

James

A STUDY ON THE BOOK OF JAMES

UPSTATE GROUP LEADER GUIDE

WEEK 10 - *JAMES 5:1-6* - JULY 22-28

LEADER NOTES

In the last few weeks of our study on the book of James, we have seen how the author warns against both worldly wisdom and worldly faith. This week, James shows us that how we use our finances is a great indicator of the type of faith we have. We are called to be a people who are generous with our finances, prioritizing the things of God over the comforts of this world.

Please be sure to connect with individuals who have been suggested to your group from Getting to Know You. Remember that as Group Leaders, you are responsible for the discipleship of those in your group. Let's continue to go Deeper together.

Please continue to complete the Gospel Connection's and Conversations form. You can find the form [HERE](#).

You can find other sermons from our Teaching Pastor's [HERE](#).

COMMUNITY

OPEN THE GROUP BY CARING FOR ONE ANOTHER AND ALLOWING A MOMENT FOR EVERYONE TO HAVE A PLACE TO BELONG.

START THE GROUP BY TAKING PRAYER REQUESTS, FINDING OUT ABOUT EVERYONE'S WEEK, AND PRAYING FOR ONE ANOTHER.

OPENING QUESTIONS:

IF YOU WERE GIVEN A MILLION DOLLARS, WHAT WOULD YOU BUY? WHAT IS THE MOST SELFLESS FINANCIAL ACT YOU HAVE EVER SEEN ANYONE DO?

SCRIPTURE

TAKE THIS TIME TO STUDY THE BIBLE TOGETHER. REMEMBER, THE GOAL IS NOT JUST TO CONVEY INFORMATION, BUT TO HELP PEOPLE IN YOUR GROUP LEARN TO READ THE BIBLE FOR THEMSELVES.

THE POINT

WISE CHRISTIANS MAKE ETERNAL INVESTMENTS.

James 5:1-6

Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you. 2 Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten. 3 Your gold and silver have corroded, and their corrosion will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure in the last days. 4 Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, are crying out against you, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. 5 You have lived on the earth in luxury and in self-indulgence. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. 6 You have condemned and murdered the righteous person. He does not resist you.

The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), James 5:1-6.

STUDY NOTES

Throughout our study on the book of James, the author repeatedly warns against the folly of worldly wisdom. Scripture consistently describes that our finances reveal not only what our hearts are fixed upon, but also who is Lord over one's life. In James chapter five, the author strongly rebukes believers for their misuse of riches and financial gain for individual pleasure and selfish ambition. However, it should be noted that many interpreters see these rebukes on the rich as addressing non-believers rather than believers. Individuals holding this interpretation will point to the fact that nowhere does James refer to these people as "brothers" as elsewhere in his letter, as well as the fact that there is no call to repentance, as is the case in the preceding exhortation. No matter how you interpret who James is addressing, there are key principles which every believer should heed with great diligence.

Foolish Christians Keep What They Should Give

Earlier in his letter, James says "Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world." The rebuke of the rich in chapter five is the opposite of this. The individuals addressed were storing up earthly riches and possessions, hoarding them and unwilling to share with the believers in need. Scripture presents three types of wealth in the ancient world: grain, gold, and garments. Verses 2-3 reveal that these individuals were hoarding every type of wealth, storing these riches to the point where they were rotting, being corroded, and destroyed, yet the rich do not give to the poor. It's not riches itself which causes people to sin, but the posture and outworking of the heart.

Foolish Christians Make Bad Investments

Jesus says in Matthew 6, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal." With this in the back of James's mind, it's as if James emphasizes the simple fact that to live in the way the rich were living is to heap judgment and condemnation on your head. This is revealed in the use of the divine title of "Lord of Hosts" in verse 4. In so doing, James says that the outcries of those wronged and oppressed reach the ears of the one who commands Heaven's armies, the one who is in control of all riches, all power, and all glory. Thus, living a life of indulgence—with a lack of concern for the needy, the lost, or the will of God—proves their hearts allegiance and forfeits all of the riches promised to those who place faith in Christ.

We must be a people who are more concerned with the Kingdom of God, the mission of God, and the things of God rather than the pleasures, the worries, or the things of the world. When our hearts and minds idolize the fleeting riches of the world, we lose sight of the eternal riches found only in the crucified and risen Jesus. To live a life of authentic faith means we care for the outcasts, the marginalized, the lowest and poorest in society. Wise Christians make eternal investments.

For more resources, click [HERE](#).

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- *What stood out to you in this passage?*
- *Why is judgment (or “miseries”) falling on the rich in this passage?*
- *How should a wise believer invest in eternity? How should they do so with their finances?*
- *Read James 4:4. How are the wealthy in this passage choosing to be friends of the world rather than friends of God?*
- *Is it a sin to be wealthy in and of itself? Why is it so easy for those who are wealthy to become self-indulgent and unconcerned about the things of God?*
- *Read v. 4. How is the promise of believers’ future vindication encouraging for a life of faithfulness now?*

COMMISSION

AS YOU WRAP UP YOUR GROUP, IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT EVERYONE KNOWS WE GO INTO THE WORLD ON MISSION FOR JESUS. USE THIS TIME TO FOCUS EVERYONE TO LIVE ON MISSION AS YOU LEAVE.

- ***AS CHRIST-FOLLOWERS, JESUS IS TO BE LORD OVER EVERY AREA OF OUR LIVES, INCLUDING HOW WE USE AND SPEND OUR FINANCES. HOW HAVE YOU FAILED TO BE FAITHFUL WITH YOUR FINANCES AND TO MAKE WISE ETERNAL INVESTMENTS? WHAT ARE WAYS IN WHICH YOU CAN MAKE ETERNAL INVESTMENTS NOW AND IN THE FUTURE?***