

QUESTIONS TO PONDER—What did you find most interesting, difficult, or encouraging this week?

1. Sunday, Jan. 15; James 4:1-4; Quarreling, Coveting, and Worldliness. With whom do you or I fight or quarrel (1a)? What is the reason for those arguments? Why does fighting with someone move the conversation into the realm of sin (1b)? How is the person in verse 2 trying to solve a problem? What does James suggest that person do instead (2b)? Why are some prayers not answered (3)? How often do you or I pray “selfish” prayers? What are the characteristics of “adulterous people”? Do you or I have any of them? What is “friendship with the world”? Why does God want us to rid ourselves of worldliness (4b)? **Personal Application:** Write a few sentences about your own contentiousness, covetousness, or selfishness. How may the Lord work in our hearts to eliminate these sins? How may we commit to Godly allegiance and say goodbye to worldliness?

2. Monday, Jan. 16; James 4:5-10; Repentance Over Sin/Double-Mindedness. Read your Bible notes regarding verse 5 if you have them. Read Exodus 20:15 regarding the scripture to which James may be referring. Why does God jealously want our faith to Him alone? What is your interpretation of the phrase “the spirit He has caused to dwell in us” (5)? What gift does God give to us (6a)? Why do we need this gift (4)? With what attitude alone are we able to receive this gift (6b)? Read this scripture in Proverbs 3:34. How do we humbly recommit to God (7a) and turn our backs to the world (7b)? What is the cure for sin (8-10)? List the steps of repentance as you or I practice it. Why must you or I draw near to God first (8a)? What is the result? Why is it necessary to mourn over our sin (9)? How long does this phase of repentance have to last and why? How does verse 10 show that after repentance comes restoration? Do you or I always feel restored after true repentance? Why is that important? **Personal Application:** Write about double-mindedness, grace, repentance, and/or restoration. What is God revealing to you?

3. Tuesday, Jan. 17; James 4:11-17; Judging Others and Living in the Moment. Judging Others: What does James warn us against (11)? Read Exodus 20:16 for the broken commandment (old law) to which he refers. What is the new law in Christ Jesus? (**Romans 13: ¹⁰ Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.**) Rewrite verse 12 in your own words. How does human judgment interfere with God, who sees and knows the inner hearts of those we judge? **Living in the Moment:** Is there anything wrong with making future plans (13)? What must we keep in mind as we make plans (14)? Could you or I incorporate verse 15 into our lives and how would it make a difference? Consider boasting and arrogance in your life or mine—how may the Lord help us to eliminate it (16)? What is the result of not obeying something the Lord has told us to do (17)? Why is obedience to God important? **Personal Application:** Write about how the Lord has spoken to you or me today regarding judging others or living in the moment.

4. Wednesday, Jan. 18; James 5:1-6; Warnings to Non-Believing rich Oppressors. [Read your Bible notes if you have them. The notes say that these rich (along with those in verses 2:2, 6) are not believers.] What is coming for these rich people (1)? What is going to happen to their various forms of wealth (2-3)? What verses from Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount do verses 2-3 mirror? (**Matt. 6:19-20 ¹⁹ “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal.”**) How could these same people receive a blessing from God instead of a curse? What other detestable act do these people do (4)? Are you or I generous when paying another for services rendered to us? For what other practice does James call them out (5)? How does self-indulgence play a role in your life or mine? When do you or I cross the line from enjoying a treat to being self-indulgent? What is the “last straw” (6)? How does verse 6 bring to mind the daily tragedies that are occurring in our country and world? **Personal Application:** Write a prayer to God about your own wealth, treasures in heaven, generosity, miserliness, or self-indulgence. Or reflect with Him on the murder of innocents.

5. Thursday, Jan. 19; James 5:7-11; My Patience, His Mercy. What two traits does James urge his readers to employ (7-8)? How do the traits of patience and standing firm show up in your life or mine? To what bad habit are we to say “bye-bye” (9)? How often do you or I grumble against other people? Why is that unacceptable behavior? After whom should we model ourselves and why (10)? Reflect on the perseverance of Job (11). How have you persevered in trials? How has the Lord shown you compassion and mercy (11b)? Read Lamentations 3:19-26.

(Lam. 3: ²¹ This I recall to my mind, therefore I have hope.²² The Lord's mercies indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail.²³ They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.) **Personal Application:** Write about patience, standing firm, grumbling, patience in suffering, perseverance, and/or God's great faithfulness, compassion and mercy to you.

6. Friday, Jan. 20; James 5:12—16; On Becoming a Prayer Warrior. Regarding verse 12, why are we not to swear, make oaths or promises in casual conversations? What did our Lord Jesus Christ say about this topic? (*Matt. 5: ³³ "Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not break your oath, but fulfill to the Lord the vows you have made.' 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."*) Why is a simple yes or no good enough for you or me? Upon Whom should our thoughts concentrate in every situation of life (13-14)? How are you or I progressing in "Practicing the Presence of God" (a book written by Brother Lawrence) in every circumstance? Have you or I ever been anointed in oil in sickness (14-15)? Would you or I consider it? Would the practice always result in healing? What is the most important reason in doing so? Why should I let anyone else know about my sins (16)? How does this practice promote healing? As "righteousness-seeking people," why should you or I pray (16b)? Who in your life or mine needs our powerful and effective prayers? Will you and I commit to pray? **Personal Application:** Converse with God about your own good word and your "prayerful-practicing-His-presence" lifestyle. For whom does God want you to pray powerful and effective prayers?

7. Saturday, Jan. 21; James 5:17-20; Brought Back to the Fold. How was Elijah an effective and powerful prayer warrior (17-18)? What prayer of yours or mine have you seen answered? Share your tips on effective and powerful praying. Have you or I ever wandered from the Truth (19a)? Who helped to bring you back to the Lord? Have you or I properly thanked God for using that person? Are you or I still able to thank that person? Are you or I being used right now to bring a wanderer back to the fold? How may you or I use the teachings we have learned in James to do this important assignment effectively? What is the outcome (20)? **Personal Application:** Reflect on turning back to God yourself and/or being used by God to help turn someone back to Him. How is this like Jesus' teaching on the Lost Sheep? (*Luke 15:4-7 ⁴ "Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn't he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? ⁵ And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders ⁶ and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.' ⁷ I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent."*)

Cindy Oury. January 13, 2017.