

# Themes in James

“Spiritual ‘wholeness,’ then, we suggest, is the central concern of the letter.” – Douglas Moo<sup>1</sup>

*How do the themes suggested below relate to each other?*

*How would you define “spiritual wholeness?”*

*What additional topics or themes do you see in James? How would you adjust the way the text is categorized below?*

*How do the themes relate to the context of believers “in the Dispersion”?*

1	• <b>Spiritual Wholeness</b>	40	its beauty perishes. So also will	79	wickedness and receive with
2	• <b>Perseverance</b>	41	the rich man fade away in the	80	meekness the implanted word,
3	• <b>Controlled speech</b>	42	midst of his pursuits.	81	which is able to save your
4	• <b>Rich and Poor</b>	43	<sup>12</sup> Blessed is the man who	82	souls.
5		44	remains steadfast under trial,	83	<sup>22</sup> But be doers of the word, and
6	1 James, a servant of God and	45	for when he has stood the test	84	not hearers only, deceiving
7	of the Lord Jesus Christ,	46	he will receive the crown of	85	yourselves. <sup>23</sup> For if anyone is a
8	To the twelve tribes in the	47	life, which God has promised to	86	hearer of the word and not a
9	Dispersion:	48	those who love him. <sup>13</sup> Let no	87	doer, he is like a man who
10	Greetings.	49	one say when he is tempted, “I	88	looks intently at his natural face
11	<sup>2</sup> Count it all joy, my brothers,	50	am being tempted by God,” for	89	in a mirror. <sup>24</sup> For he looks at
12	when you meet trials of various	51	God cannot be tempted with	90	himself and goes away and at
13	kinds, <sup>3</sup> for you know that the	52	evil, and he himself tempts no	91	once forgets what he was like.
14	testing of your faith produces	53	one. <sup>14</sup> But each person is	92	<sup>25</sup> But the one who looks into
15	steadfastness. <sup>4</sup> And let	54	tempted when he is lured and	93	the perfect law, the law of
16	steadfastness have its full	55	enticed by his own desire.	94	liberty, and perseveres, being
17	effect, that you may be perfect	56	<sup>15</sup> Then desire when it has	95	no hearer who forgets but a
18	and complete, lacking in	57	conceived gives birth to sin,	96	doer who acts, he will be
19	nothing.	58	and sin when it is fully grown	97	blessed in his doing.
20	<sup>5</sup> If any of you lacks wisdom,	59	brings forth death.	98	<sup>26</sup> If anyone thinks he is
21	let him ask God, who gives	60	<sup>16</sup> Do not be deceived, my	99	religious and does not bridle his
22	generously to all without	61	beloved brothers. <sup>17</sup> Every good	100	tongue but deceives his heart,
23	reproach, and it will be given	62	gift and every perfect gift is	101	this person's religion is
24	him. <sup>6</sup> But let him ask in faith,	63	from above, coming down from	102	worthless. <sup>27</sup> Religion that is
25	with no doubting, for the one	64	the Father of lights, with whom	103	pure and undefiled before God
26	who doubts is like a wave of	65	there is no variation or shadow	104	the Father is this: to visit
27	the sea that is driven and tossed	66	due to change. <sup>18</sup> Of his own	105	orphans and widows in their
28	by the wind. <sup>7</sup> For that person	67	will he brought us forth by the	106	affliction, and to keep oneself
29	must not suppose that he will	68	word of truth, that we should be	107	unstained from the world.
30	receive anything from the Lord;	69	a kind of firstfruits of his	108	<b>2</b> My brothers, show no
31	<sup>8</sup> he is a double-minded man,	70	creatures.	109	partiality as you hold the faith
32	unstable in all his ways.	71	<sup>19</sup> Know this, my beloved	110	in our Lord Jesus Christ, the
33	<sup>9</sup> Let the lowly brother boast in	72	brothers: let every person be	111	Lord of glory. <sup>2</sup> For if a man
34	his exaltation, <sup>10</sup> and the rich in	73	quick to hear, slow to speak,	112	wearing a gold ring and fine
35	his humiliation, because like a	74	slow to anger; <sup>20</sup> for the anger	113	clothing comes into your
36	flower of the grass he will pass	75	of man does not produce the	114	assembly, and a poor man in
37	away. <sup>11</sup> For the sun rises with	76	righteousness of God.	115	shabby clothing also comes in,
38	its scorching heat and withers	77	<sup>21</sup> Therefore put away all	116	<sup>3</sup> and if you pay attention to the
39	the grass; its flower falls, and	78	filthiness and rampant	117	one who wears the fine clothing

<sup>1</sup> Douglas Moo, *The Letter of James* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. 2000), 46.

