



# REALITY CHECK: THE BOOK OF JAMES CONTENTS

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## THE DOCTRINAL BASIS OF OUR CURRICULUM

A more detailed statement with references is available upon request.

- The verbal, plenary inspiration of the Scriptures
- Only one true God
- The Trinity of the Godhead
- The Holy Spirit and His ministry
- The personality of Satan
- The Genesis account of creation
- Original sin and the fall of man
- The virgin birth of Christ
- Salvation through faith in the shed blood of Christ
- The bodily resurrection and priesthood of Christ
- Grace and the new birth
- Justification by faith
- Sanctification of the believer
- The security of the believer
- The church
- The ordinances of the local church: baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper
- Biblical separation—ecclesiastical and personal
- Obedience to civil government
- The place of Israel
- The pretribulation rapture of the church
- The premillennial return of Christ
- The millennial reign of Christ
- Eternal glory in Heaven for the righteous
- Eternal torment in Hell for the wicked

## SENIOR HIGH TEACHER Vol. 63 • No. 1

© 2010 by Regular Baptist Press  
Printed in U.S.A.  
Alex Bauman, editor



**RegularBaptistPress.org**  
Building Lives by the Book

# HOW TO TEACH *REAL FAITH* LESSONS

**T**hank you for choosing *Real Faith in Life* as your Sunday School curriculum for senior high youth. This material has been designed to help you, a senior high teacher, clearly present God's Word to your students. It will guide you in using active learning methods that allow your students to interact with God's Word for themselves. It offers application ideas that will encourage your students to be *doers* of God's Word, not merely hearers (James 1:22).

Take a few moments to become familiar with the layout of this teacher book and with the other *Real Faith* products: the student book, the resource CD, and the memory verse card pack. All of these products work together. Notice these icons in the teacher book; they will help you know when to use the other products.



Use the suggested item from the **resource CD**.



Refer to the **daily devotions** or the **in-class** page in the **student book**.



Quote (or read) the **memory verse** in class, or use the verse in some other way.



Use the **worksheet** (from the resource CD) as part of a learning activity.

As you look through your materials, you will notice that we have built this course and the individual lessons around a central theme. As you emphasize the theme (and even decorate your room with the theme in mind), we believe your students will have an effective learning experience.

## IN PREPARATION FOR TEACHING . . .

- read the Scripture focus passage(s) several times. Look up words or concepts that you cannot clearly explain. Use Bible study tools as necessary to help you understand the passage(s).

- do the daily devotions in the student book. You need to know what your students are studying each day.
- memorize the memory verse throughout the week. (Note the suggested activities in the student book.)
- look at the materials list early in the week; note the items you will need from the resource CD.
- choose the activity you will use to focus students' attention on the Bible lesson. Usually two or more activities are suggested. You will not have time to do everything; choose the one best suited for your class. (Remember, this part of the lesson should take only five to ten minutes.)
- work through the Bible study section. Notice the active learning methods. Decide how you will involve your students in the Bible passage. These thirty to forty minutes are the heart of the lesson. Plan them carefully. Make notes in the margins of your book. Strive for maximum participation.
- decide how to apply the Bible truths and bring the lesson to a close. If more than one application idea is suggested, use the one best suited for your class. Don't assume your students will "just get it." Plan these final ten minutes of the class time carefully.
- pray for yourself, your students, and your lesson. The Holy Spirit is your divine Helper. Without Him, you cannot do anything of eternal value (John 14:16, 17; 15:5; 16:13).

## ON SUNDAY MORNING . . .

- make sure you arrive in your classroom before the first student.
- look at your room. Is it attractive and inviting to students?
- commit yourself and your class to the Lord.
- teach with the confidence that God will work in your students' lives.

God has promised that His Word will not return to Him void; it will accomplish its intended purposes (Isa. 55:11). You can teach with confidence!

# NOTES FOR THIS QUARTER

**F**aith that is real and genuine is faith that acts, not in its own wisdom, but in the wisdom of God and to the glory of God. This letter by James to believers challenges us to evaluate our attitudes, values, motivations, and deeds. We may have living, growing faith if we submit to and serve the living Lord.

The theme for this quarter is real faith, and each lesson emphasizes that theme. You may use the free poster that came with your teacher book along with the ideas on the resource CD to decorate your room in keeping with the theme. Notice that a bulletin board display is suggested; each week you may add another Reality Check statement to the display.

