

The Epistle of James

A Study Guide

by Bobby Ozuna

Contributors: Jorge Gruver, Felix Cervantez and Armando Ozuna

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Scripture references based on the **King James Version**, **Complete Jewish Bible** and the **New American Standard Bible**.

The Epistle of James – Chapter 1 – a Study Guide

“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”

2 Timothy, Chapter 2, verses 16 & 17 (NASB)

The Epistle of James – Chapter 1 – a Study Guide

Our Hope, Purpose, and Prayer for this Study Guide

It is our *hope* this study guide finds you in a place where you are ready to move beyond *reading the bible*, and walk into a deeper knowledge of the Word and the gospel message, to further establish your relationship and intimacy with the Lord Jesus. We *hope* you use this study guide as a means to instill the habit of daily reading and studying of the holy scriptures, to discover the freedom from the bondage of sin and the redemption in the grace purchased at the cross.

Our *purpose* for this study guide is to provide an outline of prayer, reading and study, for those who are ready to step out the boat, and move to a more intimate understanding of the Lord Jesus. It is *purposed* to be used for personal growth and development, or in a group setting in fellowship and community with others. The objective is to offer a template for daily reading and studying of the scriptures, with questions designed to help you dive further into the truth of the gospel message.

We *pray* this study guide is an encouragement and blessing to your walk with Christ. We *pray* you humble yourself and offer your heart to the Lord to be enlightened, encouraged, inspired, transformed, and renewed in the image of the Lord Jesus. We *pray* you open your heart to the truth, to discover the true freedom that comes from serving and following the Lord Jesus. We *pray* these questions draw you closer to the Lord and bring you to a place of true understanding of the gospel message and we *pray* you share your story of redemption with others, to be a living testament to the freedom offered in Christ.

Your brothers in Christ,

—Bobby, Jorge, Felix and Armando

The Epistle of James – Chapter 1 – a Study Guide

How you can use this study guide

This study guide is designed to be a companion to your personal study in the **Epistle of James, chapter 1**. It can be used for personal development or part of a bible group study.

Our recommendation:

- **Pray:**

- Before reading the chapter and questions—ask the Lord to reveal Himself in the words you read
- After reading the chapter and questions—ask the Lord to impart his Wisdom in the words you read.
- Throughout the days you use this study guide—ask the Lord for wisdom and understanding to reveal Himself in the passages you are studying.

- **Read:**

- The first few times you read the chapter assigned, just read it. Don't focus too much energy on understanding or knowing everything the first time you read it
- You will read each chapter multiple times, over multiple days, answering questions for each day
- If possible, use multiple translations to expand on the context of the passages you read
- You can read various translations online if you only have one version of the bible

- **Journal:**

- You can use the space provided, or capture your questions, thoughts, and responses in a separate journal
- To capture any questions that arise while you are reading, including any areas of uncertainty and any areas of confusion
- To capture any scripture passages that really speak to your heart and encourage you
- To follow-up previous days notes as you work through each chapter over multiple days

- **Memorize**

- Practice memorizing the daily scripture passages provided.

- **Individual Study Guide:**

- Follow the daily guideline provided
- Use this study guide as a tool for learning how to read and study the bible daily
- Be completely honest with yourself—and your responses, knowing, you are being completely honest with the Lord
- Remember, confession means *aligning or agreeing with* the Lord—not condemning yourself

- **Group Bible Study**

- Use a consistent, weekly assembly time to openly discuss struggles and victories in Christ
- Remember: iron sharpens iron!

The Epistle of James – Chapter 1 – a Study Guide

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Chapter 1

The Epistle of James

Week 1

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The Epistle of James – Chapter 1 – a Study Guide

Week 1, Day 1—Individual Study

Prayer: My Lord Jesus I pray you reveal yourself to me in this scripture; prepare my mind and heart to discover the truth of who You are in these passages I read, and grant me the courage to be transparent and honest in my responses. Amen.

Read: *The Epistle of James, chapter 1* out loud and answer the questions.

- 1) Have you ever been through or faced any serious struggles or adversity in your life? If so, how did it make you feel?
- 2) When you consider the trials and adversity you have faced in your life, would you consider yourself *lucky* or *fortunate* to have faced them? Why or why not?
- 3) We all have habits and patterns, specifically, when we face struggles, trials, and adversity. It's human nature to *run to* something or someone when we face difficult times. What/Who do you turn to when you face adversity and struggles in your life?
- 4) Have you ever blamed God for the struggles, adversity, or trials you have faced in your life? If yes, explain and if possible, answer *why*.
- 5) On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate your relationship with the Lord, with **1** being—little knowledge of who He is in your life, and **10** being—a strong understanding of who He is in your life? Elaborate.