118 and say, "You sit here in a good  
119 place," while you say to the  
120 poor man, "You stand over  
121 there," or, "Sit down at my  
122 feet," <sup>4</sup> have you not then made  
123 distinctions among yourselves  
124 and become judges with evil  
125 thoughts? <sup>5</sup> Listen, my beloved  
126 brothers, has not God chosen  
127 those who are poor in the world  
128 to be rich in faith and heirs of  
129 the kingdom, which he has  
130 promised to those who love  
131 him? <sup>6</sup> But you have dishonored  
132 the poor man. Are not the rich  
133 the ones who oppress you, and  
134 the ones who drag you into  
135 court? <sup>7</sup> Are they not the ones  
136 who blaspheme the honorable  
137 name by which you were  
138 called?  
139 <sup>8</sup> If you really fulfill the royal  
140 law according to the Scripture,  
141 "You shall love your neighbor  
142 as yourself," you are doing  
143 well. <sup>9</sup> But if you show  
144 partiality, you are committing  
145 sin and are convicted by the  
146 law as transgressors. <sup>10</sup> For  
147 whoever keeps the whole law  
148 but fails in one point has  
149 become guilty of all of it. <sup>11</sup> For  
150 he who said, "Do not commit  
151 adultery," also said, "Do not  
152 murder." If you do not commit  
153 adultery but do murder, you  
154 have become a transgressor of  
155 the law. <sup>12</sup> So speak and so act  
156 as those who are to be judged  
157 under the law of liberty. <sup>13</sup> For  
158 judgment is without mercy to  
159 one who has shown no mercy.  
160 Mercy triumphs over judgment.  
161 <sup>14</sup> What good is it, my brothers,  
162 if someone says he has faith but  
163 does not have works? Can that  
164 faith save him? <sup>15</sup> If a brother or  
165 sister is poorly clothed and  
166 lacking in daily food, <sup>16</sup> and one  
167 of you says to them, "Go in  
168 peace, be warmed and filled,"  
169 without giving them the things  
170 needed for the body, what good  
171 is that? <sup>17</sup> So also faith by itself,

172 if it does not have works, is  
173 dead.  
174 <sup>18</sup> But someone will say, "You  
175 have faith and I have works."  
176 Show me your faith apart from  
177 your works, and I will show  
178 you my faith by my works.  
179 <sup>19</sup> You believe that God is one;  
180 you do well. Even the demons  
181 believe—and shudder! <sup>20</sup> Do  
182 you want to be shown, you  
183 foolish person, that faith apart  
184 from works is useless? <sup>21</sup> Was  
185 not Abraham our father  
186 justified by works when he  
187 offered up his son Isaac on the  
188 altar? <sup>22</sup> You see that faith was  
189 active along with his works,  
190 and faith was completed by his  
191 works; <sup>23</sup> and the Scripture was  
192 fulfilled that says, "Abraham  
193 believed God, and it was  
194 counted to him as  
195 righteousness"—and he was  
196 called a friend of God. <sup>24</sup> You  
197 see that a person is justified by  
198 works and not by faith alone.  
199 <sup>25</sup> And in the same way was not  
200 also Rahab the prostitute  
201 justified by works when she  
202 received the messengers and  
203 sent them out by another way?  
204 <sup>26</sup> For as the body apart from  
205 the spirit is dead, so also faith  
206 apart from works is dead.  
207 **3** Not many of you should  
208 become teachers, my brothers,  
209 for you know that we who  
210 teach will be judged with  
211 greater strictness. <sup>2</sup> For we all  
212 stumble in many ways. And if  
213 anyone does not stumble in  
214 what he says, he is a perfect  
215 man, able also to bridle his  
216 whole body. <sup>3</sup> If we put bits into  
217 the mouths of horses so that  
218 they obey us, we guide their  
219 whole bodies as well. <sup>4</sup> Look at  
220 the ships also: though they are  
221 so large and are driven by  
222 strong winds, they are guided  
223 by a very small rudder  
224 wherever the will of the pilot  
225 directs. <sup>5</sup> So also the tongue is a

