



Leah C. Adams

JAMES

RECIPE FOR A LIVING FAITH

A SIX-WEEK BIBLE STUDY



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James: Recipe for a Living Faith
Written by Leah Adams

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JAMES ENDORSEMENTS

Leah Adams writes to glorify God and bring the Scriptures to life. She does exactly that in James: Recipe for a Living Faith. Leah's authentic writing is always truth-telling, making the gospel even more beautiful. The recipe found in this Bible study is one we all need and can use for living a life filled with a living faith. Thank you, Leah, for allowing God to use your voice to guide us on this journey of faith.

Karen Barrows

Compassion International, Speaker Relations Director

Through her writing, Leah is available and transparent to open up her treasure chest called life. It's full of wisdom, life experiences, and revelation that have challenged and encouraged lives all over the world. Lean in, take notes, and apply the wisdom revealed in the Book of James. It's like a cool drink of water in the desert, continually refreshing those who will engage with it.

Mike Medori

Pastor, Vertical Church of the Mountains, Blairsville, Georgia

We also recommend Leah's other Bible study, Hebrews: A Better Blend, by Warner Press: "This (HeBrews: A Better Blend) has been a great study! One of the best I've ever done or led."

Lisa Pickens

Bible Study Leader

As a wonderful, creative writer, Leah Adams managed to magically place herself in the midst of our women's Bible study group each week as we studied HeBrews: A Better Blend. We could almost imagine her sitting among us explaining and interpreting the characters, history, and fascinating details of a book that might have easily been daunting. Leah became a teacher and a friend to us. She was honest, genuine, and we trusted her. Open your front door and invite her in—you will learn, laugh, and long remember the lessons God has inspired her to teach you.

Debbi Brightbill

Bible Study Leader

FOREWORD

We live in an age of epic distractions. While knowledge may be power, the Information Age created a new complication for us—information overload. Most of us face this problem daily via cool-looking screens we carry in our pockets. Yet long before smart phones and the digital lifestyle appeared on the horizon, James spoke wisdom to anyone who would listen: doers of the word, not hearers only. Information is great, but even the best information, the Word of God, is incomplete without action. Action is the real currency of the twenty-first century. Sorry, Bitcoin.

I know Leah Adams to be a doer of the Word. My family and I worked for many years as missionaries in a difficult, restricted nation. Leah frequently reached out to us with prayer and emotional support. Although I know she would prefer I not share this particular tidbit of information, I think it's important for you to know she also funded local ministry projects for our underground seminary students. She lives the Christian life from a position of action, not simply knowledge.

When Leah asked me to write the foreword for her new study on James, I of course felt honored, but I was mostly excited at the chance to see her manuscript in advance. She is a gifted teacher who brings her Southern charm to the pages of this study. Leah skillfully invites us to engage with the Book of James through stories, examples, and background information, all while teaching personal Bible study skills. You might just become a better cook too, because she shares some of her favorite recipes throughout the study. All these inviting components offer a great excuse to kick the guys out for a ladies' Bible study night, if you ask me.

But let's face it: James has some hard things to say. He's not exactly touchy-feely. Leah matches James step-for-step and isn't afraid to tackle these difficult issues, which is one of the reasons I find her study so refreshing. She addresses sin for what it is, and her topical approach takes some of the hard truths in James and provides a broader biblical context to them. The end result is a rich, gospel-centered approach for living out God's commands in our daily lives.

History has yet to say whether our generation of women will be one that gathered around screens and at conferences to consume information about the Word of God...or a generation of women who took massive action on the Word that was implanted. My prayer for you, as you turn the pages of this study, is that you will allow the Word to transform you from the inside out. Let it move you to action and affect the way you speak to your children, the way you care for the stranger, the way you get honest before God about your sin. The twenty-first century needs a generation of women who take action. Let's be those women.

Arabah Joy

Author, Blogger, and Online Mentor at arabahjoy.com

PREFACE

A Word from Leah...

There I sat, minding my own business.

I had no writing project ongoing, nor was I writing with any regularity on my blog. My writing mojo had seemed to depart, and I was unsure if it would ever return. And I was not unhappy about it.

Then, in mid-November 2018, an email popped into my inbox. The email was from my sweet editor at Warner Press, Karen Rhodes, whom I had not heard from for a long time. The subject line read, "Hey, woman, how are you?" Yay, a let's catch-up email from Karen.

I opened the email, and in the very first paragraph, she dropped a nuclear bomb on me.

"I'm writing to ask if you would consider writing another Bible study for us."

Say what??? I reread the sentence. Yep, that's what it said. She also told me that my previous Bible study, HeBrews: A Better Blend was still selling well, and they wanted another "Leah" study. You could have knocked me over with a feather. Write another Bible study? Hmmmm...

