



FEBRUARY

2019

HEBREWS & JAMES

MONTHLY PRAYER SHEET

"...The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective." James 5:16

Reach out...

How I will do it...

How it went...

Other requests...

Answered

How it was answered...

MONTHLY COMMITMENT SHEET

Name: _____

This sheet is designed to help you make personal commitments each month that will help you grow in your walk with God. Fill it out by determining

1. What will push you
2. What you think you can achieve

If you need help filling out your commitments, seek out someone you trust who can help you. Share your commitments with those who will help keep you accountable to your personal commitment.

Personal Devotions:

How did I do with my commitment last month? _____

I will commit to read the OnTrack Bible passage and devotional thought _____ day(s) each week this month.

Church Attendance:

How did I do last month with my attendance? _____

I will attend Youth/Growth Group _____ time(s) this month.

I will attend the Sunday AM service _____ time(s) this month.

I will attend the Sunday PM service _____ time(s) this month.

I will attend _____ time(s) this month.

I will attend _____ time(s) this month.

Scripture Memory:

How did I do with Scripture memory last month? _____

I will memorize _____ key verse(s) from the daily OnTrack Devotions this month.

Outreach:

How did I do last month with sharing Christ? _____

I will share Christ with _____ person/people this month.

I will serve my local church this month by _____

Other Activities:

List any other opportunities such as events, prayer group, etc., that you will participate in this month. _____

What if Jesus Christ were just a higher form of an angel and not really equal with God? Is it even important for us to be able to make this distinction clear? Does it matter if Jesus is God or not? If Jesus is just a higher angelic form and not fully God, then one of the most important actions He took would not have been possible. The writer of Hebrews demonstrates Jesus Christ is not an angel, but is far superior to the angels. He first reminds us that, in the Old Testament, God spoke to people directly. But in the New Testament, He chose to speak to man through Jesus. He tells us that Jesus is superior to the angels because He created the universe. He is the radiance of God's glory and the "exact" representation of God. Consequently, this means Jesus is exactly like God in every way because He is God. As a result, He provided justification for our sins, which would not have been possible if He were merely an angel. After He paid the price for our sin, He returned to heaven and now sits at the Father's right hand, a position no angel can occupy. Jesus Christ came to earth to pay the price for our sin. We must respond to Him as God and receive by faith the gift of eternal life He offers. Have you?

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING

HEBREWS 1

HEBREWS 2:5-18

WHO IS JESUS?... CONTIN-

SAY WHAT?

What temptations are you now facing?

SO WHAT?

In what ways are the areas you are tempted in similar to what Jesus faced?

NOW WHAT?

How did Jesus respond to His temptations?

THEN WHAT?

Write out a prayer asking Jesus to help you be successful in the areas of temptation that you face.

Yesterday we learned that Jesus Christ is God. But why did He have to become a man? Why is this important? In today's reading, we are given some key reasons. One of those is found in verses 9 & 17. Jesus Christ became a man so that He could die for the sins of all mankind. He paid the price for our sin so we do not have to pay it ourselves. Another reason is given in verse 14. Jesus Christ became a man to destroy Satan, who had the power of death, so we could be free from the fear of death. The third reason, verses 17-18, is key for daily living, but few seem to realize it is true. Jesus Christ became a man to become a merciful and faithful High Priest. He experienced the daily walk of a man and is able to respond to us out of personal knowledge of those experiences. Further, verse 18 tells us that since He was a man, He is able to help us when we are tempted because He faced the same temptations. Since Jesus became a man, He not only knows temptations, but is able to help us resist our temptations. Use the questions presented today to help you better apply this truth to your life. In what ways are the areas you are tempted in similar to what Jesus faced?

EXTRA READING

HEBREWS 2

The book of Proverbs was designed to help us in "attaining wisdom and discipline; in understanding words of insight; in acquiring a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair; in giving prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the young." As you read through this chapter, write down the verses that are most significant to you in your present circumstances.