James is 5 chapters long, only 108 verses. Read the book two or three times in preparation for teaching this quarter. Make a list of the various themes James touches on in his short letter. James is almost proverbial in style. You will realize that as you read. Ask God to change you and your students over the next three months! Challenge your students with the fact that their walk must match their talk! Your students' claim to be God's child is validated by their real, growing faith, demonstrated by godly actions. May you see growth in your own life and in the lives of your students by the end of the course.

## SENIOR HIGH MATERIALS LIST

- Teacher's personal Bible
- Students' personal Bibles and extra Bibles for visitors or students who do not bring Bibles to class
- Whiteboard and colored markers or chalkboard and chalk
- Pens (assorted kinds) and pencils (well sharpened; with erasers)
- Felt-tip markers (various widths and assorted colors)
- Colored pencils
- Pads of self-stick notes (various colors; ruled and unruled)
- 3 x 5 cards
- Masking tape (or other adhesive for mounting items on the wall)
- Glue sticks
- Scissors for teacher's and students' use
- Poster-sized paper or butcher paper
- Construction paper; poster board

# LEADING A STUDENT TO CHRIST

**T**he highest privilege you have as a teacher is the opportunity to lead your students to Christ and help them strengthen their relationship with Him. Be prepared to talk to students about salvation or about other problems or decisions in their lives.

There is no set pattern for talking to someone about the Lord. In each situation, be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit in your own heart and mind and to the needs of the individual teen. Deal with a student separately, rather than in a group. Allow the teen to tell you in his own words what his need is. Don't put words in his mouth. This is his decision, not yours!

## EXPLAINING SALVATION

Stress the need for personal salvation, particularly if the student has grown up in the church. She may confuse her knowledge of Bible stories, her church-centered activities, her parents' salvation, or an external code of conduct with individual faith.

Thoughtfully rephrase the Christian clichés that your students may have heard so often or that may seem like a foreign language to some; e.g., ask Jesus into your heart; ask Jesus to be your Savior; have faith; trust in Jesus. Help the student understand that "trust" is having confidence that someone or something is always right; "Jesus died for me" means that I was condemned to die, but Jesus voluntarily took my place on the cross; "believe" means accepting/deciding that something is true and then acting on it. Don't let the personal nature of salvation become misunderstood through the use of trite phrases or pat answers.

## THE PLAN OF SALVATION

Keep these basic points in mind when dealing with someone about salvation.

- Everyone is a sinner. No one can live up to God's standard (Rom. 3:23).

- Sin's penalty is death (Rom. 6:23).
- God loves us and sent His Son to pay the penalty for our sin. Christ died as our substitute, in our place (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8).
- When a person places his confidence in Jesus and what He did as sufficient payment for sins, Christ becomes his Savior. His sins are forgiven, and he receives God's gift of everlasting life (John 1:12; 5:24).
- Everlasting life begins immediately and is not temporary. (Use any verse where the word "eternal" or "everlasting" is used, such as in John 3:16.) Nothing we can ever do will take us out of God's hand; we are secure (John 10:27–29).
- The Christian should tell others of his decision (Rom. 10:9, 10).
- The experience of the new birth (being born into God's family) is not based on a feeling, but on confidence in God's Word (1 John 5:11, 12).

Encourage the student to pray, no matter how hesitantly. Prayer does not save a person, but it is the means of expressing to God what is in the heart.

Ask the new believer to explain to you what he has done and what has happened in his life.

## DISCIPLESHIP

Encourage the new convert to read the Bible, and explain the importance of prayer. Help him understand how to pray. Point out 1 John 1:9 as God's instruction for dealing with sin in the Christian life.

Make it a priority to follow up with the new Christian. Visit in his home; encourage him to attend Sunday School and church regularly; help him with Bible study and prayer; guide him in his new life as a Christian.

# LESSON 1

# TRIALS AND TEMPTATIONS

## SCRIPTURE FOCUS

James 1:1–18

## MEMORY VERSES

“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience” (James 1:2, 3).

## TOPIC

Trials and temptations

## THEME

God allows a believer to face trials and temptations in order to increase his or her capacity to endure hardship and grow spiritually.

## DESIRED STUDENT RESPONSE

As an evidence of real faith, each student will identify a personal hardship or temptation and determine to persevere through that hardship or temptation by trusting God.

## MATERIALS

(in addition to supplies listed on page 3)

- *Real Faith in Life* student books, lesson 1 devotions (pp. 1–6)
- Six-inch length of chain for teacher’s use
- Three-link chains for each student
- Notebook or journal for each student
- Reality Check statement for lesson 1 from the resource CD

**NOTES TO THE TEACHER**

James, the half-brother of the Lord Jesus, believed Who Jesus is and received salvation following the resurrection of Christ (1 Cor. 15:7). Then he began his own pursuit of spiritual growth. He became a leader in the church in Jerusalem (Acts 12:17; 15:21:18, 19). According to tradition, he was martyred for his faith around AD 62.

