



LET YOUR FAITH SINK IN DEEP.  
JAMES 4:17-5:20

## James Chapter 5

LETTER  
OUTLINE

FAITH & TEMPTATIONS 1:1-27  
FAITH AT WORK 2:1-5:6  
FAITH'S REWARDS 5:7-20

CHAPTER  
OUTLINE

DESPERATELY GIVE 4:17-5:6  
DILIGENTLY SHOW PATIENCE 5:7-12  
DELIBERATELY PRAY 5:13-18  
REMEMBER! GENUINE FAITH WORKS 5:19-20

### Where we're going with it:

*In this last Chapter James uses some of the strongest and most vivid language yet. Three sections and ideas seem somewhat intuitive (instructions to the rich, patience in suffering and prayer's place in all this). Bookended with two powerful thoughts, 4:17 the sins of omission and 5:19-20 a reminder of how high the stakes are and how faith can make a difference. We're going to dip our toes in these three ideas and let discussion fall where you or students want to walk. In the end, James does continue to hold out his initial and core thought, genuine faith is alive and at work!*

### Things to chew on...

1. Chapters 4 and 5 of James pivots on verse 4:17, how does this stretch or modify how you've defined sin in your own head? Is it surprising or not, why?
2. In chapter 5, verses 1-6, what charge (or just words) do you find most troubling? Is there something in your life that it could be describing?
3. Does James's picture/illustration of a farmer (v. 7) to describe patience make sense to you? Why does it work? What is confusing for you?
4. James brings up the idea of grumbling (v. 9), what might it have to do with patience or lack of?
5. What are some things James suggest prayer can be a good and active next step for (vv.16)?
6. How does v. 17 help encourage us to live out the previous ideas about prayer?
7. James ends his book pretty abruptly, if you had to create a heading or title for these two verses in your bible, what would it be?
8. What is one thing this letter taught you, stirred up or challenged you with?

*(Some ideas for application and connecting scriptures on the back.)*

# Possible applications...

**Read:** *Isaiah 58. This chapter bears a lot of similarities to the book of James. People were religious, proud of their frequent fasting. But God challenges them to a new kind of devotion—caring for the needy, treating workers fairly, etc. Then that will open up a whole new kind of relationship with God.*

**Prayer of Confession and Commitment:** *Talk with God honestly and humbly about the role of money and possessions in your life.*

**Listening:** *Find out someone else's story. People become resilient through perseverance. When someone is going through a terrible time of suffering, it may seem like it's never going to end and hopelessness takes over. Job persevered, and so have many, many people. Go to someone in your family, your church, or someone else you know who has come through suffering. Ask to hear that person's story.*

**Gut-Level Prayer:** *Sometimes when you're suffering, praying can be difficult. Remember that prayer is open and honest communication with God. Take Job's example and let God know just how miserable you are, just how angry, sad, scared, or confused you may be. Tell Him exactly how you feel. You aren't fooling Him by trying to keep a secret from Him.*

**Study Elijah:** *The character of Elijah is fascinating. Pick the story up in 1 Kings 17, and follow him until he gets swept up to heaven in 2 Kings 2. Do a name search to find other Bible passages that mention Elijah. Consider how his "passions" made him such an effective pray-er.*

19 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Mt. 6:19-21)

## On God being patient or long of nose

And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness... Exodus 34:6

He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever... Psalm 103:9

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. (2 Peter 3:9)

# Connecting Scriptures...

Jesus' words on oaths...

34 But I tell you, do not swear an oath at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne; 35 or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. 36 And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. 37 All you need to say is simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one. (Mt 5:34-37)

"Jeremiah is one example of someone who endured mistreatment with patience. He was put in the stocks (Jeremiah 20:2), thrown into prison (Jeremiah 32:2), and lowered into miry dungeon (Jeremiah 28:6). Yet he persisted in his ministry." (Guzik on James 5)

The idea of sins being *covered* comes up in the wisdom writings: Psalms 32:1 and 85:2, Proverbs 10:12