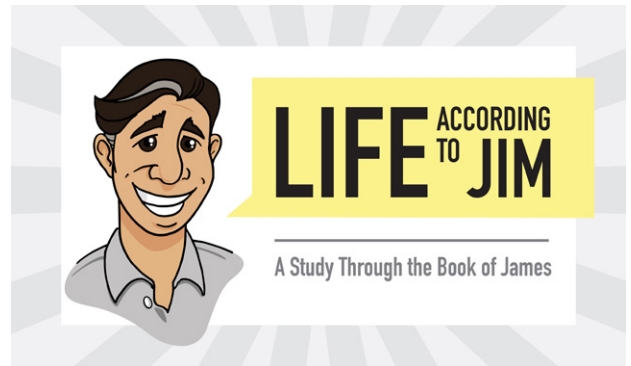


Discipleship Notes / Daily Reading Plan

Week 1 - Good News, Bad News

Sermon Series: Life According To Jim

Pastor - Mark Saunders



Good News, Bad News

A. BACKGROUND:

James, the half brother of Jesus, writes his letter to encourage first century believers to live life with a faith that works. With his first few paragraphs he unpacks God's purposes in allowing His children to experience all kinds of trials, and then points us to the power of faith-filled prayer as our guide through difficult times. When life brings trouble, a proper perspective and an unflagging perseverance are necessary for us to glean the benefits God has for us in it. God often chooses a trial as His classroom, knowing we are most likely to learn when life forces us to rely on Him.

DAY 1: READ JAMES 1:1-4

1. What trials or troubles have you been going through lately?
2. How are you handling those trials or troubles?
3. What is the value of persevering in your faith?
4. How is it possible to be joyful, when life seems to be anything but joyful?
5. In light of James' description of mature faith, would you consider your faith to be mature? Explain your answer.

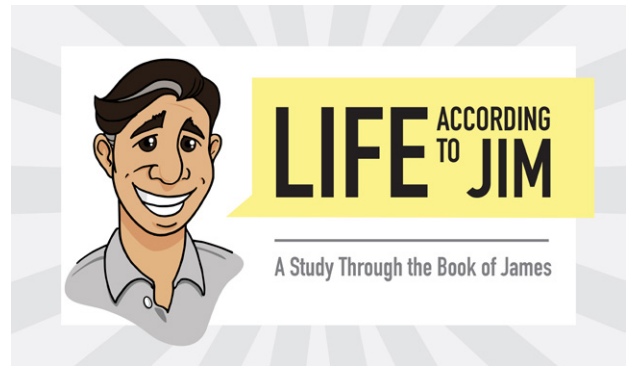
PRAY: Father, please fill me with Your joy, even as I struggle through difficult times and situations in my life. Thank You, Lord, for being my Redeemer, and always there to help me persevere in my faith. Amen.

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DAY 2: READ JAMES 1:5-8

1. Define the word “wisdom”. In light of that definition, what are the areas of your life you would say are wise and/or unwise?
2. Who do you know that embodies the wisdom described in James? What traits do they have that cause you to see them in that way?
3. What are the specific situations in your life where you need God’s wisdom?
4. Have you asked God for wisdom in those situations? Why or why not?
5. What causes you to doubt that God will give you an answer, or that God’s answer is correct?

Pray: Father in heaven, please give me wisdom in _____ (personal situation), and help me to be wise in all areas of my life. I pray You will help me grow steadfast and confident in Your Word; to trust You in all things, and never to be double-minded in my thinking. Amen.

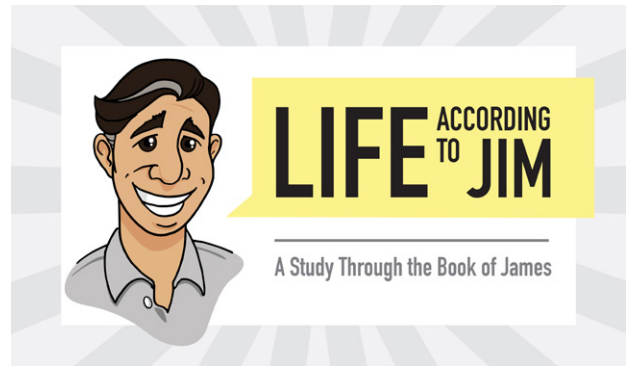
Discipleship & Life Group Study Questions
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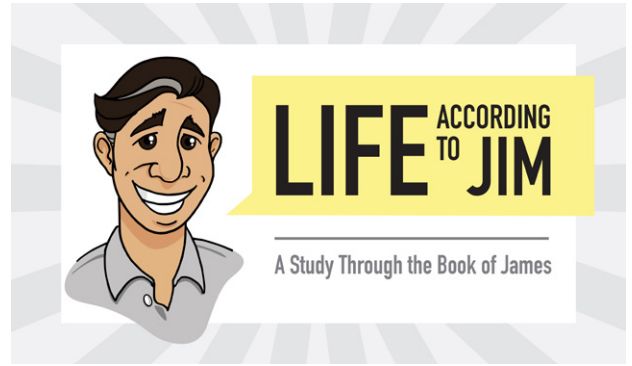
DAY 3: READ JAMES 1:9-12

1. Who are your heroes? Why?
2. In what circumstances are you tempted to prefer those who have more power, prestige, or riches?
3. How are you actively helping those less fortunate than you?
4. What changes can you make that will allow you to honor those in more humble circumstances than you?
5. How is your faith currently being tested?

Pray: Lord, please give me a heart for those in need around me. Soften my heart for those who do not know You and please use me to help reach them. Father, make me ever mindful that money and power mean nothing to You. Humble me, Lord, as I will always need You. Amen.

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DAY 4: READ MATTHEW 5:3-12.

1. How does James' teaching compare to securing God's blessing that Jesus teaches in the Sermon on the Mount?
2. In which areas are you experiencing the most spiritual growth?
3. Who is God leading you towards that can help you grow in your areas of struggle or weakness. Write the name of that person here, and make contact with them this week.
4. Who is God leading you to disciple and be a part of their spiritual growth? Write the name of that person here, and let them know you are interested in sharing with them.
5. What is the most significant life application you took away from this week's Scripture readings and how will you apply it?

Pray:

Father, teach me to live the life You have created for me and to walk in the direction You are leading. Help me to grow in my faith and please use me to help others along their own faith journey. Let Your truths sink deeply into my spirit and help me to desire and live a life that honors You, God. Amen.

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