VERSE | WHAT TRUTH IT COMMUNICATES | HOW IT IMPACTS MY LIFE

HEBREWS 3:12-19

ENCOURAGE DAILY

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

Have you ever known someone who at one time in their life walked with God, but now is far from Him? Have you ever wondered how that happens? Ever wondered what we, as brothers and sisters in Christ, can do to help prevent it from happening? The answers to these questions are in today's reading. The author warns about the possibility of turning to unbelief. He tells us, in verse 12, that one turns away from God after he first has begun to develop a sinful, unbelieving heart. His point is that you do not go to sleep at night with a great walk with God and wake up the next morning in total rebellion. It's a process that begins with developing a sinful, unbelieving heart and ends with us turning away from God. How do we help each other avoid this? According to verse 13, it is by encouraging one another daily. When we see something in another's life that concerns us, we need to speak up. If we are watching out for each other daily, we won't be very far from God before someone seeks to encourage and help us. Do you encourage daily? When is the last time you encouraged someone in his walk with God? Isn't it time you began?

EXTRA READING

HEBREWS 3

Why couldn't some of the people of Israel enter the Promised Land? The answer to that question is important and helpful to us in making sure we do not miss out on heaven the way some missed out on the Promised Land. According to verse 2, people were excluded from the Promised Land because, although they had heard the message, they did not combine it with faith. They believed it intellectually, but they never accepted it by faith, personally. As a result, instead of obeying what they had heard, they acted in disobedience. It was possible to have seen all the miracles, have actually heard God speak directly, and still miss what God had for them. They did not respond by faith to what they had heard and did not live in obedience to the message they received. The truth is, this happens all the time in Christian families. It happens to teens whose parents take them to church every time the doors are open. They hear the Word, but they do not take the next step of combining it with personal faith and personally living in obedience to what they have heard. Tragically, they miss heaven because they are like the children of Israel. Could you be one of those people? How sad to see it all and miss it!

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING

HEBREWS 4

HEBREWS 4:14-16

HELP!

SAY WHAT?

What specific temptations are you now facing?

SO WHAT?

How does it help to know that God is a sympathetic High Priest?

NOW WHAT?

How can you approach Him with confidence to find mercy and grace?

THEN WHAT?

What personal commitment can you make in light of today's passage?

Can Jesus Christ really understand what you are going through? Does He really know how you feel when faced with temptation? Since He is God, can He identify with us in our moment of crisis? In today's reading, we have what may be one of the most encouraging sections of Scripture. It shows us that the answer to those questions is a definite YES! We have, in Jesus Christ, someone who knows exactly what we face in this culture. Verse 15 tells us that He was tempted in every way like we are and He is, therefore, a sympathetic High Priest. He faced what we face every day. However, He went through it with one major difference--He did not sin. He knows not only what we are going through, He knows how to help us go through it successfully. How should we respond to such truth? Verse 16 tells us that, because all this is true, we should approach the throne of grace in prayer with confidence. Why? Because Jesus Christ alone understands what we face, and He knows how to help us be successful. It is there that we "receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need." What circumstance are you currently facing that you need to take to God in prayer? Remember that He is always ready to help!

EXTRA READING

HEBREWS 4

This passage gives us a vital principle we must understand in order to be able to grow to maturity in our walk with God. Did you see it? The author confronted the Hebrews because they did not progress as quickly as they should have in their walk with God. He told them that by this time they ought to be teachers, but they were still like infants who needed milk. He also explained that if one is to grow, he needs to move away from milk and into solid food. Solid food is for those who have trained themselves to distinguish between good and evil. In this passage, we find that milk is not just the simple truth of Scripture. It is Scripture that we accept intellectually. Meat, on the other hand, is that which tells us how we ought to live, the teachings about righteousness. Maturity is the ability to take what we are learning and apply it to our lives so that we can distinguish between good and evil. If we are going to grow, we need to apply what we are learning to our daily lives. We do not grow simply because we are gaining knowledge, but we grow when we take that knowledge and apply it to our lives. Spiritual maturity is based on how we act, not on what we know! How mature are you?

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING

HEBREWS 5

HEBREWS 6:13-20

PROMISES

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

How confident can we be in God's promises? Could you bank your life on them? Today's passage confirms the answer is yes. To help us with our confidence, let's look at what God did for Abraham to help him develop confidence. In Genesis 15, God had Abraham take animals, cut them in half and place each half on opposite sides creating an aisle one could walk through. Why? Because in Abraham's culture, when two people made a commitment to each other, they walked through halved animals together. It symbolized that the one who was responsible for breaking the promise should be cut in half. Abraham finished arranging the animal pieces, but God caused him to fall asleep. God passed between them alone. This illustrated that the fulfillment of the promises God made depended on Him alone, and Abraham had nothing to do with it. That same commitment is made to us. According to verse 18, if our hope is placed in God, we will be greatly encouraged. Why? Because the fulfillment of His promises depends on Him alone, not on us. How amazing to know that the promises of God cannot be broken! Do your actions demonstrate you believe that?

