

# NIV Online-Friendly Involvement Learning

## Lesson 9 | August 2, 2020

### Into the Lesson

Distribute handouts (you create) with all the following statements. After you read each one aloud, call for *agree* or *disagree* by shows of hands, physical or electronic; tally results.

- 1–Most of the truly wise people I know are older and more experienced than I am.
- 2–Satan uses tough times to push us away from God.
- 3–It’s easy to condemn the wealthy, but it’s difficult not to yearn for financial security.
- 4–The lives of some smart people show how foolish they can be.
- 5–I’ve seen how terrible problems or devastating disappointments have brought some people closer to God.
- 6–Poverty in our community would be eradicated if poor people simply became practicing Christians.
- 7–Wisdom is difficult to achieve, but it’s possible for those who will study and work at it.
- 8–In difficult times, it’s natural to wonder whether God has abandoned us.
- 9–Poverty is a scourge of Satan; God’s favor is usually accompanied by material blessing.

If you have time, ask volunteers to explain why they chose as they did for one or two of the statements.

Say, “Each statement reflects a concern addressed by the book of James, both in this week’s passage and throughout the book.”

### Into the Word

Ask learners what they know about the author of the book of James. Then ask learners what they know about the book that bears his name. Add comments from the Lesson Context to complete or correct their understanding in both areas.

Inform the class that today’s study introduces three major themes in the book of James. Then form three groups (or multiples of three for larger classes), designating them Wisdom Group, Trials Group, and Poverty Group. Those participating virtually can be placed in Zoom breakouts. Challenge them to listen for instruction from the text on their assigned theme as a volunteer reads James 1:1-11 aloud.

Following the reading of the text, ask groups to make a list of teachings on their assigned topic, with verse references. After discussion winds down, reconvene for a whole-class discussion and for groups to report their findings.

Send students back to their small groups (physically and/or via Zoom breakouts) to discuss how the statements from the beginning of the class session compare and/or contrast with the teaching of today’s text. After five minutes, reconvene for whole-class discussion to seek consensus on the findings (*expected responses*: wisdom–1, 4, and 7; trials–2, 5, and 8; poverty–3, 6, and 9).

Focus on verse 8 and ask for an explanation of what it means to be “double minded.” Make a transition to Into Life by asking, “In what ways does being double-minded hinder the Christian’s ability to obey the teaching of today’s text?”

### Into Life

Ask learners to take no more than one minute to write a prayer that requests God’s wisdom in a specific

area. The prayer should also confess the sin of double-mindedness that hinders receiving wisdom in that area. Assure learners that you won't put them on the spot by asking them to reveal their prayers to the class but that you will invite volunteers to do so. Be prepared to read your own prayer in this regard.

*Option.* As time allows and the needs of your class dictate, distribute copies\* of one or more of the three exercises on the activity page, which can be downloaded to be completed by study pairs. If given as at-home work instead, encourage completion by stressing that the activity or activities will be the first matter the class will discuss during next week's lesson.

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\*Note: Whenever you distribute copies of anything, use hard-copy (paper) handouts for those physically present and e-copies for those on Zoom.

# NIV Online-Friendly Involvement Learning

## Lesson 10 | August 9, 2020

### Into the Lesson

Open with the following on screen sharing:

*begins knowledge and doesn't obedience  
with there but*

*person action is seen not a the character  
best of words in*

*do you something is love*

Challenge class members to unscramble the three sentences. They may do this alone, with a partner who is physically proximate, or as a whole group. After all three sentences are successfully unscrambled, read them aloud again: *Obedience begins with knowledge but doesn't end there. / The character of a person is best seen in action, not words. / Love is something you do.*

Ask class members to share illustrations of how they've seen the truth of one or more of the sentences. Inform the class that today's text is just one example of how the book of James is about combining action with our faith.

### Into the Word

Distribute handouts\* (you prepare) that feature **only the three headers** from the chart below. Put the same three headers on screen share.

#### DO THESE

*more listening, slow to speak (v. 19)*

*accept the Word (v. 21)*

*do what the Word says (v. 22)*

*take care of those in need (v. 27)*

#### AVOID THESE

*quick anger (v. 19)*

*moral filth (v. 21)*

*merely listen to the Word (v. 22)*

*uncontrolled tongue (v. 26)*

#### REASONS WHY

*anger doesn't produce righteousness (v. 20)*

*make room for the Word (v. 21)*

*the Word can save (v. 21)*

*self-deception (v. 22)*

*to be blessed (vv. 23-25)*

*vain religion (v. 26)*

*pure religion pleases God (v. 27)*

Then read aloud James 1:19-27 while class members listen for phrases and verse references to enter under the headings. Do this a second time. Then form study pairs or triads of learners in Zoom breakout rooms to discover whether anyone has missed anything.

Call time after six to eight minutes to transition to a whole-class discussion of the results. Work toward consensus as you talk through the entries together. Expect the finished chart to look similar to the filled-out one above.

*Option.* Distribute copies\* of the "Freedom or Frustration?" exercise from the activity page, which you can download [here](#). Have small groups complete as indicated in Zoom breakout rooms (caution: may be

very time consuming).