James wrote his letter to Christians who had been scattered from Jerusalem into neighboring lands because of persecution (Acts 8:1; 11:19). The letter is proverbial in nature; James touched on many different subjects, making this a difficult letter to outline. When the reader does what James admonished in 1:22 (do the Word, not just hear the Word), spiritual growth occurs.

As you teach the book of James this quarter, you will emphasize spiritual growth over and over again. You want your students to know what spiritual growth looks like and how they can gauge their own growth.

This lesson will help your students learn to respond Biblically when they face trials and temptations. As you prepare to teach this lesson, ask God to help you model the Biblical response to trials and temptations. As your students watch you apply these truths in your own life, they will realize that they, too, can trust God in their times of trials and temptations.

**BEFORE CLASS**

If you plan to use the Lust and Lure activity, write on a sheet of poster board, “Senior high students today are tempted to . . .” and attach the poster to the wall. Place 3 x 5 cards and pencils near the poster. Also write “Lust” and “Lure” on separate sheets of paper and post the sheets on opposite sides of the room.

If you are using the Two Perspectives activity, enlist the help of two people: a pianist who plays for your church, and a student (or adult volunteer) who does not play the piano. Arrange for students to meet near a piano.

Purchase inexpensive chain links (one three-link strip per student) at a local hardware store. Use for the Spiritual Chain activity.

Purchase small notebooks for your students or encourage them to bring personal journals to class.

**OUTLINE**

I. Rejoicing in Trials (James 1:1–12)

- A. Trials are inevitable
  - B. Trials produce patience
  - C. Trials help believers mature spiritually
- II. Understanding Temptation (James 1:13–18)
- A. The source of temptation
  - B. The lust and lure of temptation
- III. Overcoming Temptation

## **FOCUS THEIR ATTENTION (5–10 MINUTES)**

Use the activity better suited for your students.

### **LUST AND LURE**

As students arrive, direct their attention to the poster on the wall and ask them to write on 3 x 5 cards an end to the sentence. Tell students not to sign their names. Collect the cards as students finish.

When all students have responded, tell them that temptations come in many forms. These temptations come as a result of an inner desire (lust) or an outside source (lure).

Point out the “Lust” and “Lure” signs posted on the walls. Read a temptation listed on a 3 x 5 card. Instruct students to choose whether that temptation is a result of an inner lust or an outside lure and then go to the appropriate side of the room. Repeat with several of the temptations suggested on the 3 x 5 cards.

When students discover that they really can’t separate inner lust and outer lure, affirm their conclusion. Then discuss the following questions:

- What is lust?
- What is lure?
- How do the two work together to tempt us?

### **TWO PERSPECTIVES**

Gather students near a piano and explain that you have asked two individuals to help you. Tell students that these two individuals are faced with the same situation: to play a certain song. Ask the student who cannot play the piano to play a certain song. Then ask the pianist to do the same. After the pianist has played part of the song, discuss the questions below.

- What made the difference in how these two individuals handled the situation they faced?
- The situation did not change; both were challenged to play the

Allow time between reading the temptations for students to think. Make no comment at the present time. Encourage students to decide, but do not force them to move to one side or the other. The objective of this activity is to get students to see that both lust and lure contribute and work together in temptation.

Be sure the student or volunteer you choose will not feel threatened or humiliated by this activity.

same song. Which person had the advantage? Why? How did the challenge expose the student's weakness?

Compare this activity to times when believers face hard situations. Explain that this week's lesson will help your students know how to handle the trials and temptations they face. Remind students that every person faces trials, but believers have an advantage because they possess the ability to call on the Lord in their trials.

## **STUDY THE BIBLE** (30–40 MINUTES)

### **I. Rejoicing in Trials (James 1:1–12)**

Read together James 1:1 and 2. Explain that this letter of encouragement was written to Christians who had been forced to scatter and were now enduring tests. Discuss the following questions with your students:

- What is the purpose of a test in school? (To see what you have learned; to make sure you have mastered something before you are given more.)
- Can tests be difficult? Why?
- What types of tests in life can one experience? (Possible answers include illness, loss of possessions, parents fighting over divorce.)
- What is the purpose of a test in life? (The same as a test in school; to produce patience and endurance; spiritual growth.)

