

Twelve Ordinary Men
How the Master Shaped His Disciples for Greatness and What he Wants to Do with
You

Chapter 4- James the Apostle of Passion

Matthew 17: 1-5, Matthew 20: 20-24, Mark 5:35-43, Mark 13:3, Mark 14:32-42,
Luke 9:49-56, Acts 12:1-3

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Study

I. Introduction

The characteristics of James - Identify at least 16 characteristics of James as
described on pages 77-80.

II. Outline of Chapter 4

A. Fire from heaven (Review pages 81-89)

1. Review and summarize Luke 9:51-56 and describe the attitudes of James and
John.

2. James and John already had in mind a remedy for the situation described in Luke
9:51-56, they asked Jesus if He wanted them to command fire from heaven to
consume the people as Elijah had done previously.

3. James and John had wrong motives for making this request of Jesus. There was
a tone of arrogance in their question. James and John were in effect asking Jesus to
enable them to do what they knew He would not do.

4. James and John momentarily forgot that Jesus had come to seek and save that
which was lost-Luke 19:10. Jesus had come to earth on a mission of rescue, not
judgment.

5. The response of Jesus to this request taught James that loving-kindness and
mercy are virtues to be cultivated as much as (and sometimes more than)righteous
indignation and fiery zeal. Instead of calling down fire from heaven, they went to
another village.

B. Thrones in the kingdom (Review pages 89-91)

1. In Matthew 20: 20-24 we discover additional insight into the character of James,
in addition to being fervent, passionate, zealous and insensitive; he was also ambitious
and overconfident.

2. James and John focused on the promise of Jesus in Matthew 19:28, you who
followed me will also sit on 12 thrones and judge the 12 tribes of Israel, they were
being ambitious and selfish.

3. Jesus included , however, with that promise , that many who are first will be last, and the last first - Matthew 19:30. The reply of Jesus subtly reminded them that suffering is a prelude to glory.

4. The ambition of James and John created conflicts among the apostles because the other 10 heard about it and were displeased.

5. James wanted a crown of glory, Jesus gave him a cup of suffering. He wanted power, Jesus gave him servanthood, he wanted a place of prominence, Jesus gave him a Martyr's grave. James wanted to rule, Jesus gave him a sword-not to wield but to be the instrument of his own execution. James would become the first of the 12 to be killed- Acts 12:1-3.

C. A cup of suffering (Review pages 92-94)

1. James is the only apostle whose death is actually recorded in Scripture.

2. At this point in his ministry the passion of James is under the control of the Holy Spirit and James was so instrumental in the spread of the truth that it aroused the wrath of Herod.

3. James was on the front line as the gospel advanced and the church grew.

4. James was mentored by Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, and shaped by those means into a man whose zeal and ambition were useful instruments in the hands of God for spreading of the Kingdom.

5. James is the prototype of the passionate, zealous, front runner who is dynamic, strong and ambitious. Ultimately, his passions were tempered by sensibility and grace. Somewhere along the line he had learned to control his anger, bridle his tongue, redirect his zeal, eliminate his thirst for revenge , and completely lose his selfish ambition. And the Lord used him to do a wonderful work in the early church.

III. Questions and review-Chapter 4

1. Besides being fervent, passionate, zealous , and insensitive, James was also ambitious and overconfident. Are these leadership qualities neutral, negative or positive?

2. Review the following passages of Scripture: Matthew 17:1, Mark 5:37, Mark 13:3, Mark 14:33, in which passage did James experience the following:

** Agony

** Sovereignty

** Power

** Glory

3. How would the firsthand experience of the above events impact the faith of James?

4. If you had witnessed these events , how do you think it would have impacted your faith?