## Into Life

Have learners return to study pairs or triads in Zoom breakout rooms. For each item in the first two columns of their completed handouts, have them discuss and note specific steps to take to act on the biblical commands. If time is short, assign a few items per group instead of asking groups to consider every item. After several minutes, ask volunteers to share action plans, but don't put anyone on the spot. Compare and contrast differences.

*Option.* Distribute copies\* of the “What Will You Do?” exercise on the activity page. Because of the highly personal nature of this assignment, it should be an at-home exercise. To encourage its completion, say that you will invite learners to volunteer responses next week.

Close with a prayer seeking God's help to obey. *Alternative.* Have participants in their groups pray for one another about their decisions.

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# NIV Online-Friendly Involvement Learning

## Lesson 11 | August 16, 2020

### Into the Lesson

*Option.* Begin by allowing volunteers to share their results of completing last week's at-home activity. Then divide your class into three groups (one or more via Zoom breakouts), giving each group one of the following incomplete sentences. Encourage every group member to offer a completion for the group's assigned sentence.

- 1—*You know I love my spouse when you see me doing this:* \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2—*Because I love my children, you'll see me doing this:* \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3—*You know how I feel about my job when you see me doing this:* \_\_\_\_\_.

After a few minutes, call for volunteers to share their completed sentences. Choose a few examples, and ask the class questions like this one: "If [insert name] told you he loves his wife but then did just the opposite of what he mentioned here, what would you conclude?"

Say, "The connection between words and actions is important. Today's Bible study offers us insight on this issue."

### Into the Word

Distribute handouts\* (you prepare) of the lesson text. As you read the text slowly (perhaps also displaying via screen share), listeners should do the following (which you will have printed on the handout): 1—Underline every command. 2—Mark illustrations that clarify commands with  $\approx$  symbol. 3—Mark sections that seem particularly important with \* symbol. 4—Mark surprising sections with ! symbol. 5—Mark anything you don't understand with ? symbol.

Read the text aloud twice to give class members ample opportunity to absorb what it is saying as they perform the above. Then call for volunteers to point out the verses they underlined and marked with  $\approx$ . After discussing disagreements, ask for volunteers to tell what sections they marked with other symbols and tell why. As questions come up, toss them back to the class by asking, "Who has an insight for that question?" Use the commentary to clarify.

*Option.* Distribute copies\* of the "Reconsider the Stories" exercise from the activity page, which you can download [here](#), for deeper study. Ask learners to complete this activity in pairs or triads (Zoom breakouts as appropriate) before you have volunteers share what they've discussed.

*Brainstorming.* Ask half the class to voice reasons why connecting faith with works is difficult; jot responses on the board and/or as screen share as they are called out. After two minutes, invite the other half of the class to voice reasons why connecting faith with works is reasonable. Again, take two minutes to jot responses on the board and/or as screen share.

During the whole-class discussion that follows, point out that the two lists don't necessarily contradict each other; rather, they actually are mutually supporting at certain points. Ask learners to point out examples of that fact from the two lists. Be prepared to do so yourself.


*Option.* Distribute copies of the "Finish the Thoughts" exercise from the activity page for learners to complete individually as a post-test. Allow only one minute.

### Into Life

Write on the board and/or display as screen share the phrases *I Believe* and *I Do* as headers to two lists. Ask class members to name tenets of the Christian faith for you to write in the first column. After a suitable list is created, ask learners to suggest specific actions for the *I Do* list that would demonstrate Christian faith for each entry in the *I Believe* listing (example: the statement *I believe Jesus is the only way to God* could draw the response *Therefore I participate in my congregation's efforts to evangelize*).

Challenge students to choose one of the listed actions to initiate personally. Close with prayer for students' faith to be combined with dynamic new works for Christ.

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# NIV Online-Friendly Involvement Learning

## Lesson 12 | August 23, 2020

### Into the Lesson

Distribute three sets of handouts\* (you prepare) on which are printed the three scenarios below, one scenario per handout. Form small groups or study pairs (use Zoom breakouts as appropriate); give each a handout of one scenario. Allow a few minutes for each group or pair to answer this question: Given the facts of the scenario, what action should be taken (or should have been taken), if any?

- 1—My third-grade teacher in the public elementary school once called me “airheaded” when I didn’t have the right response to a question.*
- 2—When a math teacher at our college couldn’t get a quadratic equation to compute, a student had to point out that he was trying to take the square root of a negative number! Such incompetence!!*
- 3—One professor at the local college really knows how to teach economics! The students hang on his every word. But from what I know of his life outside the college classroom, the man is a racist.*

After a few minutes, have groups present their conclusions for class discussion. Make a transition by putting learners back in their same groups and change the scenarios as follows: (1) instead of a public school teacher it was a Sunday school teacher, (2) instead of math course at college it is a church class in basic doctrine taught by an elder, (3) the professor in economics is also a deacon at your church, and he excels at teaching Bible.

After another round of group and whole-class discussion, say, “Let’s see if James has some thoughts that can help us with solutions.”

