

Faith In Motion

A Study in the Book of James

Week 1: Life in Motion

01. INTRODUCTION

Hello there, my name is _____ and I want to welcome you to _____ Church. I am so excited to kick off our New Series **FAITH IN MOTION**. Together we are going to begin a study through the New Testament Book of James. I want to welcome everyone who's joining us this week here locally at one of our physical locations or just streaming us online. We're glad you're here.

02. TRANSITION TO MESSAGE

The Book of James is filled with many practical, straightforward principles and provides a **New Testament version of the book of Proverbs**.

Transition: Over the next 6 weeks we will be studying through the entire book of James, straight through.

Lets jump right in: Some CONTEXT:

In the New Testament we see a number of **people named James**.

- **James, the brother of John**, is probably the most well known of these. This James was also one of the original disciples and is one of Jesus' inner core.
- The author of the book of James is the **half-brother of Jesus**. This is interesting... when Jesus was performing His miracles and preaching the Good News, His own half-brother James was not following Him. He was not among the Twelve Disciples.
 - The Scriptures indicate in **Mark 3**, when Jesus' family learned He was presenting Himself as the Messiah they thought Jesus was "...out of his mind."

But something powerful happened with Jesus' brother, James.

After Jesus was crucified, buried, and rose from the dead He appeared to more than 500 people.

- In **1 Corinthians 15**, we see one of the specific people to whom Jesus appeared was his half-brother, James. *This encounter with Jesus changed James' life forever.* Immediately James believed. Immediately he had real, genuine faith in Jesus Christ.

James, the son of Zebedee and brother of John, was the first pastor of the Jerusalem Church. In 44AD the Sanhedrin murdered John's brother, James.

- After the martyr of this first James, James, the half-brother of Jesus and author of this book, became the **second pastor** of the Jerusalem church.
- Eventually the Sanhedrin got around to this James as well. In 62AD, the Sanhedrin murdered James, the half-brother of Jesus.

Now, the book of James was written in approximately 49AD and was penned to **encourage Believers** who were scattered geographically and drifting spiritually.

- They found themselves buried in all kinds of struggles – unbridled speech, unhealthy attitudes, doubt, strife, carnality, and rootless in their faith.

The Big Idea Book of James: *A genuine relationship with Jesus always results in a life of action.*

Balancing right belief with right behavior. Or that your faith produces results. It is alive and should be moving.

Personal: When I became a Believer, I learned quickly that Christianity is much **more than just “being forgiven,”** God began to change me from the inside out. It didn’t happen overnight. It took a lot of time. Time with God and time with His People. *But I began to see my beliefs change and they changed my behavior.* This is what the book of James is all about.

BIG IDEA TODAY

Your faith will be tested, not by God but He will use these trials. Why? God wants to do something in you before he can do something through you.

03. MESSAGE

So, today I’m going to give you **Four Principles for a Life In Motion:** from *James, chapter 1.*

1. A Life in Motion starts with an authentic faith.

Let’s look at **James 1:1:** *James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

- Notice what James didn’t say. He didn’t say, “*James, senior pastor of 1st Church of Jerusalem,*” because faith is not about who you are or the position you’ve attained.
- Notice he didn’t say, “*James, associate of the Apostles,*” because faith is not about the people you know.
- James calls himself a servant of God and of Jesus, because **Real faith is about who you belong to.**

A Life In Motion - begins when you **surrender** your life to Jesus and receive Him as Savior and Lord.

Romans 10:9 (NLT) says: *If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*

- You will never be all that God created you to be without a relationship with God. Period.

2. A Life in Motion is tested.

James 1:2 encourages us: *My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials.*

To most people this verse probably makes no sense at all. Your faith will be tested, not by God but He will use these trials. Why? *God wants to do something in you before he can do something through you.*

Think about some of the heroes of history: Churchill, Lincoln, and Mother Theresa— these three were all immensely influential. But did you know they had a number of **things in common**? They all had a faith in Jesus Christ... and... they all battled deep depression and huge issues!

What's the point here? It's your **attitude** when you're going through the trials. Trials mature and develop you. You *can* overcome. We have to set our attitude. **We have to choose a positive attitude. To count it all joy when not if we encounter trials.**

3. A Life in Motion requires patience.

James 1:3 says: *knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.*

James is encouraging these believers to walk in patience. He's saying, *"An extraordinary life doesn't happen overnight."*

Personal Illustration: Think about your physical body. You don't go into the gym one time and walk out looking like **Mister or Miss Universe**. *My personal journey in the gym, back surgeries, hopelessness.* Nearly 25 weeks going strong!

- **In the same way, spiritually** as you and I persevere despite the trials, it produces an inner strength and patience. We develop a staying power, a fortitude by being tested and prevailing.
- *The more tests we pass, the stronger we become.* We cannot grow without the tests.

Delays will come. Discouragement will come. Embrace the place where you are. Don't go out and try and make something happen on your own.

Remember this, **God's building character** and patience in you. **James 1:4** goes on to say: **But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.**

- The word for perfect in verse 4 doesn't speak of perfection, but **maturity**. The goal is having the character of Christ.

This brings us to our fourth and final principle.

04. CLOSING & PRAYER

4. A Life in Motion requires wisdom.

James 1:5 says: **If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.**

The question isn't – will God give you wisdom? The question is – will you ask? Will you respond in faith to what He says?

James 1:6-8 says: **But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷ For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸ he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.**

This passage speaks a lot to the **tossing around of the waves** – just being thrown by the impulse of the wind, with no regularity. **James is saying, the doubter is out of control and is on a wild ride to nowhere.**

Personal: I got seasick on our honeymoon, we went on a carnival cruise. We stopped in Cozumel and went snorkeling. It was horrible. Up, then down, the up again. When we got back on solid ground, I literally wanted to kiss it. When you're really seasick, nothing else matters. Your head is swirling. Your stomach is rumbling. It's horrible. You totally lose all bearing for life.

- **The person James is speaking of is a Christian.** He has received eternal life. The Holy Spirit dwells within him. But his doubting & unstable, life means he will not get wisdom to help handle his troubles. Tragically, he will not allow God to grow and mature his character through the trials.

Is God demanding perfect faith? No. Is He saying that we never waver? I don't think so. If our faith had to be perfect, no one would ever receive anything. We all experience doubt.

What James is saying is – **"boldly ask for God's wisdom in faith!"** Believe you will receive it. He has the pitcher out ready to pour His perspective, His practical understanding on you. We just need to ask.

Let's Pray.