

The letter that James wrote This page tells a bit more about the letter that James wrote

James was a young brother of Jesus and he wrote this letter about 20 years after Jesus went back to heaven. At that time James was a leader in the church in Jerusalem.

James wrote this message to the Christians in other churches at that time, and now it is a part of the Holy Bible. It tells us the way to be better Christians.

¹ I am James. I work for God and for our leader, Jesus Christ. I write this letter to all God's people that live in lots of places everywhere in the world. I hope you are all good and happy.

If you get trouble

² Listen, my friends, if you get a lot of trouble because you are Christian, don't get upset. No, you can be happy about it, because God is letting them test you to see if you believe in him properly. ³ He lets them do this to teach you to keep on trusting him all the time. ⁴ Then, after you learn that properly you will be really strong. You will not miss out on any of those things that make you a good Christian.

Ask God to help you do good

⁵ Whenever you want to properly understand what is the right thing to do, and you don't know the way to stop doing bad things, just ask God to help you. He will not growl at you. He is happy if you ask him for help like this, and he will help you and make you think properly. He

will make you think the right way so that you will not do those bad things any more. ⁶ But whenever you ask him you have to believe that he will answer you. Don't think, "Maybe he will not listen to me." No, don't think like that. Anybody that thinks like that can't stay strong. He is like a bit of dry grass – the wind just blows it around and it goes anywhere. ⁷⁻⁸ If you are like that – if you don't know whether to follow God or not, it is like you are thinking 2 ways at the same time and you will not be sure about anything. If you are like that you can't expect God to help you.

Poor people and rich people

⁹ Whenever a Christian doesn't have much money, God thinks he is important. So that Christian can be happy. ¹⁰ And somebody that has a lot of money can be happy too, if God will take it all off him later. He is like a flower growing in the bush. ¹¹ At first it looks good, but later the sun gets hot and that flower dries up, and it doesn't look good any more. Well, people with a lot of money are like that. Later on, while they are still trying to get more things they will suddenly die, and they will not think about that money any more.

Keep on believing

¹² If God lets people test you, to see if you trust him properly, don't give up trusting him. After God sees that you keep on trusting him he will make you really happy, and he will give you a good prize – you will live for ever. He promised to do that for everybody that loves him.

What makes us do wrong?

¹³ Whenever you feel you want to do something that is wrong, don't blame God and say that he is pushing you to do wrong just to try you out. No way. God never pushes

anybody to do wrong, and nobody can trick God to make him do wrong. ¹⁴⁻¹⁵ If we only think about things we want for ourselves, and we don't think about things God wants us to do, we are just tricking ourselves. We just think about whatever we want, and then we go ahead and do bad things. If we keep on doing that we will die.

God is good to us

¹⁶ Don't let anybody trick you, my friends. ¹⁷ Everything that is really good comes from God in heaven. He made the sun, moon and stars up there in the sky that give us light. They make shadows that move and change around, but God never changes at all. He always gives us good things.

¹⁸ He wanted us to be his own relatives, so he sent his true word to us. And after we believed that word it was like we were born all over again. He says we are really special, we are his very own relatives.

Listen to God and do everything he says

¹⁹ My dear friends, you have to be ready to listen to other people, and you have to stop and think before you say anything yourself. Stop and think before you get angry, too. ²⁰ If you are angry you can't do the good things that God wants you to do. ²¹ So you have to stop doing everything that is dirty and wrong. You have to be good and gentle with people. You have to listen to that word from God which he put right inside you. That word will save you.

²² And don't just listen to that word from God but you have to do everything it says too. If you don't do the things it says you will just trick yourself. ²³⁻²⁴ Don't be like a man that looks at his face in a mirror but then he just walks away and he forgets about it. He doesn't do

anything to make himself look any better. Well, if you hear God's word but don't do the things it says you are just like that man, because you forget that word and you don't do anything to make yourself any better. ²⁵ Don't be like that. You have to listen to God's word and keep thinking about it. Don't forget it, but do everything it says. That word will make you free so that you will do everything God wants. And God will make you really happy whenever you do the things he wants you to do.