I asked her if I could pray about it for a few days and get back with her. She agreed, and so I did. After several days the Lord told me to say "yes" to writing a Bible study on the Book of James. What you hold in your hands is that "yes."

I have prayed like a crazy woman over this Bible study. Please understand, I always pray as I write, but this time I had no words to put on paper. If this Bible study were going to be written, the responsibility for it would be on God's Holy Spirit. He called me to it, and He MUST equip me with words. He was, and is, and always will be faithful, praise His holy name!

So many people deserve a shout out for supporting and encouraging me as I write. One group of people rises to the top, however.

Karen Rhodes and the team at Warner Press: Thank you for entrusting this book to me. You do your jobs with distinction, professionalism, and vision. It is my privilege to, once again, partner with you on a book. I pray this study encourages many to live life with renewed determination to look more like Jesus to those who circle around their lives.

And to Jesus: You are the reason I have words to tap out on a keyboard. You are the reason I live and move and breathe. You are my very best Friend, and I will go to my grave praising You for Your willingness to be my substitute on the cross. When God sees me, He sees me through Your blood. I am chosen, redeemed, forgiven, adopted...a precious daughter of the King. There are no words to express the gratefulness and adoration I feel for You.

Leah

INTRODUCTION

“How do I know if God is speaking to me?”

This is such a common question among Christ-followers, and I’m pretty sure it is not a question exclusive to twenty-first century Christians. After Jesus died on the cross, rose on the third day, and left earth for heaven, those who follow Christ live by faith, and listen for the still, small voice of the Holy Spirit for guidance.

You might ask, “In what ways does God speak to us?”

There are several. God speaks to us as we are praying to Him, through other people, books, music, nature, but His voice is most apparent in Scripture. Scripture is God’s heart for His people poured out in ink.

Another common question among Christians is, “How do I live like Jesus?”

The entire canon of Scripture has a redemptive red thread woven throughout. From Genesis to Revelation, we find the most excellent love story ever told, the story of how God made possible a restored relationship with humans by sending Jesus to pay the debt for our sin. A debt we would never be able to pay.

There is wisdom for life in each book of the Bible, but none, other than Proverbs, even comes close to James in wisdom and encouragement for our daily walk with Jesus. My prayer is that through this Bible study, you will hear God’s voice offering instruction for living a life that reflects Jesus.

The fact that you have chosen this Bible study tells me that you, dear friend, want your journey on this groaning earth to shout *Christ in [me], the hope of glory* (Colossians 1:27). You have come to the right place. James will be our mentor throughout this study. He will encourage us at times while trampling our toes at other times. The Book of James is practical, engaging, and short enough to read in one sitting. It is full of commands and wisdom born of life experience. James held nothing back in his letter because he knew the only way to live is the Jesus way.

After six weeks of sitting at the feet of James, we will come to the end of the study, having read the entire book, but we will not go through it chronologically. The Lord has suggested a topical study of James rather than a chapter-by-chapter, verse-by-verse study. As we dive in, I think you will see why.

What you hold is a six-week Bible study that can be done individually or as a group. (Group studies are wonderful, so find a few friends and dive in together!) Contained within each week of the study are five days of at-home study. Notice I did not use the dreaded H word—homework. Each day of study will require 20–30 minutes of your time. Also included in each week of the study is a memory or meditation verse or verses from James, one from each chapter in the book. I am committing to memorizing all of these, and I hope you will join me. You will find them within each week of the study and also on a page at the back of the book, designed to allow you to cut them out and carry them with you. Something new for me in this study is that I have included topics for further study in some of the days of at-home work. The “For Further Study” section is for those who can’t get enough and want to go deeper. You are free to do it or not, and there is no condemnation for choosing not to do it.

God’s Word is living and active and has the power to change your life. Engage with it, and I promise you will find yourself walking closer to Jesus and looking more like Him. Pinky promise!

I am eager to take this journey with you and will be praying for you. Grab your Bible, a pen, and a heart set on pursuing Christlike living. I will meet you in our first week of study.

WEEK ONE

JAMES: HIS LIFE AND LEGACY

Mentor.

From loads of personal experience as both a mentor and a mentee over the past ten years, I have learned that a mentor is an older or older-in-the-faith person who comes alongside a younger or younger-in-the-faith person and offers encouragement, instruction, correction, and accountability for a specific task, or for life in general.

It is my privilege to mentor women in life and the kitchen. Often I bring women and girls into my kitchen and teach them how to make homemade dishes that will bless their families' tummies. I give them instruction on how to make the recipe and encouragement to go home and try making it themselves. Sometimes a woman will call or text me to find out why a dish she made did not turn out Pinterest worthy. That gives me a teaching moment to correct anything that went awry. No small number of husbands have thanked me for helping their wife cook some tasty dishes.