The Epistle of James – Chapter 1 – a Study Guide

Memorize: James Chapter 1, verse 2: “Consider it all joy, my brothers and sisters, when you encounter various trials...” (NASB)

Journal: Write down any scriptures that resonate, stick out, or speak to your heart. Use this as an opportunity to expand on any of the questions above.

The Epistle of James – Chapter 1 – a Study Guide

Week 1, Day 2—Individual Study

Prayer: My Lord Jesus, as I begin to dive into these questions, I pray you soften my heart and quiet my mind to hear You speak to me. Grant me the boldness to be vulnerable and honest with You, knowing, in true confession we begin to find and experience true freedom that comes through You. Amen.

Read: *The Epistle of James, chapter 1* out loud and answer the questions.

Review Verse 2

- 1) Is there a difference between a **test** and a **temptation**?
- 2) The original translation for *temptations* comes from the Greek word *peirasmos* (pa-rä-smo's)ⁱ; here are two examples of the usage of the word *temptation*, as derived from the Greek translation.
 - A test—a trial or proving
 - An enticement to sin—whether arising from the inner desires or from outward circumstances

In reading this opening verse (2), James is referencing a *test*—*a trial or proving of our faith*—not an enticement to sin. Do you believe tests are an important part of a person's growth and development?

- 3) Why do you think James said “*when*” and not “*if*” in verse 2?
- 4) In your opinion, should a *test* of any kind (parental, academic, athletic, musical, etc.) be designed to be *easy* or *challenging*? What is the hope in the outcome of a test? Explain your answer.

Expanded Reading: Read the following passages:

- The book of Matthew, Chapter 4, verses 1—10
- The book of Hebrews, Chapter 4, verses 12—16

We learn in these passages [that] Jesus was tempted by the devil and ultimately, He was tempted in all manner, just like us. Knowing this—that our very Lord and savior faced temptations/tests—how does that make you view the test and trials you face in your life? Explain.

The Epistle of James – Chapter 1 – a Study Guide

Memorize: James Chapter 1, verse 3: "...Knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance." (NASB)

Journal: Write down any scriptures that resonate, stick out, or speak to your heart. Use this as an opportunity to expand on any of the questions above.

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Week 1, Day 3—Individual Study

Prayer: My Lord Jesus, I thank you for revealing to me the source of trials and struggles in my life; I thank you for refining me and working to develop my faith and establish my trust in you. Amen.

Read: *The Epistle of James, chapter 1* out loud and answer the questions.

Review Verses 2-4

- 1) If tests, trials, and adversity are so difficult for us, why do you feel the Lord would allow them to happen in our lives?
- 2) Do you believe the trials we face in life reflect God's love for us? If not, why?
- 3) Does it feel like *love* when we undergo immense pressure, difficulties, tests, and trials? Explain.

EXPANDED READING: Read the Book of 2 Corinthians, Chapter 12, verses 7—10

The Lord promises His strength is perfected in our weaknesses. Examine the Apostle Paul's view of his weaknesses and compare them to your perspective when you face trials and adversity.

Review Verse 5

- 4) James says, "...if any man lacks **wisdom**, let him ask of God." What is wisdom?

EXPANDED READING: Read the following passages and answer the question below.

- Read the Book of Job, chapter 28, verse 28
- Read the book of Proverbs, Chapter 2, verses 3—7

Does this expand your understanding of the word *wisdom* and how important is obtaining wisdom to the Lord?

The Epistle of James – Chapter 1 – a Study Guide

Memorize: James Chapter 1, verse 4: “And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.” (NASB)

Journal: Write down any scriptures that resonate, stick out, or speak to your heart. Use this as an opportunity to expand on any of the questions above.

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Week 1, Day 4—Individual Study

Prayer: My Lord Jesus, you said you would take me from faith to faith, and glory to glory. You said you are the author and finisher of my faith. I thank you for increasing my knowledge of you and for helping me grow to a place where I trust in you more than I trust in myself or the world. Amen.

Read: *The Epistle of James, chapter 1* out loud and answer the questions.

Review Verses 6-7

- 1) What do you think it means to *ask in faith*?

EXPANDED READING: Read the following passages:

- Read Hebrews chapter 11, verse 6
- Read Romans chapter 10, verses 8—11 & verse 17
- Psalm 119, verses 9—11

Based on these passages, what is the Lord trying to express to us in the relationship between *faith* and the action of diligently seeking him? Where does our belief in the Lord stem from and how can we increase our faith in the Lord?

Review Verse 12

- 2) As mentioned before, the word **temptation** comes from the Greek word *peirasmos* (pa-rä-smo's)—which means *a test/trial* or *an enticement to sin*. Do you consider the present moment in your life, or the long-term, with regards to the consequences of sin? Explain.

EXPANDED READING: Read the Book of Romans chapter 8, verse 18.