²⁶ You might go to church and think you are pretty good, but if you can't stop yourself from saying bad things, you are really just tricking yourself, and going to church for nothing. ²⁷ God wants you to look after people that need help. He wants you to look after people that have no money to buy food, like kids that have no father or mother, or women whose husbands have died. If you do that kind of thing God will be happy with you. But if you are like the people in this world and do bad things to just look after yourself God will not be happy with you.

2

Be good to all kinds of people

¹ Listen, my friends. Jesus Christ is our really great leader, so if you really believe in him you will be good to everybody and treat them all the same way. ² Suppose one man comes to your church service wearing really pretty clothes and gold rings on his fingers, and another poor man comes wearing old rubbish clothes. ³⁻⁴ Maybe you look at the man with pretty clothes and think to yourself, "He has got a lot of money." So you are good to him and say to him, "Here is a really good seat for you." But you are rough on the poor man and say to him, "You stand over there," or, "You can sit on the ground." If you are like that

you make yourself like a bad judge. You are wrong if you do that. Don't think that way about people. You have to be good to everybody whether they have money or not.

⁵ Listen to me, my friends. God picks out poor people and he gets them to properly trust him. He promises to take them into his family. He promises this to everybody that loves him. He will give them their own place in his good country, in heaven. In the end those poor people will be really rich. ⁶ So you are wrong if you rubbish poor people. Just think now. Who is rough on you? What people take you to court? Do poor people do that, or rich people? Rich people do it. ⁷ And they talk against Jesus Christ. You belong to Jesus Christ, but they rubbish him.

⁸ This is a really important law in God's book. It says, "Love other people just like you love yourself." If you do that, you are doing good. ⁹ But if you are good to some people but rough on other people, you are doing bad. You are not following that law. ¹⁰ Now think about God's laws. If you don't follow all of God's laws you are guilty. Suppose one man does everything in those laws except that he breaks one law, that man is guilty. Suppose another man breaks all those laws, he is guilty too. They are both guilty. ¹¹ It is like this. One of God's laws is, "Don't sleep with anyone that is not your wife or your husband, and do what married people do together." And another law is, "Don't kill anybody dead." Suppose you didn't sleep with the wrong person, but you did kill somebody dead, you are guilty anyway, because you didn't follow all of God's laws.

¹² God will judge us and he will use the law that tells us to love other people. So before you say anything and before you do anything you have to think about that law from God. That is the law that makes us free so that we

can do whatever is right. ¹³ Later on God will judge you and he will not be sorry for you if you were not sorry for other people. But if you are sorry for them and good to them, God will be sorry for you and good to you. God can be good to people that he judges.

Believe the right way and do the right things

¹⁴ My friends, it is no good for you to say that you believe in Jesus Christ if you don't do the things he wants you to do. If you reckon you believe, but you don't do the things he wants, you can't think that God will save you.

¹⁵ If there is another Christian that is hungry and needs food, or cold and needs some clothes, ¹⁶ you can't just talk and give them nothing. You can't just say, "Don't worry. I hope you get something to eat and I hope you get some clothes to wear." If you don't do anything to help them, you do no good at all. ¹⁷ So if you reckon that you believe in Jesus Christ, but you don't do the good things that he wants you to do, I reckon your talk isn't true. It is useless. It will get you nowhere.

¹⁸ Maybe you reckon, "Some people can believe in Jesus and other people can do the good things that Jesus says to do." I answer like this, "You can't show me that you believe in Jesus if you don't do the things he says. But whenever I do the good things he tells me to do I show you that I do believe in him." ¹⁹ You reckon you believe that there is only one God, and you are thinking just the same way as the devils think. They believe that there is only one God, and if they think about him they get really frightened of him. They get so frightened that they shake.

