

JAMES

Faith that works

José Young

Ediciones Crecimiento Cristiano

Young, José

James : Faith that works / José Young. - 1a ed. - Villa Nueva : Crecimiento Cristiano, 2021.

44 p. ; 21 x 14 cm.

Traducción de: José Young.

ISBN 978-987-1219-50-6

1. Estudios Bíblicos. I. Young, José, trad. II. Título.

CDD 227.91

James is a translation of the study guide "Santiago" published by Ediciones Crecimiento Cristiano ISBN-13 978-950-9596-75-7.

© Ediciones Crecimiento Cristiano

1ª Edición inglés: Marzo 2021

ISBN: 978-987-1219-50-6

Queda hecho el depósito que marca la Ley 11.723

Prohibida la reproducción total o parcial de este material sin previa autorización escrita de los editores.



"Más que enseñar, te ayudamos a aprender"

 **Córdoba 419 - Villa Nueva - Cba. - Argentina**

 **+54 9 353 491-2450**

 **+54 9 353 481-0724**

 **oficina@edicionescc.com**

 **www.edicionescc.com**

 **Ediciones Crecimiento Cristiano**

 **edicionescc**

Index

Index.....	5
Introduction	6
Live the Word.....	9
Trials	14
Prayer.....	19
The tongue	24
Faith and works	28
My brother.....	32
Rich and poor.....	36
Conclusion	41
How to use this study	42

Introduction

Studying James is not an easy experience. Not so much because it is hard to understand but because it is very demanding. James has no problem painting the situation in realistic terms and condemning certain attitudes in the churches. His letter reflects the stern words of our Lord against the Pharisees.

Despite it being a very old book, James is quite up-to-date and practical. The letter emphasizes problems and needs that we constantly see in our churches. Every church should study it as if it were directed directly to them, since they will surely see themselves reflected in the mirror that James offers.

One characteristic of James' letter is that he repeats key subjects several times. For example, instead of speaking about prayer in one place he touches on it in three different chapters. For that reason, we have divided the study into subjects and each lesson covers the parts of James that touch on that subject.

James

We encounter a variety of people named "James" in the New Testament, two of which are the best known. The first is the fisherman, son of Zebedee and brother of the apostle John. He was executed by Herod around the year 48 (Acts 12:1, 2), so it is very unlikely that he could be the author of this letter.

The second, that most commentators feel is the author of the letter, is James the brother of the Lord mentioned in Marcos 6:3.

It is clear that Jesus' brothers didn't trust him during his life but Acts 1:14 shows that after the resurrection their attitude changed. We do not have much information about this James, but we do know that he was one of the key men in the Jerusalem church, a "pillar" according to Galatians 2:9.

Since James was pastor of a church, we can understand why he chose some of the themes of this letter and why at times writes with very strong language. He knew the churches and could recognize their problems. They, like us, had the tendency to separate their faith from their lifestyle. But James insists that faith is something very practical, something to *live out*.

The readers

James does not directly name those who were to receive this letter. He speaks of the “twelve tribes in the Dispersion” but the majority of the commentators believe he is speaking in a figurative manner, and is referring to the many Christians (the new Israel, Galatians 6:16) spread throughout the Roman Empire because of the persecution described in Acts 8.

The purpose

In truth it would be more appropriate to talk about the purpose of the book at the end of the study instead of the beginning. That’s when we can easily see the writer’s goal.

Yet we propose James 1:27 as the verse that best summarizes the message of the book. In this verse James gives his definition of religion, and in one sense his book is a commentary and application of that definition.

“Religion” here does not refer to the content of our faith, to doctrine, but to its practice. It speaks of the external expression of faith, the way we communicate it and live it. That is the matter James deals with in this book.

Important note

To really benefit from James’ book, you need to read it, and read it a lot. You should read it at least once before starting the

first lesson. Look for another version of the Bible and read James there also. The more you read, the better it will become a part of your life.

We will refer to three possible versions of the Bible in this study:

RSV, the Revised Standard Version

NIV, the New International Version

ESV, the English Standard Version

1 Live the Word

James 1:16-18; 1:21-25; 2:10-13; 4:7-10

This lesson emphasizes something that is fundamental in all Bible study: our attitude towards the Word of God. The way we view the scriptures is a measure of the way we view God. We don't give the scriptures the importance they deserve because we don't give God that much importance in our lives. But for the disciple of Christ there is nothing more important than immersing ourselves in this book: it is life and light for us. But it is better if we let James speak.

James 1:16-18

In this passage James refers to God as light, as John did in 1 John 1:5. But in contrast to the strongest light we know, the sun, in this light there are no variations or shadows. And it is this God who does not change who gives us gifts.

1/Think for a moment. What are some of the gifts that God gives? There are many and not only spiritual gifts.

Also, by the will of God, we have been born anew. But the means of that birth, according to James, is the Word of God.

2/Can you find another passage in the New Testament that affirms that we are born by the Word?

3/But how can the Bible be the means by which we are born again? Don't we receive our new life through Christ (John 14:6) and by the Spirit (John 3:6)? In what way are we born anew by means of the Bible?

James 1:21-25

James explains here what we must do to make the Word useful in our lives. "The perfect law, the law of liberty" that James cites in verse 25 is the law of Christ, in contrast with the law of Moses.

4/In this passage there are at least five conditions we should fulfill if we are to have a healthy Christian life and not a mediocre one. What are they?

5/What is the situation of the believer who hears (or reads) the Word but does not apply it? In what way does he or she deceive themselves?

This passage explains why many "good believers" never advance in their Christian life. They appreciate the Word; they hear it preached and even read it. But the Word is not something we should just only hear, but also obey. We repeat: our attitude towards the Word is a good indication of the reality of our faith.

James 2:10-13

From all appearances Antonio is a good believer. He is faithful in attending church meetings and has a Sunday School class. He has a small store where he sells damaged merchandise that he received directly from the factory at a good price. He patches over the damage and sells the result at the normal price. His friend Paul commented to him about that practice but Antonio, angrily said: "What I do in my business is up to me. Don't try to bring the church into it."

6/How would you answer Antonio, according to this passage we are studying?

James 4:7-10

This passage hits pretty hard. We would feel a bit better if it were aimed at non-believers, but it is for us. How we should behave before God is clear:

- Submit (7)
- Draw near (8)
- Humble ourselves (10)

We put ourselves in his hands, we seek to know him better and we humble ourselves before him in gratitude and obedience. But there is a series of challenges to our lifestyle that are not that obvious.

7/For example:

a/ What does it mean to "cleanse your hands" (verse 8)?

b/ Why should we mourn (verse 9)?

**c/ Do verses 9 and 10 mean that we should live gloomily?
If not, how do we apply these verses?**

8/As a summary, what do the verses in this lesson ask of us?

Conclusion

The verses we have studied in this lesson are a call to repentance, not to the sinners "outside", but for us. James attacks the cause of our spiritual weakness and explains the solution.

"But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing." (James 1:25 ESV)