EXTRA READING

HEBREWS 6

This chapter is an amazing piece of Scripture! Although it may seem complicated and difficult to understand, there is much here to motivate us. Let's take a closer look. The author portrays a superior office and a superior system. Jesus Christ, the High Priest, and the New Testament system are superior to the Old Testament high priests and the Mosaic Law system. Under the old system, a priest served only for a period of time. Jesus Christ is our Priest forever. The old system required that the priest offer sacrifices for sins. Jesus Christ is our sacrifice. The old system merely covered sin. Jesus Christ takes sin and washes it away. We have a High Priest who can save us completely. Since He will never die, this new system will not change and will live on forever. Jesus Christ is all we need, and He has become our Priest. He has given us access to God in a way that no other priest before Him could. Have you taken advantage of what Christ has done for you under this new system? Have you trusted Him as your Savior? Have you taken advantage of the direct access you now have to God? Do not allow yourself to live under the new system and not use all it provides for you. Who in your world needs to know what this passage teaches?

SAY WHAT?

What does it mean to have access to God?

SO WHAT?

How would your life be different if you were living under the old system?

NOW WHAT?

In what ways are you taking advantage of the "new" system?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment should you make?

EXTRA READING

HEBREWS 7

PROVERBS 27

The book of Proverbs was designed to help us in "attaining wisdom and discipline; in understanding words of insight; in acquiring a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair; in giving prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the young." As you read through this chapter, write down the verses that are most significant to you in your present circumstances.

VERSE | WHAT TRUTH IT COMMUNICATES | HOW IT IMPACTS MY LIFE

Why did the author tell us that our High Priest "sat down" at the right hand of the throne? Is this significant to us? It is if you understand the Old Testament system of law. Under that law, a priest never sat down. In fact, there wasn't even a place in the tabernacle for the priest to sit down. His job was never finished because the sacrifices he made for the sins of people were not sufficient to cover all of their sins. When they sinned again, the priest had to offer sacrifices again. Jesus Christ is different. Do you remember what He said just before He died on the cross? "It is finished." The sacrifice for sin was paid. There was no need for any other sacrifice or payment for sin--not for any sin you have committed or will commit. Our High Priest, Jesus Christ, sat down because His work was finished. He sat down because everything that needed to be done to enable us to have our sins forgiven was completed on the cross. There is nothing you or I can or need to do beyond what Jesus Christ already did on the cross. How complete is our salvation! How should we serve the One who provided this for us? With hearts filled with gratitude, every minute of every day that He gives us. Is that how you are living your life?

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING

HEBREWS 8

HEBREWS 9:11-14

GUILT FREE

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

Is it possible to live with a clear conscience? Is it possible, even after having done something horrible, to not feel guilty forever? Yes, if we understand what the New Testament system we are learning about has done for us! This is one of the greatest passages we can use to give hope to people in our world of what Jesus Christ can do in their lives. The author explains that the gifts and sacrifices under the Old Testament law were not able to "clear the conscience." Can you imagine that? When a sin had been committed and the blood of an animal applied, it did not clear the conscience of guilt. The sin was covered, but not taken away. But we can have our consciences cleared. We can live guilt free. Verse 14 tells us that because of what Jesus Christ did for us on the cross, His blood can "cleanse" our consciences, not just cover our sin. We can have the burden of a guilty conscience removed. If a heavy conscience is haunting you, Jesus Christ can wipe it clean—not just cover the sin, but take it away. Is there a sin you've confessed that still haunts you? Do you realize that God has cleansed you and washed your sin away? How can you apply this truth in your life today? Who can help?