Review students' answers to Monday's *Real Faith in Life* devotions. Use the following commentary to supplement students' answers. Encourage your students to keep their specific areas of trials in mind as they take part in this lesson.

Rejoice in trials; endure temptation. Or is it, Rejoice in temptation; endure trials? A test, a trial, a temptation—what's the difference?

The word for "temptation" in James 1:2, 12, 13, and 14 is always the same word. In the Greek it simply speaks of a test, a





“putting to proof.” James 1:2–12 reminds us that testing can be a form of training or discipline, designed to achieve something positive. Temptation is an invitation to do wrong. When we face a temptation, we need to “put to proof” what we believe in or what we will stand up for. Temptation is never easy, but knowing more about it will help us overcome it.

Read together James 1:3 and 4; then discuss these questions: What is the key to passing any test? (Knowing the right answers.) When we’re going through a test in life, where will we get the right answers? (God and His Word.)

**IN-CLASS:** Have students complete the In-Class worksheet on page 8 of their student books. Give students five minutes to complete the worksheet; then discuss the answers as a class. Use the commentary to guide your discussion.

### A. Trials are inevitable

James told Christians who were suffering harsh social isolation and physical persecution, “Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations” (James 1:2). Now advice like that hardly sounds practical. We rejoice when we manage to escape problems and hardships, but to rejoice over having them is completely against our nature. And that’s just the point James wanted to make. We can’t escape trials; they’re inevitable in this fallen world. But we can handle them in a way that marks us as different from the world. We can respond joyfully—with confidence that God has allowed these things in our lives to accomplish good and to strengthen our faith (Rom. 8:28–39; Heb. 13:6).

### B. Trials produce patience

**MEMORY VERSES:** Read or quote James 1:2 and 3 in unison.

Ask students who regularly work out to raise their hands. Allow volunteers to share what they know about building muscle. Use the commentary to draw parallels between building muscle and building patience.

An athlete develops his muscles by concentrating on strengthening activities. He strains and tests his body to its limits in order

Place students in pairs or small groups according to your class size.



to perfect his strength and skill. We need similar discipline to grow and mature as Christians. God is the One Who supervises the training process. James wanted us to know that the “workout,” the trial, is to help us develop patience (James 1:3).

Patience is not a natural virtue. Waiting is out of character for us humans. But when we are tested, we learn to see our areas of weakness and to depend on the Lord to resolve a conflict, provide for a need, or help us in some other way. Waiting doesn’t mean passively sitting by, but pressing forward by honoring and serving the Lord in spite of the obstacles of suffering and difficulty.

Developing patience contributes to our “growing up,” our being mature Christians who can be given additional responsibility and blessing. “Let patience have her perfect [maturing] work,” James said (v. 4).

### **C. Trials help believers mature spiritually**

Display a length of chain and explain that each chain link needs the other links surrounding it in order to form the whole chain. Use the following commentary to teach students how our trials and the results of those trials bring about God’s intended “full-length chain,” or purpose in our lives.

Consider the spiritual chain that begins with a test: A trial produces patience. Patience, or perseverance, finishes its work by helping us become more mature, more “perfect and entire,” more like our model, the Lord Jesus. This is spiritual growth. It is God’s goal to have us be conformed to (in the likeness of) the image of His dear Son (Rom. 8:29). Testings are His tools to accomplish this goal.

God allows us to struggle through trials in order to increase our capacity to endure and mature. James 1:2 tells us that we are to be glad for what testing can do for us. And verses 5 and 6 guarantee that if we really want God’s help in trials, we can be sure that He will give it gladly.

These verses aren’t a promise to take the trial away. Rather, they are an assurance that if we’re willing to trust God even when we can’t see the sense of it all, He will help us benefit from the experience.

Review students’ answers to Tuesday’s and Wednesday’s devotions as you discuss the importance of godly wisdom in the life of a believer.



James 1:5–8 stresses the importance of the wisdom God will give to believers. This wisdom involves more than knowledge. Many people know a lot but can't apply what they know to their problems. Wisdom means knowing how to put the facts together to come up with a clear understanding.

However, James warned against asking the Lord for wisdom without being committed to sticking with the Lord through the trial (vv. 6–8). The person who asks for wisdom but hopes for an easy way out is not spiritually mature. God calls that kind of person a “double-minded” person. Verse 7 warns that a person who has not firmly fixed his faith on the Lord has no right to expect God to answer his or her prayers.

## II. Understanding Temptation (James 1:13–18)

Refer to Friday's devotions and the commentary as you discuss the following questions.

