



# Adulging

Accept

Snooze

*Expositional study on the book of James.*

*The #1 catalyst for spiritual growth is reading and reflecting on the Bible.  
Use these questions for personal study or as part of a community group experience.*

**WEEK 7 OF 7**

**10/29/2017**

**Note to Leaders:** Spiritual maturity can develop through many different ways. One indicator of spiritual growth is one's use of and perspective regarding the gifts and resources God has given you. However, we can often become too attached to these things making them our focus. This week, help guide your group to a discussion of where they place their value, resources and confidence.

\*\*\* This is the last week of the adulating series. There are no additional Grace-generated questions or leader's guide until January. There are a couple of options: 1) See [bit.ly/throughasermon](http://bit.ly/throughasermon) for an easy guide on leading a group through sermon-based discussion. 2) Consider one of our suggested studies: [trygrace.org/groupstudies/](http://trygrace.org/groupstudies/). Or, 3) take a break until January with a possible social gathering during the holidays to keep developing relationships.

## **Sermon Questions**

1. What statements did John make or what points did he raise that were unexpected or new?
2. How can money help you grow spiritually? How can it hinder?
3. Re-read James 4:13-5:6. What is something that spoke to you out of this passage?

## **Discussion Questions**

1. What negative attitude does James identify in 4:13-14? How can this lead you away from God?
2. Why does James insist that we preface our plans by saying, "If the Lord wills..."? What does this mindset indicate? (Consider Acts 18:21; Romans 1:10; 1 Corinthians 4:19)
3. What charges does James bring against the wealthy? Why was he so harsh in his rebuke? (Isaiah 10:1-4; Matthew 6:19-21)
4. Do you think of yourself as rich? Why or why not?

5. How does James characterize our lives (i.e., its length)? Why is this significant? (Consider Job 9:25-26; Psalm 39:5)
6. How have the rich chosen to tear down those around them rather than build them up in 5:1-6? What's behind this mindset?
7. What does James' rebuke reveal about God and God's priorities?
8. What priorities need to shift so that money can serve as a tool for God's use to help you grow spiritually?
9. Money often serves as an indicator to the question: "Who's controlling my life?" In other words, "Whose money is it?" When you think of these questions, would you say you move more toward money or toward God?
10. How might you respond to John's challenge from Sunday's message? What would begin to look different?

#### Background Comments

James 4:13-5:6 addresses a clash of worldviews, specifically among of the wealthy. In this passage, he speaks to the rich who have largely left God out of their consideration. Underlying their attitude is one of boastful arrogance—not only do they leave God out but they brag about it and proclaim their autonomy. They have the freedom and resources to live how they want, go where they want and use people as they want. Thus, James rebukes them for the "this-worldly self-confidence" they exhibit in pursuing their goals that convey their ability to determine the course of future events and their success. Verse 15 marks the contrast that James upholds, "If the Lord wills". What his audience needs to reckon with is that their lives are ultimately in the hands of God. This life cannot be properly understood without considering the spiritual.

The second half of this passage addresses wealth, not just the plans of the wealthy. Here, James' focus is on the transitory things (money, resources, status, etc) that often receive so much focus and stock. These will not last. Not only are these transitory, but they have been misused in order to abuse. As such, not only will they decay but they will actual testify against the individual for the damage that has been caused (cf. Luke 6:24-25). Their misuse is specified by James as cheating their workers, hoarding for themselves rather than being just or even generous. These actions become an indicator of the heart. James has already spoken in 2:8 about the royal command to love your neighbor. He has worked

out the practical implications of faith and its impact on community. Now he hits close to home with one's financial perspective and impact (cf. Leviticus 19:13; Deuteronomy 24:14-15).

### **Prayer Requests**

Take a few minutes to go around the room and ask if anyone has something they would like prayer for. Write these down as they are being shared.

Additionally, challenge people to begin praying about the step of maturity God may be calling them to during this series.

Finally, pray together. You can pray the prayer below or your own prayer that incorporates the requests represented in the group.

### **Closing Prayer**

Father, all men are equal before. Humanity is within your hand. You desire that all people look to you first and foremost, as their creator, their Lord and their deliverer. In these verses, I am reminded that I can too often look to money as a means to create myself into my ideal image. To secure for myself stability and status. Open my heart to these words that I might consider your blessings and resources as tool to build others up. May they serve as indicators of my spiritual growth as I submit them back to your control. In Jesus name I pray, amen.