EXTRA READING

HEBREWS 9

How do you feel when you have done something wrong? How do you feel after you have come to realize you did wrong, seek forgiveness, and it has been granted? Imagine what it would be like to feel guilty forever, never able to make it right or to ever have the guilt cleared. In today's reading, we are given the amazing truth of what Jesus Christ has done for us. This chapter, like yesterday's, emphasizes that Jesus Christ paid the price for our sins once and for all. We are reminded again that in the Old Testament, the priest had to continually offer sacrifices for sin. However, our priest, Jesus Christ, made the final sacrifice and then "sat down" because it was finished. What does that mean for us who have trusted Christ? We are forgiven once for all. There is nothing else we need to do to take care of our sin. In fact, God says in verse 17, our sins will be remembered no more. They are not only forgiven, but set aside and not remembered. What an incredible truth! Why not underline verses 17 and 18 in your Bible to remind you of what happened to you when you accepted Jesus Christ. Don't allow guilt to plague you and hinder your walk with God! Ask God to give you the ability to live as one who has truly been set free!

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING

HEBREWS 10

HEBREWS 10:19-31

LET US

SAY WHAT?

Which one of those five do you need to work on the most? Why?

SO WHAT?

What will you need to do to begin working on it today?

NOW WHAT?

What kind of plan can you create to see it happen? Who can help you?

THEN WHAT?

What personal commitment can you make in light of this passage?

How should we respond to the kind of truth we read about yesterday? The passage we are reading today answers that question. It gives to us five challenges all beginning with the words "let us." Number them in your Bible. First, we are to draw near to God. We can do this by being faithful in our devotions and making sure we spend time every day with Him in prayer. Second, we are to hold unswervingly to the hope we have. God is faithful, so we should not doubt or lose our confidence. Though it may not appear as if He has control at times, He does. Third, we are to consider how we can spur one another on toward love and good deeds. That is, how can we challenge others to become more like Christ? Notice he uses the word "spur." Spurs are not very comfortable when applied. Sometimes doing this for each other may not be very comfortable for us or them. Fourth, we need to make church attendance a priority. Meeting together as a body is not optional. Finally, we are to encourage each other. We are to do things that boost others' spirits. We should pray for and encourage each other daily. In light of all God has done for us, what else would we do? Use the questions for today to help you begin.

EXTRA READING

HEBREWS 10

To help you to think through this chapter and the next, keep this outline in mind. Mark it in your Bible. First, we receive a definition of faith (11:1-2). Second, we see what people who have faith can do (11:3-40). Third, we realize what we need to do in order to become people of faith ourselves (12:1-3). Finally, we realize what God will do to help us (12:4-13). What exactly is faith? According to verse 1, faith is being sure and certain. Faith is not hoping that something will work out, or even confidence that it will. Faith is being sure and certain it will. Do those two words describe your faith? According to verse 6, faith is being sure that God rewards those who earnestly seek Him. What are we certain of? That God exists, even though we cannot see or touch Him. It is only when our faith becomes something that we are sure and certain of that we can expect to step out for God like the men and women in this chapter did. They could not have done it based on a "I hope so" kind of faith. Are you sure that God rewards those who diligently seek Him? Are you certain that God exists? Does your life show it? If not, start asking God to give you a heart of faith that is sure and certain.

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING

HEBREWS 11

HEBREWS 11:23-28

LOOKING AHEAD

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

What is the most important thing in the world to you? Hopefully, it is the same thing that was important to Moses. He was able to enjoy everything the world has to offer and values. As the grandson to Pharaoh, he had fame. Many would have wanted to be with him and have him as a friend. He had money--all the wealth of Egypt. He could have bought anything he wanted. Yet those things were not important to him. Although the world could never understand, he chose to be mistreated rather than to experience the pleasures of sin. He thought it was better to suffer persecution for being a child of God than to have treasure. Would you do the same? Would you choose to be mistreated if you could be popular? Would you choose to be picked on for being a Christian if, instead, you could have as much money as you would want? If you were "sure" of what you hope for, and "certain" of what you cannot see, you would. Like Moses, you would be looking ahead to the reward you know that God has for those who diligently seek Him. You would be sure it is far better than anything the world could ever give. So, are you doing what Moses did? If not, what next step do you need to take?

EXTRA READING

HEBREWS 11

Who is the cloud of witnesses talked about in vs. 1, and how do they help us? The cloud of witnesses are the people listed in chapter 11. They encourage us by demonstrating that it is possible to live the life of faith and influence your world. They give us hope by showing us it can be done! How do we become people of faith? First, by throwing off everything that hinders. That includes those things that are not sin, but slow us down and entangle us in our walk with God. Secondly, we must get rid of any sin that is in our lives. We cannot tolerate any sin, large or small, and expect to become people of faith. Third, we need to run with perseverance, realizing this walk of faith is a long distance race. We need to keep at it. Fourth, we focus on Jesus Christ. He needs to be our priority and the only one we seek to please. This passage also tells us, in verse 4, that we can be encouraged knowing that, whenever we get off track, God will discipline us to get us back where we need to be. We must not fight against the discipline, but allow it to train us. You see, it is possible to become a person of faith. You do your part and be confident that God will do His.

