

Name: .....



## SESSION 1

# James Overview

### PRIVATE STUDY (9.30-10.30am)

1. Read through the book of *James* (- out loud?). As you read, mark the text (using different colour pens & highlighters if you have them) with underlinings, lines to connect phrases, symbols like these:
  - ! = surprise
  - ? = don't understand
  - \* = seems important ... etc
2. Divide the book into (no more than eight) sections, and give each section a short sentence title that describes the contents.
3. Make a list of all the imperatives (ie where James tells his readers to do something specific).
4. What has struck you as the two or three main recurring themes? Trace each theme through the book by jotting down some references.

### GROUP DISCUSSION (10.30-11.00am)

5. What have you identified as the two or three main themes of *James*?
6. Why do you think James wrote this letter?

## The problem of double-mindedness

How to wander ...

Double-mindedness (8) is living like a Christian, and like a non-Christian ...

and it's dangerously unstable.

So ...

- be single-minded about worries (2-4)
  
- be single-minded about wisdom (5-8)
  
- be single-minded about wealth (9-11)

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Something about the birds and bees (13-15, 17-18)

Don't be deceived



SESSION 3 / James 1:26-2:26

## An example of double-mindedness

The issue: 'do not have the faith ... with partiality' (2:1-4)  
because this is being double-minded

2:5-11 explains why this is a problem:

You're not following through on your belief (ie your faith is not 'completed' [22])

(1) Christian teaching on rich and poor (5-7)

(2) Christian teaching on the law and judgment (8-11)

Conclusion: live out what Christians believe (12-13)

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The issue: someone with faith who does not show mercy (14)

What kind of faith saves? (14-18)

(1) not the kind of faith demons have (19)

(2) but the faith of Abraham (21-24) who lived out what he believed

(3) and the faith of Rahab (25-26) who lived out what she believed



## SESSION 3

### GROUP DISCUSSION (James 1:26-2:26)

1. Are there things from the talk that you'd like to chat about now?
2. Explore some of the many ways in which we 'show partiality' in today's Christian subculture. In what ways do you think that this is a good example of how Christians today are double-minded?
3. How can we help each other (- especially in a City environment) to believe that being 'rich in faith' is far more significant than being 'rich'?!?
4. Imagine someone here this weekend who decides (in response) that they will volunteer at a night shelter for the homeless. To what extent do you think that's a good application of James 2?

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### GROUP PRAYER TIME

Pray in some of what we've been learning today.

Sometimes James chapter 2 is taught as if Christians need to do two things: (a) 'have faith' and (b) 'do works' ... and you don't really have (a) unless you are also doing (b). But we've seen that James' concern is rather different: he wants our Christian conviction to work itself into every part of our thinking and behaviour (otherwise we're being double-minded). In either case, 'works' matter. But we're seeing why they matter: they reveal our single-mindedness.

Pray particularly for that kind of genuine, whole-hearted faith.

SESSION 4 / James 3:1-4:10

## Double-mindedness exposed

The headline: 'not many teachers' (3:1)

The reason?

(1) your tongue shows your double-mindedness (3:2-12)

So who is to be a teacher?

(2) the humble teacher shows wisdom from above (13-16)

Continuing from chapter 3 ...

(1) ... and double-mindedness is adultery (4:1-5)

(2) ... so humble yourself before the Lord (4:6-10)

Three conclusions:

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## Remain steadfast

Remain steadfast ...

(5:7-11)

like a farmer

like the prophets

like Job

... because the Lord and Judge is coming

What does that look like?

- don't speak badly of a brother (4:11-12)
- ... you're not the judge  
don't presume in planning your life (4:13-17)
- ... you don't know tomorrow  
don't pursue wealth / oppress the righteous (5:1-6)
- ... you will face the oppressed's Lord  
don't 'swear' (5:12) but instead, let your word be your bond

... you don't want to fall under condemnation

So, facing the suffering/trials of 1:2, remain steadfast

And this is why 'saving' is so important (5:13-20):  
saving a wandering 'anyone' will mean that they 'remain steadfast' too!  
So, 'do an Elijah' to bring back a wandering sinner

**Notes page**

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