

LOVE

A new commandment I give to you, that you love *one another*... (John 13:34)

- *Internal*: How was your week? Any new life updates? How was your walk with the Lord this week?
- *External*: Practically, is there any individual or family that needs encouragement from us as a group?

TRUTH

Let the word of God dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing *one another*... (Col. 3:16)

Understanding:

1. When you reflect on the message from Sunday, what most resonated with you?

[\[Open Discussion\]](#)

2. Let's read our primary text. Who are the "rich" people in verse 1, and why does James address them so sharply?

James is speaking primarily to wealthy landowners outside the believing community who were oppressing the poor, some of whom were in the church (2:6–7). Unlike earlier sections, he issues no call to repent here; the tone echoes the Old Testament prophets pronouncing judgment on the nations and the unjust (Isa. 13:6; Amos 6:1). Yet the passage is written to the church, so believers overhear it as both comfort and warning: comfort that God sees injustice, and warning not to let money own their hearts the way it owns these oppressors.

3. Is James condemning wealth itself? How do we know?

No. Scripture presents wealth as a gift that can be used for God's glory (Deut. 8:18; 1 Tim. 6:17–19), and faithful believers like Abraham, Joseph of Arimathea, and Lydia had great resource. James condemns what these rich people did with their wealth: hoarding it (v. 3), withholding wages (v. 4), indulging themselves (v. 5), and crushing the innocent (v. 6). The problem is not having money but being owned by it, trusting it, and using it to serve self at others' expense (Matt. 6:24; 1 Tim. 6:10).

4. What sin does James expose in verse 4, and why does he say the wages are "crying out"?

These landowners defrauded the day laborers who harvested their fields, either withholding wages or delaying them. For a day laborer that meant his family went hungry. God's law explicitly forbade it (Lev. 19:13; Deut. 24:14–15), and the prophets condemned it (Jer. 22:13; Mal. 3:5). Like Abel's blood (Gen. 4:10), the stolen wages cry out to God. Injustice that goes unnoticed by courts and society never goes unnoticed by him.

5. What picture does James paint in verse 5 with "fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter"?

It is the image of livestock eating heartily right up until the day they are slaughtered, unaware of what is coming (Jer. 12:3). These rich people lived in luxury and self-indulgence, feeding every appetite, while judgment approached. Self-indulgence dulls spiritual awareness; comfort can numb

us to eternity. Jesus' parable of the rich man and Lazarus shows the same tragedy (Luke 16:19–25): a life of feasting that ends in torment because the heart was never turned toward God or neighbor.

6. Who is "the righteous person" in verse 6, and what does it mean that "he does not resist you"? Most likely James means the innocent poor generally, people the rich condemned through rigged courts and economic oppression that could literally lead to death (2:6). Taking away a poor man's livelihood could amount to taking his life. The righteous person's non-resistance shows how defenseless he is. Many readers also hear an echo of Jesus, "the Righteous One" (Acts 3:14; 7:52), who was condemned unjustly and did not resist (Isa. 53:7; 1 Pet. 2:23). In either case, the defenseless sufferer is vindicated by God, and his oppressors are not.

Application:

7. If your bank statement and calendar were read aloud as "evidence" of what you treasure, what would they say? What is one change you want to make?
8. Oftentimes, the Bible provides graceful actions that correspond and oppose sinful actions. What graceful act opposes greed? What is one specific step you will take this week with your money, time, or possessions to store up treasure in heaven?
9. Are there ways you benefit from or contribute to unfairness toward workers, whether as an employer, customer, or consumer? How could you act more justly this week?
10. Any other thoughts you would like to share before we wrap up this text?

GREAT COMMISSION

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations... (Matt. 28:19-20)

- *Internal*: Did you make time to disciple your family this week? Pray with them?
- *External*: Is your life marked by joy/contentment? Are you prepared to share the gospel if the Holy Spirit prompted? Is the name of Jesus on your lips in your day-to-day activity?

CONFESSION/PRAYER/REPENTANCE

But exhort *one another* every day, as long as it is called "today,"... (Heb. 3:12-14)

- Confession is agreeing with God about our sin according to the Scriptures. Is there anything you want to confess before the group (generally)? [*apathy, idolatry, selfishness, jealousy, anger, envy*]
- Let's pray, asking God to help us apply His word to our lives.

Sources:

- ESV Study Bible Commentary
- GotQuestions.org
- Multiple AI Resources