²⁰⁻²³ It is not good to say that you believe in Jesus if you don't do the things he says. If you are so stupid that you don't agree with me, just think about the story

of Abraham, our first grand-father. God told Abraham to give him his son Isaac. To do that Abraham had to kill Isaac and burn his body on a table made of stones. Abraham believed that somehow God will make it end up all right, so he started to do that hard thing that God said. He started to kill Isaac. But just then God told him to stop. God's book says,

“Abraham believed God, and so God said that he was a really good man.”

In another place it says that Abraham not only believed God but he also did that hard thing God told him to do, so Abraham was a friend of God. ²⁴ So from that story we learn that God will say that we are alright only if we believe him so much that we do whatever he says.

²⁵ And think about that story about Rahab. She was a bad woman that used to sleep around with any man that paid her money. But one day Israel's enemies were chasing 2 Israeli men and those 2 asked Rahab to help them. She hid in her house until their enemies went past, and then she told them which way to run to get away. She helped those 2 men, so God was happy with her. Later on, while a lot of Israeli soldiers attacked that town, God saved her and those soldiers didn't kill her.

²⁶ It is like this. If a man's body doesn't breathe it is no good. He is dead. In the same way, if you say you believe in Jesus but you don't do the things God wants you to do, you are no good as a Christian. It is like you are dead.

3

Teachers need to be careful and teach properly

¹⁻² My friends, don't all of you try to become teachers of God's word. Only the right ones can do that. It is like this, all of us make mistakes and we get trouble from those

mistakes. But if we teach people, and we make a mistake so that we teach them something that is wrong, we will get really big trouble from that. It is hard for us to control our tongues so that we say everything properly. If you can control your tongue you are pretty good, and you can control your whole body.

³ Think about the people that ride horses. They put a little bit of steel in the horse's mouth and they tie reins to it, then they use that bit of steel to turn the whole horse around and steer it wherever they want it to go.

⁴ Think too about ships. They are like that too. A ship is very big, but the captain can use the little rudder at the back to steer it around. Even if strong winds want to blow it one way the captain can steer it another way using that little rudder. ⁵ Well, these are pictures of our tongues. They are only little, like that bit of steel and that little rudder. But our tongues can do a lot of damage if we use them to talk up big and say that we are really good. Think about fire. A very little spark can start a fire that can burn up a lot of bush. ⁶ In the same way each of us has a little tongue, and it is like a little spark of fire inside us. It can say really bad things, and tell lies and that can make the rest of our body bad too. It can make everything in our lives go wrong, like a spark of fire can make a big bushfire. The devil in hell makes us say those bad things. It is like he uses our tongues to start that fire and it grows like a bushfire and gets us into a lot of trouble. ⁷ People can control all kinds of wild animals and birds and snakes and fish. They can make them quiet and train them to do whatever their boss wants them to do. ⁸ But nobody can control his own tongue properly. It is always saying bad things and hurting people, like it has poison in it just like a cheeky snake.

⁹⁻¹² Sometimes we use our tongue to tell God that he is good, and sometimes we use it to swear at people. And, remember, God made people to be like himself. So both good things and bad things come out of our mouths. That's not right. Do you ever find fresh water and salt water coming from the same waterhole? No, it is never like that. And you never find 2 sorts of fruit on one tree. So our mouths shouldn't say 2 sorts of things. We shouldn't say good things and bad things with the same mouth.

Think God's way, not the devil's way

¹³ Do you reckon you can think good and you know if something is right or wrong? If you do, you have to show everybody that you think properly by quietly doing good things for other people. You are thinking properly if you do those good things but don't tell anybody about it. ¹⁴⁻¹⁵ But if you only think about things that are good for yourself, and if you are jealous of other people and hate other people, you are not thinking God's way. That is the devil's way. You can't hide it by telling lies about yourself and saying that you are really good. ¹⁶ If people are jealous of each other and if they only do things to make themselves happy and if they don't think about anyone else, soon they will start fighting each other, and they will get into all kinds of trouble.

¹⁷ Whenever we think God's way we are like this.

- We keep away from doing anything bad.
- We want to make other people happy and help them to be friends with each other.
- We are gentle all the time and let other people have their way.
- We are good to people and do things to help them.

