

Gruff Words From a Prophet of God

Scripture Reading — James 4:1-12

Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. . . . Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up. — James 4:8-10

Martin Luther struggled to understand the letter of James because he thought it contradicted Paul's letters. Of course, that was not the case. James can be off-putting in our day too, because of his gruff commands. But sometimes we can be too delicate, saying that God "suggests" ideas for our consideration, as if he were a shop-keeper eager to please a customer.

We need to accept James for who he is—a New Testament prophet inspired by the same Spirit as the Old Testament prophets and Jesus himself. Then we will find treasures in his brief letter that will -strengthen our relationships with God and with others.

Sitting under James's teaching is like drinking from a fire hose. One relevant theme after another gushes forth: overcoming troubles in life, avoiding -hypocrisy in our faith, taming the tongue, putting an end to quarreling, ensuring healthy -employer-employee relationships, bringing peace where there has been strife and -disorder.

The letter of James is like a summary of the Old Testament Law and the Prophets, Proverbs, and the New Testament Gospels. Ponder its unforgettable words in your heart! James is a good place to continue the lifelong quest of learning to relate to others.

Prayer

Lord our God, we ask that you lift us up, for we have stumbled in so many ways. Lead us by your Spirit in the way everlasting, through Jesus. Amen.

Devotion topics: [Humility](#), [Bible](#), [Books of the Bible](#), [James](#), [Life](#), [Family & Relationships](#)

Written by George Young — <https://today.reframemedia.com/authors/george-young>

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