226 small member, yet it boasts of  
227 great things.  
228 How great a forest is set ablaze  
229 by such a small fire! <sup>6</sup> And the  
230 tongue is a fire, a world of  
231 unrighteousness. The tongue is  
232 set among our members,  
233 staining the whole body, setting  
234 on fire the entire course of life,  
235 and set on fire by hell. <sup>7</sup> For  
236 every kind of beast and bird, of  
237 reptile and sea creature, can be  
238 tamed and has been tamed by  
239 mankind, <sup>8</sup> but no human being  
240 can tame the tongue. It is a  
241 restless evil, full of deadly  
242 poison. <sup>9</sup> With it we bless our  
243 Lord and Father, and with it we  
244 curse people who are made in  
245 the likeness of God. <sup>10</sup> From the  
246 same mouth come blessing and  
247 cursing. My brothers, these  
248 things ought not to be so.  
249 <sup>11</sup> Does a spring pour forth from  
250 the same opening both fresh  
251 and salt water? <sup>12</sup> Can a fig tree,  
252 my brothers, bear olives, or a  
253 grapevine produce figs? Neither  
254 can a salt pond yield fresh  
255 water.  
256 <sup>13</sup> Who is wise and  
257 understanding among you? By  
258 his good conduct let him show  
259 his works in the meekness of  
260 wisdom. <sup>14</sup> But if you have  
261 bitter jealousy and selfish  
262 ambition in your hearts, do not  
263 boast and be false to the truth.  
264 <sup>15</sup> This is not the wisdom that  
265 comes down from above, but is  
266 earthly, unspiritual, demonic.  
267 <sup>16</sup> For where jealousy and  
268 selfish ambition exist, there  
269 will be disorder and every vile  
270 practice. <sup>17</sup> But the wisdom  
271 from above is first pure, then  
272 peaceable, gentle, open to  
273 reason, full of mercy and good  
274 fruits, impartial and sincere.  
275 <sup>18</sup> And a harvest of  
276 righteousness is sown in peace  
277 by those who make peace.  
278 **4** What causes quarrels and  
279 what causes fights among you?

280 Is it not this, that your passions  
281 are at war within you? <sup>2</sup> You  
282 desire and do not have, so you  
283 murder. You covet and cannot  
284 obtain, so you fight and quarrel.  
285 You do not have, because you  
286 do not ask. <sup>3</sup> You ask and do  
287 not receive, because you ask  
288 wrongly, to spend it on your  
289 passions. <sup>4</sup> You adulterous  
290 people! Do you not know that  
291 friendship with the world is  
292 enmity with God? Therefore  
293 whoever wishes to be a friend  
294 of the world makes himself an  
295 enemy of God. <sup>5</sup> Or do you  
296 suppose it is to no purpose that  
297 the Scripture says, "He yearns  
298 jealously over the spirit that he  
299 has made to dwell in us"? <sup>6</sup> But  
300 he gives more grace. Therefore  
301 it says, "God opposes the proud  
302 but gives grace to the humble."  
303 <sup>7</sup> Submit yourselves therefore to  
304 God. Resist the devil, and he  
305 will flee from you. <sup>8</sup> Draw near  
306 to God, and he will draw near  
307 to you. Cleanse your hands,  
308 you sinners, and purify your  
309 hearts, you double-minded. <sup>9</sup> Be  
310 wretched and mourn and weep.  
311 Let your laughter be turned to  
312 mourning and your joy to  
313 gloom. <sup>10</sup> Humble yourselves  
314 before the Lord, and he will  
315 exalt you.  
316 <sup>11</sup> Do not speak evil against one  
317 another, brothers. The one who  
318 speaks against a brother or  
319 judges his brother, speaks evil  
320 against the law and judges the  
321 law. But if you judge the law,  
322 you are not a doer of the law  
323 but a judge. <sup>12</sup> There is only one  
324 lawgiver and judge, he who is  
325 able to save and to destroy. But  
326 who are you to judge your  
327 neighbor?  
328 <sup>13</sup> Come now, you who say,  
329 "Today or tomorrow we will go  
330 into such and such a town and  
331 spend a year there and trade