- We are fair to everybody. We don't treat some people good and other people like rubbish.
- We don't try to pretend that we are better than we really are.

¹⁸ Whenever somebody teaches people to live the right way like that, those other people stop fighting each other and start to be good to each other.

4

Let God be your boss, not the devil

¹ Why do you always fight and argue with each other? I'll tell you why. It is because you only think about things that you want for yourself, to make yourself happy, and you don't care about anyone else. So you fight everyone else to get the things you want. ² You think you really want something a lot, and if you can't get it you argue and fight for it. You try to work out ways to trick people, or maybe even kill people, just to get something you want. You don't ask God for it so you don't get it. ³ And even if you do ask God he doesn't listen to you. He knows that you are just thinking about yourself. He knows you just want to make yourself happy and you don't care about anybody else, so he doesn't give you that thing you want.

⁴ If you are like this it shows that you left God. You stopped following him and joined the other people in the world that hate God. They are God's enemies. So if you join up with people like that you make yourself God's enemy. You ran away from God. You are just like a woman that leaves her husband and runs away with another man.

⁵ God's book says that he put his Holy Spirit in us, and his spirit gets really upset if we leave him and follow some other way. You have to understand that message. ⁶ And

remember that God is really good and kind to us. His book says,

“God is against people that think they are great,
But he is good and kind to people that know they are not great.”

⁷ So listen to God, follow him and do whatever he says. Whenever the devil tries to get you to go wrong just tell him to shut up and don't listen to him, then he will run away from you. ⁸ Whenever you trust God more it is like you get closer to him, and if you do that he will come close to you and help you. You have to stop doing bad things. Don't even think about doing bad things. Don't think that maybe you will go the right way, or maybe the wrong way. No, forget the wrong way and just go the right way. ⁹ Stop laughing about the bad things you did. Cry about them instead. You did wrong, so be sad, not happy. ¹⁰ Tell God that you are sorry. Tell him you are weak and need him to help you. If you do that he will say that you are important, and he will make you strong.

Don't make yourself the judge of other people

¹¹ My friends, don't say bad things about each other or rubbish each other. If you rubbish other people, it is like you reckon you are their judge. But God's law says that you have to love other people, so you are really saying that God's law is wrong. Hey. You are not a judge. You can't say that God's law is wrong. Your job is to do whatever God's law says. ¹² God made his law and he is the only judge. He is the only one that can blame anybody. He can save somebody, or he can kill somebody. But you can't make yourself a judge. You are not God.

Don't talk up big about something you want to do

¹³ Listen. Some of you talk like this, you say, “Tomorrow we will go to that town over there and we will buy things for a little bit of money and then sell them for a lot of money. We will keep doing that for a year. In that way we will get plenty of money to keep for ourselves.” ¹⁴ You talk like that saying, “Tomorrow,” but you don’t know what will happen tomorrow. Will you still be alive tomorrow? Your life is like a puff of smoke, it doesn’t last long. You are alive today but maybe tomorrow you will die.

¹⁵⁻¹⁶ So don’t talk up big about something you will do tomorrow, but instead you have to talk like this, “If God wants us to we will keep on living and we will go and do something.” It is wrong to forget God and talk up big about something before you do it.

¹⁷ So if you know the right thing to do but you don’t do it, it is just the same for you as if you did something wrong.

5

God will punish people that cheat to make themselves rich

¹ Now I’m talking to you rich people, so you listen to me. You are going to get big trouble, so you can start right now to cry and be really sad. ²⁻³ All your money and clothes, and those things you got for yourself, will all become useless. They will rot away. Or they will rust away. Or white ants will eat them. God will see that rusty rotten mess and he will say that you are too greedy, and he will give you big trouble. He will punish you with big trouble, like a fire that will burn up your body. You thought you could keep all that stuff for a long time, but you will not have it for very long. ⁴ You cheated to get that money. You got men to work on your farm and they cut down the food crop that grew there and brought all that food to you. But

you didn't pay them for that work. You sent them away with no pay. Then they cried about it and our God heard them. He is very strong, and he can see that you cheated them. God can see their money. It is still in your pocket. So God will make big trouble for you.

