are you considering right now? Have you sought God's direction? Have you even considered what He might want you to do? If you have not, why not ask Him about it right now?

EXTRA READING
JAMES 4

Do people consider you trustworthy? Do they always believe what you say without needing proof? Or, are you someone who has to prove or swear you are telling the truth? If you do not have credibility with people, you must have found verse 12 discouraging. James tells us that we should not be people who need to swear or prove that what we say is true. Our character ought to be enough that when we say yes, people know it means yes and, when we say no, people know it means no. Our truthfulness and character ought to be above reproach. If we give our word, it should be enough. People ought to know they can depend on us. If we make a commitment, they should know we will fulfill it. If we give our word, it means something. We need to strive to be the kind of people that James describes here. How do you measure up to this standard? Do you have a reputation for being dependable? What will it take for you to become known as this kind of person? Use today's questions to help you get started.

SAY WHAT?

In what ways do people demonstrate that they are trustworthy? In what ways do people demonstrate that they are not trustworthy?

SO WHAT?

In what ways do you demonstrate that you aren't trustworthy?

NOW WHAT?

How can you begin to improve in this area?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

EXTRA READING

JAMES 5

JAMES 5:13-20

PRAYER

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

Why did James use Elijah as the example of a righteous man who could do so much through prayer? The reason should give you great hope. James tells us that the prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. Would the words powerful and effective describe your prayer life? It should encourage you to learn that all we have to do is be righteous, and we can have a prayer life that is powerful and effective. James uses Elijah as an example. In 1 Kings 18, we see Elijah is bold, courageous, confident, zealous, valiant, and empowered by God. All of these are characteristics we would expect from a righteous man. In chapter 19, we see that there were also occasions when Elijah was scared, discouraged, lonely, and blind to what God was doing. He doubted God's plan. You see, he was a man just like us. Sometimes we are confident and courageous. Other times we are afraid. In reality, we are just like Elijah. James' point is that we can have a powerful and effective prayer life just like Elijah. What needs to change in your life?

EXTRA READING
JAMES 5

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HEBREWS 6:19-20

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AND WITHOUT **FAITH** IT
IS IMPOSSIBLE TO
PLEASE HIM, FOR THE
ONE WHO COMES TO
GOD MUST **BELIEVE**
THAT HE EXISTS, AND
THAT HE PROVES TO BE
ONE WHO REWARDS
THOSE WHO SEEK HIM.
HEBREWS 11:6 (NASB)



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