

James 1:1 – 8

New American Standard Bible 1995

1 James, a bond-servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,
 2 To the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad: Greetings.
 3 ² Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter
 4 various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith
 5 produces endurance. ⁴ And let endurance have *its* perfect
 6 result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in
 7 nothing.
 8 ⁵ But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who
 9 gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be
 10 given to him. ⁶ But he must ask in faith without any
 11 doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea,
 12 driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷ For that man ought not to
 13 expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, ⁸ *being*
 14 a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

**Read the passage through completely
before looking at these questions.**

Observation (What does it say?):

Consider the observation questions on the back of this page. What do you notice in this passage?

- Underline commands.
- Double-underline explanations James gives for the commands.
- What else do you observe in this passage?

Interpretation (What does it mean?):

After observing the passage:

- How do the explanations clarify the commands? Or do they?
- Do the explanations seem adequate for the strong commands?
- How would you define “perfect and complete”? What are the different meanings of those two words? Or are they the same?
- Is “perfect and complete” describing some standard of right behavior? Or does James mean something else?
- What other questions come to mind?

Application (What does it mean for me?):

- In v. 3 James assumes we know that endurance comes from testing. How does that theoretical knowledge become trust in God? How does joy come from that trust?
- What might “perfect and complete” look like in your life? What would be different?
- Where do you “lack wisdom” as it relates to this passage? Where is it difficult not to doubt? Are there areas where you feel tossed and unstable?

For additional thought and discussion:

From Trench's Synonyms, substituting [complete] for ὁλόκληρος (*holoklēros*) and [perfect] for τέλειος (*teleios*):

The distinction then is plain. The [complete] is one who has preserved, or who, having once lost, has now regained, his completeness: the [perfect] is one who has attained his moral end, that for which he was intended, namely, to be a man in Christ; however it may be true that, having reached this, other and higher ends will open out before him, to have Christ formed in him more and more. In the [complete] no grace which ought to be in a Christian man is deficient; in the [perfect] no grace is merely in its weak imperfect beginnings, but all have reached a certain ripeness and maturity.

Richard C. Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1975), 77; Originally published in 1854.

For more suggested methods of study: <http://www.goodnotsafe.com/methodical-bible-study/>

For examples of inductive studies: <http://www.goodnotsafe.com/inductive-bible-study-examples-2/>

Inductive Bible Study

(A few general ideas)

Observation **(What does it say?)**

What facts do you **observe** about the passage that help bring out the writer's thought process?

- Who are the people involved?
- What action takes place?
- What type of literature is it (poetry, history, didactic, etc.)?
- What details are included or left out?
- Are any unusual words used?
- Is there symbolic language?
- What is the grammar of the passage (pronouns, prepositions, verb tenses)?
- Are words or ideas repeated?
- Any comparisons or contrasts?
- Any cause and effect?
- Are there indications of purpose ("in order that...")?
- Are there conclusions ("Therefore...")?
- Are there explanations?
- Does the passage logically break into sections?
- How would you summarize the passage?
- What would be a good "headline" for the passage?

Interpretation **(What does it mean?)**

What questions come to mind about the facts that would help you **interpret** the meaning?

- How would the original readers have understood the passage?
- What is the main emphasis?
- Why does the writer use repetition, or contrast, or unusual words?
- What does the grammar or structure of the passage reveal about the writer's thought pattern?
- Is there a logical sequence in the passage?
- How are different ideas in the passage connected?
- Are there any new ideas or concepts presented?
- Are there difficulties in the passage?

Application **(What does it mean for me?)**

What is the impact on your life? What **application** does the Holy Spirit want to show you?

- Is there a command to obey?
- Is there a promise to be thankful for?
- Is there an attribute of God to worship?
- Is there an example to follow?

**Read nothing into the Scriptures,
but draw everything from them,
and suffer nothing to remain
hidden that is really in them.
J.A. Bengel (1687-1752)**

For a much more detailed description of the methodology, see
Robert A. Traina, *Methodical Bible Study*. Wilmore, Kentucky: Asbury Theological Seminary, 1952.