- Does God ever tempt us to sin (James 1:13)?
- What fuels our temptation to sin (v. 14)?
- Describe what happens step-by-step when we sin (v. 15).
- Does that mean that every time we sin, we die? Explain your answer.
- What can help us stand strong against temptation?
- What is the connection between temptation and what we feed our minds?

### A. The source of temptation

Temptation is inevitable in every believer's life. God's desire is for believers to resist the temptation, resulting in spiritual growth. Satan's desire is for believers to give in to the temptation, resulting in spiritual destruction.

Temptation is never from God; verse 13 makes this clear. No one can say, “I am tempted of God.” God does not ever tempt anyone. Then where does temptation to do wrong come from? It comes from Satan and the lusts within our own selves (Mark 7:20–23; Jer. 17:9).

We are created with certain natural desires that are necessary to



life itself. Thirst for water, hunger for food, and desire for shelter are just a few. These desires are natural and necessary. Desires move us to care for our physical needs; without them the human race could not survive. However, these desires can become temptations when they are met in wrong ways; e.g., by stealing or cheating. When we see an opportunity for obtaining something that is good in itself in a wrong way (against God’s commands), we are being tempted. Two particular influences cause us to see and respond to these “opportunities,” these temptations.

### **B. The lust and lure of temptation**

Natural desires under the control of our “flesh,” our old sin nature, are lusts. James 1:14 says that when a person is tempted to do evil, “he is drawn away of his own lust [or desire], and enticed.” Even after we are born again, we still have the old nature that is just as inclined to sin as ever; but God gives the new nature that can be victorious if we support it with our will.

The enemy within (the old nature) works with the enemy outside our being. One of Satan’s favorite tools is the lure of the world and the things of the world. Satan tries to trip us up by mixing our own internal potential for wrong with the external power of appeal from his world. The result is described in verse 15. If we allow lustful thoughts in our hearts, Satan feeds these thoughts with the enticements of the world—songs, pictures, stories, and so on. Feeding lust makes it grow, and eventually it explodes into sin, which brings the penalty of death (Rom. 6:23).

### **III. Overcoming Temptation**

As you teach the principles for overcoming temptation, encourage students to apply what they have learned from Thursday’s and Saturday’s devotions.

Both the saved and the unsaved teenager have the old nature (lust) that is drawn to the attractions of the world; but the similarity stops right there! The unsaved teen has no defense against temptation. But that is not the condition of the believer. God gives us wisdom to help us through trials and temptations, and He also provides deliverance from any temptation.

After showing the awful power of the old nature in Romans 7:18, Paul wrote about the law, or principle, of the Holy Spirit in Romans 8. The law of the Spirit of life in Jesus Christ has made



possible freedom from the law, or principle, of sin and death (v. 2). We cannot eradicate the old nature, but we can be liberated from its power over us: “That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh [the old nature], but after the Spirit [the new nature]” (v. 4). Even though the old nature is still within us and capable of sinning, we have no excuse for sinning, for the Lord has given us His Holy Spirit. God the Holy Spirit sustains us in testing and strengthens us to withstand temptation (1 John 4:4).

## **APPLY THE TRUTH**

**(10 MINUTES)**

### **SPIRITUAL CHAIN**

Distribute a three-link chain to each student. Tell students that the first link represents a trial that they are going through. The second link represents patience that God promises to give to those who endure their trial with God’s strength. The third link represents spiritual growth, the result of faithful endurance through the trial. Ask each student to think of a trial that he or she is currently facing. Encourage students to quietly ponder their answers to the following questions:

- Have I taken this trial to God?
- Have I humbly asked Him to help me endure this situation, or has this trial become a temptation for me to doubt God?
- Have I searched the Scriptures for help in this trial?
- Am I willing to let God work in my life through this trial?

Distribute journaling notebooks. Explain that students will use these journals throughout the quarter.

Give students several minutes to record in their journals what they need to do concerning this trial. If students do not feel comfortable journaling, encourage them to talk to God about their trials. Remind them to ask God for endurance during this trial. After several minutes, close in prayer.

Encourage your students to use their journals throughout the week as they have their daily devotions or to record sermon notes. Students will want to bring their journals to class every week.

Explain to the students that during this quarter, you will be posting the Reality Check statements that you study together from James. Begin the bulletin board display by posting the first Reality Check statement: I know my faith is real when I persevere through trials and temptations by trusting God.

Plan to e-mail your students throughout the week, encour-



aging them to complete the *Real Faith in Life* devotions for week 2. Encourage students to bring their books and journals to class next week.