

# Home Groups Together

Introduction to James  
Practical Christian Living

9th January 2008

# Introduction to James



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# Why James?

- Opportunity to look in depth at one book in depth
- It's a short term
- Chance to look at issues of practical Christian living
- A whole range of relevant topics....

# Main themes

- When things go wrong – ‘trials’. Suffering, persecution, poverty, displacement.
- Low spirits – how do we stay positive in difficult circumstances?
- What is the purpose of our lives? What goal should we keep in mind through good times and bad?
- How can I keep going in my faith?
- How are our ambitions and priorities influenced by the world around us?

# Main themes (2)

- How do I resist temptation?
- Conversations with others (learning to listen)
- How can I grow more quickly as a Christian?
- Favouritism and snobbery
- Making plans for the future
- Our response to the poor
- What does real faith look like?

# Main themes (3)

- Hypocrisy and double standards
- The effects of the things we say
- The influence of the Devil on our behaviour
- What is real 'wisdom' and how do the values of our culture compare?
- What should I pray for?
- Coping with the spiritual battle
- The attitude that leads to blessing

# Who were James' original readers? (1)

- Those going through persecution, or having been 'displaced'
- Those experiencing poverty
- Those who were rich and had confident plans about making money in this place or that
- Those who were giving in to temptation and living immoral lives

# Who were James' original readers? (2)

- Those who did not put their faith into practice
- Those who showed favouritism and looked down on others
- Those who hurt others with their words
- Those who had been too influenced by the values of the world

# Who was James? (1)

- Jewish
- A leader of authority
- Widely known
- Very familiar with the Old Testament (e.g. the prophets and Proverbs)
- But also had a good knowledge of Greek, plus Roman culture and literature

# Who was James? (2)

If James the brother of Jesus, he:

- Became a Christian after the resurrection.
- Was leader of the Jerusalem church
- Knew Paul and Peter well
- Knew a lot of the teachings of Jesus
- Was martyred in AD 62

# Things to bear in mind...

- He's rather abrasive and direct
- He revisits themes
- He uses provocative language to make a point
- He assumes knowledge in his readers
- He knew the problems in the churches he was writing to
- Some of the passages are quite tricky

# What resources are there to help?

- Bible Speaks Today commentary
- Cross references for some questions
- Questions by email or phone
- I can visit your group
- Extra help if required
- The Holy Spirit

# Any other tips?

- Look at material in advance
- Take notes in studies
- Pray for the study beforehand
- Don't be afraid of unanswered questions
- Look at introduction and conclusion notes
- Take time to think
- Make sure you cover the asterisked questions
- Make sure you pray through your response
- Come to small group leadership training

# Small Group Coordination



- Need to translate Vision into reality....
- ..working with leaders and groups as “first port of call”
- Training events coming up in January and February....for all interested
- Anyone thinking of joining a small group?

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