332 and make a profit"— <sup>14</sup> yet you  
333 do not know what tomorrow  
334 will bring. What is your life?  
335 For you are a mist that appears  
336 for a little time and then  
337 vanishes. <sup>15</sup> Instead you ought  
338 to say, "If the Lord wills, we  
339 will live and do this or that."  
340 <sup>16</sup> As it is, you boast in your  
341 arrogance. All such boasting is  
342 evil. <sup>17</sup> So whoever knows the  
343 right thing to do and fails to do  
344 it, for him it is sin.  
345 <sup>5</sup> Come now, you rich, weep  
346 and howl for the miseries that  
347 are coming upon you. <sup>2</sup> Your  
348 riches have rotted and your  
349 garments are moth-eaten.  
350 <sup>3</sup> Your gold and silver have  
351 corroded, and their corrosion  
352 will be evidence against you  
353 and will eat your flesh like fire.  
354 You have laid up treasure in the  
355 last days. <sup>4</sup> Behold, the wages  
356 of the laborers who mowed  
357 your fields, which you kept  
358 back by fraud, are crying out  
359 against you, and the cries of the  
360 harvesters have reached the  
361 ears of the Lord of hosts. <sup>5</sup> You  
362 have lived on the earth in  
363 luxury and in self-indulgence.  
364 You have fattened your hearts  
365 in a day of slaughter. <sup>6</sup> You  
366 have condemned and murdered  
367 the righteous person. He does  
368 not resist you.  
369 <sup>7</sup> Be patient, therefore, brothers,  
370 until the coming of the Lord.  
371 See how the farmer waits for  
372 the precious fruit of the earth,  
373 being patient about it, until it  
374 receives the early and the late  
375 rains. <sup>8</sup> You also, be patient.  
376 Establish your hearts, for the  
377 coming of the Lord is at hand.  
378 <sup>9</sup> Do not grumble against one  
379 another, brothers, so that you  
380 may not be judged; behold, the  
381 Judge is standing at the door.  
382 <sup>10</sup> As an example of suffering  
383 and patience, brothers, take the

384 prophets who spoke in the  
385 name of the Lord. <sup>11</sup> Behold, we  
386 consider those blessed who  
387 remained steadfast. You have  
388 heard of the steadfastness of  
389 Job, and you have seen the  
390 purpose of the Lord, how the  
391 Lord is compassionate and  
392 merciful.  
393 <sup>12</sup> But above all, my brothers,  
394 do not swear, either by heaven  
395 or by earth or by any other  
396 oath, but let your "yes" be yes  
397 and your "no" be no, so that  
398 you may not fall under  
399 condemnation.  
400 <sup>13</sup> Is anyone among you  
401 suffering? Let him pray. Is  
402 anyone cheerful? Let him sing  
403 praise. <sup>14</sup> Is anyone among you  
404 sick? Let him call for the elders  
405 of the church, and let them pray  
406 over him, anointing him with  
407 oil in the name of the Lord.  
408 <sup>15</sup> And the prayer of faith will  
409 save the one who is sick, and  
410 the Lord will raise him up. And  
411 if he has committed sins, he  
412 will be forgiven. <sup>16</sup> Therefore,  
413 confess your sins to one  
414 another and pray for one  
415 another, that you may be  
416 healed. The prayer of a  
417 righteous person has great  
418 power as it is working. <sup>17</sup> Elijah  
419 was a man with a nature like  
420 ours, and he prayed fervently  
421 that it might not rain, and for  
422 three years and six months it  
423 did not rain on the earth.  
424 <sup>18</sup> Then he prayed again, and  
425 heaven gave rain, and the earth  
426 bore its fruit.  
427 <sup>19</sup> My brothers, if anyone  
428 among you wanders from the  
429 truth and someone brings him  
430 back, <sup>20</sup> let him know that  
431 whoever brings back a sinner  
432 from his wandering will save  
433 his soul from death and will  
434 cover a multitude of sins.