### Into the Word

Recruit in advance one or more volunteers having artistic skills to come to class with very large sketches they have made of the images in today’s lesson text (figs, bit, etc.). Furnish large sections of poster board for the task. Or ask the volunteers to sketch the image and then email you an image, to be shared directly via Zoom. Put the sketches on display (physically and via Zoom screen share) just before you read the lesson text aloud. Use them as visual reinforcements at appropriate times during the lesson.

After reading the lesson text aloud, pose the following questions for discussion. 1—Which comparison gives you the greatest insight into problems with the tongue? 2—Which comparison reminds you most of an issue you’ve seen but not experienced personally? 3—Which comparison illustrates most sharply a difficult situation you have had to face?

*Option.* For extended discussion, distribute copies\* of the “Positive Pointers” exercise on the activity page, which you can download [here](#). Have learners work in study pairs to complete as indicated.

### Into Life

Distribute four sets of handouts\* on which you have printed the following situations, one per handout. Form learners into pairs and give a handout to each pair.

- 1—You overhear a teacher at church talking at length about how upset he is with your minister.*
- 2—A friend describes the terrible housekeeping habits of a mutual friend.*

3—*A snippy acquaintance asks you if you got your outfit at a thrift store.*

4—*A friend gripes about behavior of someone's child.*

Ask pairs to develop and enact or read a dialogue before the class the situation on the pair's scenario. Instruct that the sketch should demonstrate a Christian response. Allow each pair two minutes to prepare and two minutes to present. After each, encourage reactions in open discussion.

*Option.* Distribute copies of the “Situational Suggestions” exercise from the activity page. Due to its personal nature and need for possibly lengthy reflection, it should be an at-home exercise. To encourage completion, promise to ask for volunteers to disclose results at the beginning of next week's class.

Close with sentence prayers from learners. Wrap up with your own prayer that asks for God's for help in controlling the tongue.

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# NIV Online-Friendly Involvement Learning

## Lesson 13 | August 30, 2020

### Into the Lesson

*Acrostic.* Write the word *WISDOM* vertically down the center of the board; point the webcam toward the board for those attending virtually. After you remind learners that wisdom has been the theme in the past several studies, ask, “What are some single-word descriptions of wisdom that have one of that word’s letters in common?” As learners suggest words, write them on the board, making sure that each description intersects with one of the letters of the word *WISDOM*. After you have six words to complete the acrostic, ask which one is most accurate. Discuss.

Make a transition by saying, “Today we consider more of what James has to say about wisdom as we look at two passages from his letter.”

### Into the Word

Point out that James 3:13 both asks a question and implies the answer. Ask half the class to read the question out loud in unison and the other half to respond in unison with the second half of the verse (make appropriate adjustments if the class is a hybrid of those present physically and virtually). Then distribute handouts\* (you prepare) featuring two blank columns, one headed *Godly Wisdom* and the other headed *Worldly Wisdom*. As you read today’s text aloud, ask students to note behavior that belongs under either heading. Have study pairs or triads discuss and resolve differences or omissions in entries. Use Zoom breakout groups as necessary.

After several minutes, reconvene for a whole-class discussion. Compare the lists and discuss differences. Ask, “What can you do to contribute godly wisdom to the church today?”

*Option.* Distribute copies\* of the “Commentary from Scripture” exercise from the activity page, which you can download [here](#). Let half of the class, in pairs or triads, consider the first passage noted as the other half considers the second. Use Zoom breakout groups as necessary. Call for whole-class sharing after several minutes.

Point the class to Galatians 5:22-23, and ask a volunteer to read it aloud. Ask, “Which items from this list are also in James’s list in 3:17?” Wait for responses, then ask, “What does this tell us about how to achieve the wisdom that James describes here?” (*Expected response:* we need the help of the Holy Spirit in order to demonstrate godly wisdom.)

*Option.* Distribute copies\* of the “Wisdom of the Sages” exercise from the activity page. Allow one minute for learners to complete Part 1 with quick first impressions. Then put learners into groups of three or four to complete Part 2. Use Zoom breakout groups as necessary.

### Into Life

Ask students to conduct a search in contemporary sources for examples of godly wisdom and worldly wisdom. Do this as follows:

- *Newspapers and/or magazines.* Bring an assortment of these for students physically present to use for searches.
- *Internet.* Ask students to use smartphones or tablets to search for examples from news items of the last seven days.


With either approach, ask students to complete the activity in the same pairs or triads formed earlier for Bible study. Allow at least eight minutes to work in groups before calling the class together to share discoveries.

Discuss: “Which kind of wisdom was easier to find, and why?” Ask the class to decide on the best example of worldly wisdom and the best example of godly wisdom they found.

Point students again to James 3:17. Ask class members to decide which of the qualities listed there is the biggest challenge to them personally. Have volunteers suggest one particular action step they could take to manifest their chosen attribute of wisdom.

Ask learners to complete the following sentence: “I can demonstrate godly wisdom this week by \_\_\_\_\_.” Close with sentence prayers, asking that God will give wisdom to those who seek it.

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