⁵⁻⁶ While you lived here on this earth you killed good people that couldn't fight back. You lied and said they were guilty and then you killed them. While you were doing that you got everything you wanted and had plenty to eat. You are fat now, but look out. God will kill you. Think about a farmer and his cow. He feeds that cow a lot of grass and makes it fat, then he kills it to get some meat. Well that is a picture of you. You are fat now, but God will kill you.

Christians, don't give up

⁷⁻⁸ Now I'm talking to you Christian people. You have to wait for our leader, Jesus, to come back, and not give up. Think about farmers. They are happy to wait. They plant their food crops and then just wait for the rain to come and make the plants grow, so that in the end the farmers will get lots of food from those plants. Well, you have to be happy to wait, like they do. Don't give up. Our leader, Jesus, will come back soon.

⁹ My friends, don't growl about each other, or God will judge you and say that you are wrong. He is the big judge and he is coming back soon. He is nearly here already.

¹⁰ My friends, remember the stories from a long time ago. Think about the men that told God's word to people. They kept going, even if people didn't believe them and gave them a lot of trouble. ¹¹ They didn't give up, so now we respect them and say they were good men. Do you remember the story about Job? The devil gave him a lot

of trouble, but he stayed true to God, and in the end God made everything good for him. So we know that God is always sorry for his people when they get trouble, and he is very good to them.

¹² And another thing I want to say is very important, my friends. Whenever you tell somebody something you have to tell the true story. Say “Yes” or “No,” whichever is right. Don’t say, “God is watching us and he knows that this is true.” No. Don’t use God’s name, or any other name. Just say the true word and say no more, or you might go wrong, and then God will tell you that you are guilty.

This is the way to pray

¹³ Have any of you got trouble? You have to keep on praying about it. And are any of you happy? You can sing to God to say thank you to him, and tell everybody that God is really good. ¹⁴ Are any of you sick? You have to ask the leaders of the church to come to you and pray for you. They can put some olive oil on you while they pray. Jesus says they can do this, so they can say his name while they pray for you. ¹⁵ Whenever somebody prays and really trusts God to make a sick person better, God will do like that one asks. Jesus, our leader, will make that sick person good again. And if they did something wrong and got sick from that, God will not blame them for that any more.

¹⁶ So whenever you go wrong and do bad things, don’t try to say that you are still good. No. Tell each other the true story about the bad things that you did. Then you can pray for each other so that God can make you right again. Whenever a good man prays to God about something, then God uses his power and does whatever that good man asks for. ¹⁷ Do you remember the story

about Elijah? He was just a normal man like us but he prayed and asked God to stop the rain, and then it didn't rain at all for 3½ years. ¹⁸ Then Elijah asked God to send rain again and a lot of rain came down, then the food plants started to grow again.

¹⁹⁻²⁰ Listen, my friends, suppose one of you starts forget about God's true words and goes the wrong way, and suppose somebody else talks to him and gets him to come back to the right way, then God will go easy on the one that went wrong. He will not die, and God will not punish him for the many bad things that he did. You see, the one that steers him back does a lot of good. So that is the sort of thing you have to do.

From James

Plain English Version
Portions of the Holy Bible in the Plain English Version translation
for Australian Aboriginal people who speak English as a second
language

Copyright © 2019 The Plain English Project

Language: Aboriginal English (English)

Dialect: Australian Aboriginal

This translation is made available to you under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivatives license 4.0.

You may share and redistribute this Bible translation or extracts from it in any format, provided that:

You include the above copyright and source information.

You do not sell this work for a profit.

You do not change any of the words or punctuation of the Scriptures.

Pictures included with Scriptures and other documents on this site are licensed just for use with those Scriptures and documents. For other uses, please contact the respective copyright owners.

2019-08-07

PDF generated using Haiola and XeLaTeX on 27 Sep 2019 from source files dated 8 Aug 2019

838c6f50-4b58-56fb-846b-7becf8890f94