

**GOSPEL** of *Grace*  
FELLOWSHIP

**James**

**Jesus Christ, Our Pattern**

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**F - L - I - G - H - T**

**F** – The author of this book is identified as “James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.” The NT mentions several people named James, but the general consensus is that this work was written by James the half-brother of Jesus (Mark 6:2-3), who by Acts 15 was in charge of the church in Jerusalem.

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**F - L - I - G - H - T**

**F** – Because James did not mention the destruction of Jerusalem and used the Greek term that translates to *synagogue* instead of *church*, it’s believed that the book of James is one of the earliest books in the NT, dated between AD 44 and 50 – within 15 years or so of Jesus’ resurrection.

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**F - L - I - G - H - T**

**L** – The book of James is distinct from most of the other NT epistles because of its unmistakably Jewish nature – addressed to the “*twelve tribes*” and emphasizing faith in action. True Christianity is characterized by good deeds and a faith that works. Genuine faith, James argued, must and will be accompanied by a consistent lifestyle; it involves putting your faith where your hands and feet are.

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**F - L - I - G - H - T**

**L** – Some people argue that there’s a contradiction between James’ emphasis on works (2:24) and Paul’s emphasis on faith (Rom. 3:28; Eph. 2:8-9). But we must keep in mind that each author had a very different audience: James wrote to counter those who said that a Christian’s conduct is irrelevant to salvation, and Paul was addressing legalists who said you needed works in order to be saved.

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**F - L - I - G - H - T**

**I** – Mature Christians Are Patient in Trials (1)  
Mature Christians Practice the Truth (2)  
Mature Christians Control the Tongue (3)  
Mature Christians Are Poor in Spirit (4)  
Mature Christians Persevere in Trials (5)

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**F-L-I-G-H-T**

**G** – Although Jesus is only mentioned a couple of times in the book of James, he is at the center of everything James is driving toward. Because we have such a great salvation through Jesus, we have access to what we need to live out our faith: the wisdom of God. *“If any of you lacks wisdom,”* James wrote, *“let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him”* (1:5).

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**F-L-I-G-H-T**

**G** – This is especially true when we are going through hardship—and the book of James certainly doesn’t shy away from talking about that. In a trial, we tend to pray for deliverance rather than wisdom.

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**F-L-I-G-H-T**

**G** – For the mature Christian, however, hardship ought to be embraced as an opportunity to learn, grow, and move forward in one’s walk with God. Instead of asking, “Lord, how can I get out of this?” develop an attitude that says, “Lord, what can I get out of this.”

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**F-L-I-G-H-T**

**G** – Having faith doesn’t mean that you always understand what God is doing or allowing in your life, but it does mean having confidence in his ability and then obeying whatever he tells you to do. Look at what Jesus did in his darkest hour in the Garden of Gethsemane: he first prayed for deliverance, then he prayed for God’s will to be done no matter what. Then he went and did what was necessary (Matt. 26:36-46).

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**F-L-I-G-H-T**

**H** – James had an unusual life. Growing up in the home of Joseph and Mary and living with his older half-brother Jesus must have been quite an experience! James had the rare opportunity to watch Jesus in all sorts of life situations, and in the end, he humbled himself and declared that he was Jesus’ bondservant (1:1).

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**F-L-I-G-H-T**

**H** – Initially, Jesus’ brothers – including James – didn’t believe in him (John 7:5). But after the resurrection, James’ unbelief turned to unwavering belief (1 Cor. 15:3-7). James became a leader in the early church (Acts 15) and headed up the Jerusalem council in AD 50. He was executed for his faith in AD 62.

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**F - L - I - G - H - T**

**T – Embrace trials.** Two main factors drive Christian maturity: trials and temptations. We don't like either one, but we need both – the great paradox being that patience helps you endure trials but is also produced by trials. Growth as a believer cannot be achieved while being content to stay in safe waters.

**F - L - I - G - H - T**

**T – Be God's conduit of love and blessing.** James reminded us to fulfill the "royal law" of Scripture: "*You shall love your neighbor as yourself*" (2:8). Because God has poured his love and his spirit into our hearts through Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:5), no one in our circle of influence should be starved for love, care, or consideration.

**F - L - I - G - H - T**

**T – Loose lips sink ships.** Gossip and careless speech can sink not just individual brothers and sisters, but entire churches. That's why James said mature Christians will control their tongue, and "*the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace*" (3:18).

**F - L - I - G - H - T**

**T – Growth hinges on practice.** Being born again is just the beginning of your spiritual life. It has little to do with actual age, but is an ongoing process. Becoming mature in your faith requires patience, perseverance, and plenty of growing pains. James said that spiritual growth happens when you live what you believe, acting on the Word of God as you press on and keep walking in faith (1:22).