SAY WHAT?

Of the four steps listed in this passage, which one do you think would be the most difficult to accomplish? Why?

SO WHAT?

What would it take for you to implement these steps?

NOW WHAT?

What kind of plan can you create and who can help you to make them a reality in your life?

THEN WHAT?

What personal commitment can you make in light of this passage?

EXTRA READING

HEBREWS 12

HEBREWS 12:12-17

SEE TO IT

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

How important is it for us to be involved in the lives of others? According to today's reading, it is very important. This passage is a call to be hard at work in three areas. First, we are to work hard to live in peace with all men. We are to do whatever we can to avoid being a part of division or conflict. Secondly, we are to work hard to be holy. We are to do our best to keep ourselves from sin and to be faithful in our walks with God. Thirdly, the author tells us that we are to work hard to "see to it" that no one is involved in the following four areas: missing the grace of God, allowing a bitter root to grow, practicing sexual immorality, or being godless like Esau of the Old Testament. You can't fulfill your responsibility to "see to it" if you sit on the sidelines worrying only about yourself and not getting involved in the lives of others. How active are you in the lives of other students in your youth group or church? Are they having their devotions? Are they avoiding sin? What are they struggling with? Do they have any bitterness in their hearts? What would it take for you to be able to answer those kinds of questions? Who might need your encouragement today? Circle the words "see to it" to remind you to be involved in people's lives!

EXTRA READING

HEBREWS 12

What one thing would give you contentment if you had it? If you could have anything in the world that you wanted, what would make you the happiest? The author, in today's reading, says something related to this question. In verse 5, we are told to keep ourselves from the love of money and be content with what we have. Why shouldn't we seek money? Why should we be content with the amount of money we have or make? According to verse 5, it is because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." Do you realize what you are being told? To be discontented with what you have is to say that having God is not enough and we need more than Him to be happy. The love of money and discontentment has a direct correlation to how important God is to an individual. Our lack of contentment demonstrates that God is not enough to cause us to be happy. We need Him plus friends. We need Him plus better looks. We need him plus..., you fill in the blank. We should be able to live without possessions and still be content knowing God is with us. Check your level of contentment. What does it tell you about how important God is to you?

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING

HEBREWS 13

JAMES 1:12-18

AVOIDING SIN

SAY WHAT?

Read the following verses and write down what they say about how to stop my evil desires from dragging me away and enticing me. Romans 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Matthew 26:41; Romans 6:1-14

SO WHAT?

Read the following verses and write down what they say about how to stop desires that have dragged me away and are enticing me. 1 Corinthians 10:13; 2 Peter 2:9; 2 Timothy 2:22; Hebrews 4:15

NOW WHAT?

Read the following verses and write down what they say about how to stop desires that have already enticed me and are ready to result in sin. Philippians 4:8; Romans 12:2; Ephesians 4:20-24

THEN WHAT?

What personal commitment should I make in light of this passage?

Is it possible for you to resist temptation? The answer is yes, and today's reading has some very helpful insights on how to do that. James tells us, in verse 12, that the person who perseveres under temptation and does not give in is happy. In fact, he tells us that there is a crown awaiting those who have successfully resisted temptation in their lives. He then goes on to describe the steps that temptation takes before it becomes sin. We need to make sure we stop it along the way so that it does not result in sin or death. First, it begins with an evil desire. Second, that evil desire drags us away. That means to be distracted or lured away from safety. We become curious and let down our guard. Third, we are enticed. We are now away from safety and ready to take the plunge. Those desires are conceived in our mind and are all we think about. At this point, sin is just around the corner. All we are waiting for is an opportunity to sin, and an opportunity will come. However, if we stop the temptation at any point, we can resist sinning. At what point in the process of temptation are you? What do you need to do to stop the progression, before it becomes sin? Use today's questions to help you.