As you and I walk through our days, our lives should be patterned after the life that Jesus lived while He was on earth. Nowhere do we need a mentor more than in our calling to live like Jesus. God knew that and sovereignly placed the Book of James in Holy Writ. This week we will spend time getting to know our mentor, James, and understand a bit about why he felt compelled to write the book that bears his name.

For this first week's memory verse, you will think I have lost my mind, and that is possible. However, I believe by the time you turn the page on the final day of Week 1 homework, you will completely agree with me that James 1:1 is a perfect memory verse for this week. Write every word of the verse in the space below.

James 1:1



Recipe

I always tell those who pull up to my table that they are our guest the first time they eat with us; after that, they are family. So, the first recipe I would serve to you and James is one that is a favorite with my family and most of the people who have tucked their knees beneath my table.

A dear friend gave me the recipe for Creamy Chicken Enchiladas years ago. I have no idea where it originated, but it is a gem. Creamy Chicken Enchiladas are rich, creamy, comfort food if ever comfort food existed. They are easy to make and can be assembled very quickly. That makes them a total win for week-night dinners, especially if you use a precooked rotisserie chicken, which I am convinced is a gift from the hand of God.

RECIPE

CREAMY CHICKEN ENCHILADAS

- 1 tablespoon (or more) **butter**
- 1 medium **onion**, chopped
- 1 4.5 oz. can chopped **green chilies**, drained
- 1 8 oz. package **cream cheese**, softened and cut into large chunks
- 3½ cups chopped, cooked **chicken breast**
- 8 medium sized **flour tortillas**
- 8-10 oz. **Monterey Jack cheese**, shredded (can use Pepper Jack if you like some zing)
- 2 cups **whipping cream**

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Melt butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Add onions and sauté 5 minutes or until onions become translucent. Add green chilies and sauté for 1 minute. Add in cream cheese and chicken, stirring constantly until cream cheese melts.

Spoon 2-3 tablespoons of chicken mixture down center of each flour tortilla. Roll the individual tortillas around the chicken mixture and place in a lightly greased 9 x 13 baking dish, seam side down.

Sprinkle tortillas with Monterey Jack cheese, then drizzle with whipping cream. Cover with foil and bake for 45 minutes.

Ready to begin our journey through James? Let's go!

DAY 1

How do you feel about meeting new people?

Are you excited and eager to learn more about them, or does the thought of meeting someone new cause you anxiety? Do you ask yourself questions such as: *Will they like me? What if I say something stupid? Do we have anything in common or will there be long stretches of uncomfortable silence?*

Allow me to put your mind at ease as we meet James in the pages of Scripture. He will like you, and the two of you will have a lot in common. James will encourage you to keep on keeping on in your walk with Jesus. He will also step on your toes occasionally but in a loving sort of way.

Before we invite James over for a cup of coffee, let's start with a 50,000-foot view of the Book of James.

Who wrote the Book of James?

You might be thinking, "Well, duh, Leah. Everyone knows it was James, the brother of Jesus."

Hold your horses a minute! Other "Jameses" have been tossed around over the centuries as the writer of the Book of James, so let's take a few minutes to consider those.

The name James was used abundantly in the early first century and was a form of the Old Testament name Jacob. Several possible authors of the book have floated to the top over the years simply because they were named James. Only two have been given much credence at all, and only one is widely accepted.

1. James, the brother of John; the sons of Zebedee—one of the three intimate friends of Christ
2. James, the son of Alphaeus—another of the disciples with little known about him
3. James, the father of Judas, the disciple—not Judas Iscariot
4. James, the Less (In *Clarke's Commentary* you will find this James also referred to as James, the son of Alphaeus, #2 above)
5. James, the brother of Jesus

While some commentators ascribe the authorship of this book to James, the son of Zebedee, the majority agree that James, the brother of Jesus, is the author. Many things make this choice of authors sensible, so we will lean into that choice.

FOR FURTHER STUDY

Explore a few commentaries on your own about the issue of the identity of the author of James, as well as the dating of the book.

When was the Book of James written?

As with the issue of author identity, divergent opinions exist regarding the dating of the Book of James. If you ascribe to the idea that James, the brother of Jesus, wrote the epistle, then you will understand that it had to be written before A.D. 62 when James was martyred, according to the historian, Josephus. Some believe it was written near the end of James' life, while others think the book was written between A.D. 45 and A.D. 50.

With all of that as background, I want us to spend the remainder of our time today learning about the man, James. We will accomplish this through a character study. Each of the scriptures below reference James, the Lord's brother, in some way. Look up each reference and note the context in which James is mentioned, either directly or inferred.

Matthew 13:54–58

John 7:1–5

Acts 1:12-14 (Careful! There is more than one reference to men named “James” mentioned here.)

Acts 15:13-22

Acts 21:17-18

Galatians 1:18-19