EXTRA READING

JAMES 1

What is the difference between a "listener" and a "doer?" It may not be what you think it is. James explains the difference in today's reading and admonishes us not to be a "listener." A listener is someone who, when he hears the Word of God, looks at it. The word James used here means stopping and actually seeing what is there. In fact, he says the listener looks closely enough to be able to see himself as he really is. The problem is that he then walks away and doesn't act upon what he sees. He is the person who goes to a camp or to church and hears a message that causes him to see himself as he really is but, when the service ends, walks away and forgets what he heard or read. A "doer" is someone who also hears, but his look is different from the "listener." He sees something from which he can't look away. What he has seen is so shocking and moving to him that he can't forget it. The result? He walks away determined to do something about it. He is so moved that he can't forget it and makes the necessary changes in his life. Which one are you? What are you working to change based on what you have recently "heard?" Don't walk away and forget what needs to change!

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING

JAMES 1

JAMES 2:8-13

FAVORITISM

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

Why are you guilty of violating the whole law if you stumble in just one area? Doesn't that seem extreme? Not when you understand James' point. The example James uses is showing favoritism. It is wrong to treat people differently for any reason. No matter what one's race is, his social status, or his financial situation, God expects us to treat everyone the same. James then says, if we do show favoritism, we are judged as though we have violated the whole law (vs.10). It seems to be similar to being punished for staying out all night when you were only 5 minutes late. It would appear unfair. It seems that way until we read Matthew 22:37-40. In this section of Scripture, Jesus says that the entire law hangs on two commandments. One of these is to love your neighbor as yourself. You see, if we show favoritism, then we violate one of the foundations of the law. If we really loved our neighbors as ourselves, we would never show favoritism. What follows in verse 13 is even more sobering. Did you see it? James tells us that God will not be merciful to us if we show favoritism to others. If God were to treat you the way you treat others, what would it be like? Are there areas where you show favoritism? What needs to change?

EXTRA READING

JAMES 2

James asks a very important question in verse 14--whether or not a person's faith, which is not demonstrated by his actions, can save him. In other words, if someone says he is saved, but he does not have behavior that seems to demonstrate it, is he really saved? As you read through this section, it becomes obvious that James' answer is no. He is telling us that it is possible to have a faith that does not save you. Faith that does not change behavior is as useless, according to James, as a person who does not meet the needs of people when he becomes aware of them. Likewise, this kind of faith is also useless in meeting our need for salvation. According to James, it is just dead faith (vs. 17). Does just believing in your head and knowing factually that Jesus is God and that He died and rose again enough to get you to heaven? According to James, it isn't (vs. 18-19). If you have the kind of saving faith seen here, you will demonstrate it by the way you live. As you examine your behavior, what do your actions tell you about your faith? Do they tell you that your faith is true saving faith, or have you deceived yourself? Underline verse 26 in your Bible to remind you to examine your life in light of your actions.

SAY WHAT?

What evidences would you see in the life of someone who is genuinely saved?

SO WHAT?

What evidences do you see in your own life?

NOW WHAT?

What behavior could deceive someone into believing he is saved when he is not?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

EXTRA READING

JAMES 2

JAMES 3:1-12

OUR TONGUES

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

What do you want to do in your future? Could God have full-time vocational ministry in your future? If you think God may be leading you into a ministry in which you would be teaching, today's reading should concern you. James tells us that teaching is not for everyone. In fact, those who teach will be judged by a stricter standard than others. That is a sobering standard when we think about the sin in our lives. What makes it even more serious is that teachers have to deal with their tongues and the danger they present just like everyone else. However, if you are going to be a teacher, you must realize that your tongue may be a small thing, but can cause great damage. Teachers must realize that the tongue can do irreparable damage. They must also realize that only through the power of God can it be tamed. If you are going to be a teacher, you must learn to control your tongue. If you don't, then you should pursue another vocation. Does the way you use your tongue allow you to be a teacher? Is your tongue being used by God to bring others to Christ, or used by Satan to hurt and discourage them? What can you do to better use your tongue and qualify yourself to be a teacher?

EXTRA READING

JAMES 3

How can we tell if we are using God's wisdom or our own? According to today's reading, we simply need to look at the results in our lives from the choices we make. Knowing whether or not we have God's wisdom is very important. We read in chapter one that if we ask God for it, He will give it to us. But we also know that our selfish pride can often get in the way of using God's wisdom. We can easily allow our selfishness and pride to influence our decisions. James tells us that we can distinguish between those who are using godly wisdom or worldly wisdom by the results in their lives. Decisions made with worldly wisdom produce bitter envy, selfishness, disorder, and evil. We see an amazing contrast between those traits and the description of the results of godly wisdom. God's wisdom produces peace, consideration, sincerity, etc. James ends this chapter with a great promise. He tells us that those who seek God's wisdom and peace will reap a harvest of righteousness. What a great motivation to use God's wisdom and never our own worldly wisdom. As you examine the results of decisions in your life, whose wisdom are you using? Take a close look at your life. What characteristics do you see?

SAY WHAT?

How would the results of worldly wisdom be revealed in our lives?

SO WHAT?

How would the results of godly wisdom be revealed in our lives?

NOW WHAT?

What steps can you take to make sure you are using godly wisdom in the choices you are making?

THEN WHAT?

What commitment should you make in light of this passage?

EXTRA READING

JAMES 3

JAMES 4:13-17

DECISION MAKING

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

Do verses 13-17 mean that we should not plan for the future? There are some who teach that these verses suggest just that. However, a closer examination of this section reveals a very different perspective. James' point is that there are many people who make plans for their future without ever considering God and what He might have planned for them. They have decided what to participate in in high school, what college to attend, where to work, any summer plans, etc., without ever considering what God would have them do. James is making the point here that we do not know what will happen tomorrow, so how can we make plans without considering God? Instead of making our own plans, we should seek His direction for our lives. Verse 17 takes it even a step further. To make plans without considering God is not only a bad idea, but it is sin. The one who knows that he ought to seek God's direction in making decisions and doesn't do it, sins. Not to seek what God wants you to do, in any decision you make, is to sin. What plans are you considering right now? Have you sought God's direction? Have you even considered what He might want you to do? If you have not, why not ask Him about it right now?

EXTRA READING

JAMES 4

Do people consider you trustworthy? Do they always believe what you say without needing proof? Or, are you someone who has to prove or swear you are telling the truth? If you do not have credibility with people, you must have found verse 12 discouraging. James tells us that we should not be people who need to swear or prove that what we say is truth. Our character ought to be of such solid reputation that when we say yes, people know it means yes and, when we say no, people know it means no. Not to be known as someone who is honest and trustworthy is a serious blight for a Christian. Our truthfulness and character ought to be above reproach. If we give our word, it should be enough. People ought to know they can depend on us. If we make a commitment, they should know we will fulfill it. If we give our word, it means something. We need to strive to be the kind of people that James describes here. Our yes should always mean yes and, our no, no. How do you measure up to this standard? Do you have a reputation for being dependable? What will it take for you to become known as this kind of person? Use today's questions to help you get started.

SAY WHAT?

In what ways do people demonstrate that they are not someone who is trustworthy?

SO WHAT?

In what ways do you demonstrate that you are not a reliable person?

NOW WHAT?

How can you begin to improve in this area?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

EXTRA READING

JAMES 5

JAMES 5:13-20

PRAYER

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

Why did James use Elijah as the example of a righteous man who could do much through prayer? The reason should give you great hope. James tells us that the prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. Would the words powerful and effective describe your prayer life? It should encourage you to learn that all we have to do is be righteous, and we can have a prayer life that is powerful and effective. James uses Elijah as an example. In 1 Kings 18, we see Elijah is bold, courageous, confident, zealous, valiant, and empowered by God. All of these are characteristics we would expect from a righteous man. In chapter 19, we see that there were also occasions when Elijah was scared, discouraged, lonely, and blind to what God was doing. He doubted God's plan. You see, he was a man "just like us." Sometimes we are powerful and bold. Other times we are not. In reality, we are just like Elijah. James' point is that we, too, can be righteous and have a powerful and effective prayer life just like Elijah. What needs to change in your life to allow you to become a righteous man? Underline "just like us" to remind you it can be done.

EXTRA READING

JAMES 5

WILDERNESS OUTFITTING



The longest-standing tool in our toolbox, the **Wilderness Outfitting** program presents an opportunity for the intentional leader to gain abnormal access to **real connection** with those they lead.

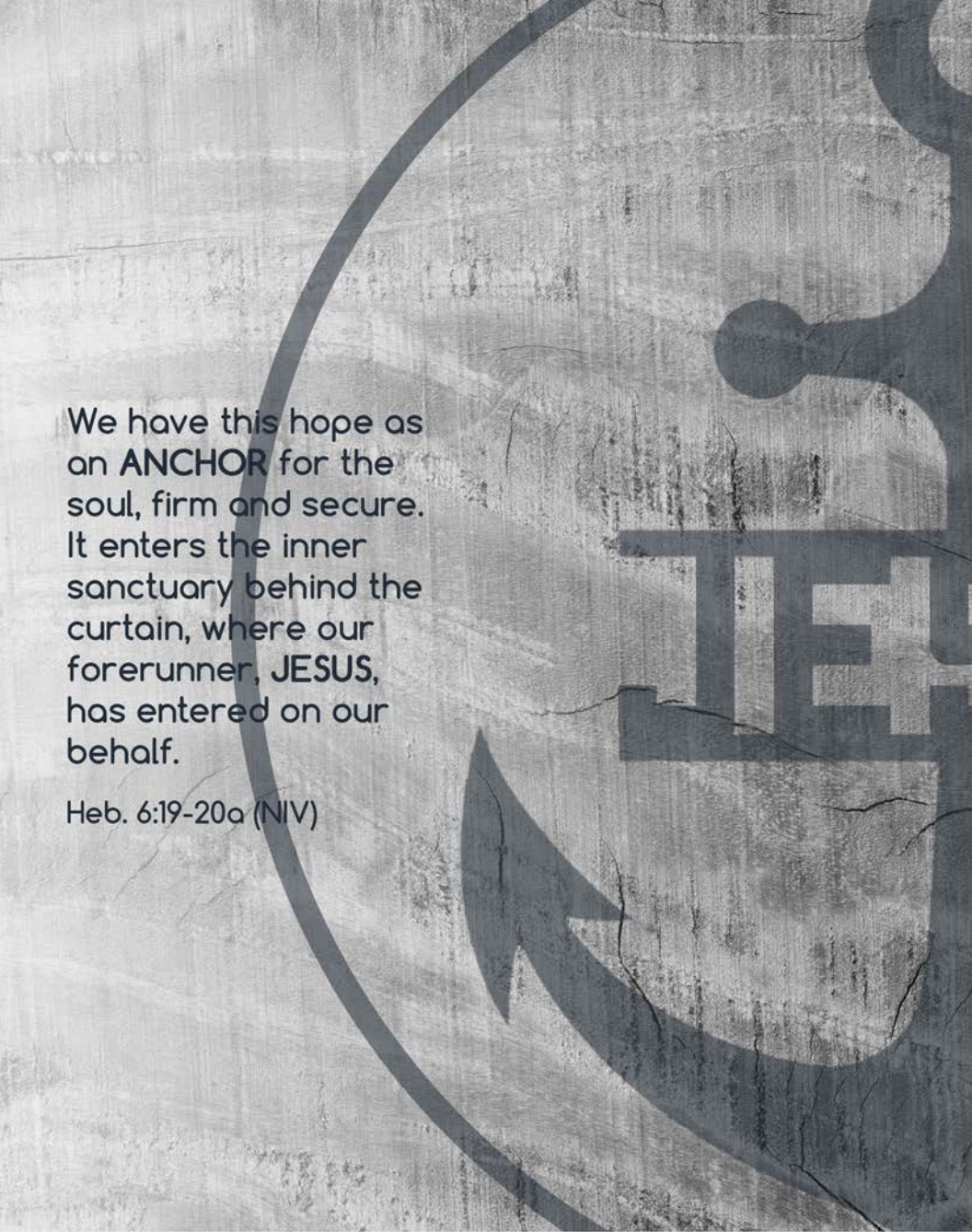
The wilderness can be leveraged into significant access to **real relationships** and **real conversations** that defy other environments... and it transfers back home beautifully.



LEARN MORE AT
SIMPLYAPILGRIM.COM/TRIPS



Photos by **Katie Hall** from a 2016 Pilgrimage trip with Ogletown Baptist Church (DE).
katiehallcreative.com



We have this hope as
an **ANCHOR** for the
soul, firm and secure.
It enters the inner
sanctuary behind the
curtain, where our
forerunner, **JESUS**,
has entered on our
behalf.

Heb. 6:19-20a (NIV)

ontrackdevotions.com

 [@ontrackdevos](https://twitter.com/ontrackdevos)

 facebook.com/ontrackdevos