What was the Apostle Paul's perspective on momentary suffering? What type of relationship does a person have with the Lord, that they see beyond the momentary struggle, because of a greater reward in heaven?

The Epistle of James – Chapter 1 – a Study Guide

Review Verses 13-15

- 3) The Lord allows us to undergo various trials and tests; but, the Lord doesn't entice us to sin—or tempt us with evil, as James states in verse 13. According to verse 14, where do you think the enticement to do evil comes from?

EXPANDED READING: Read the following passages:

- Romans chapter 7, verses 14—25
- Romans chapter 8 verses 1—7
- Galatians chapter 5, verses 16—26

After reading these passages, do you have another perspective on where the enticement to do evil comes from?

- 4) If we understand the enticement to do evil—comes from internal sin struggles and not purposely by the Lord—how much more willing are you to confront the sin in your life, confessing it to the Lord, knowing, He can help you overcome it?

EXPANDED READING: Read the following passages:

- Romans chapter 8, verses 1—17

After reading these passages, do you see that when we pursue the Lord and give our life to him, we come into a *spiritual* relationship with Him, still existing in the flesh as human, where sin abounds, but no longer bound by the sins of our life because of the freedom and adoption in Christ.

How much more willing are you to discover what it means to walk in the Spirit, pursuing the things of God through his Son Jesus?

The Epistle of James – Chapter 1 – a Study Guide

Memorize: James Chapter 1, verse 13: “No one is to say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone.” (NASB)

Journal: Write down any scriptures that resonate, stick out, or speak to your heart. Use this as an opportunity to expand on any of the questions above.

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Week 1, Day 5—Individual Study

Prayer: My Lord Jesus, thank you for revealing the areas of my life where I need to confront sin, knowing, you love me and died for my sins. I confess my sins to you today, to align and agree with you, so that you can begin working in my heart to transform me. I know that in you there is no condemnation—only freedom. Amen.

Read: *The Epistle of James, chapter 1* out loud and answer the questions.

Review Verse 17

- 1) Take a moment to consider all the people in your life you say you “love.” How does it feel to give gifts to these people?
- 2) Do you believe “everything you have” is a gift from the Lord? Why or why not? Explain.
- 3) Do you believe the gift of salvation is a gift from God? Explain your answer.

EXPANDED READING: Read the following passages:

- Ephesians chapter 2, verses 8—9
- Romans, chapter 5, verse 8

James teaches us that every **good** gift and every **perfect** gift is from God the Father in heaven and in Ephesians the Apostle Paul reminds us that we are saved by grace through faith and that is a **gift** of God. How does it feel to know the Lord loved **you** so much, he gifted you with eternal salvation through his son Jesus?

How does it feel to truly know and see—the Lord loved you, even when you were covered and sin—and still gifted you with eternal life through His Son?

The Epistle of James – Chapter 1 – a Study Guide

Review Verses 18—20

- 4) Have you ever had a relationship become hindered, hurt or broken by words spoken out of anger? Can you imagine what those relationships would be like today if we humbled ourselves so much we let others be heard before demanding we be heard?

EXPANDED READING: Read the book of Colossians chapter 3, verses 1—17

Where should our focus be as Christians and followers of Christ?

How are we called to behave towards others as followers of Jesus?

The Epistle of James – Chapter 1 – a Study Guide

Memorize: James Chapter 1, verse 14: “But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.” (NASB)

Journal: Write down any scriptures that resonate, stick out, or speak to your heart. Use this as an opportunity to expand on any of the questions above.

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The Epistle of James – Chapter 1 – a Study Guide

Week 1, Day 6—Individual Study

Prayer: My Lord Jesus, I pray you give me a disciplined spirit to be a doer of the word, and not just a hearer. I thank you for this new day and for renewing my mind. I pray your word becomes a spring of life in me, overflowing to others, so that I can share your goodness. Amen.

Read: *The Epistle of James, chapter 1* out loud and answer the questions.

Review Verses 22—25

- 1) In verse 22, what do you think it means to be a “doer” of the word?

EXPANDED READING: Read the following passages:

- Luke chapter 6, verses 46—49
- Matthew chapter 7, verses 21—27
- Titus, chapter 1 verse 16

After reading these passages—how does Jesus view people who know *of* Him, but do not have a personal relationship with Him?

Based on what you learned up until this point—how can you become a doer of the work and establish a relationship with the Lord Jesus?

Review Verses 26—27

- 2) In what ways can you begin acting out or becoming a “doer” of the word in service to others?
- 3) If you understand you are a sinner—and we are powerless over our sin without the Lord Jesus—are you prepared to dive deeper into the deep waters of your faith, to allow the Lord to begin a new work in your heart?

The Epistle of James – Chapter 1 – a Study Guide

Memorize: James Chapter 1, verse 22: “But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not just hearers who deceive themselves.” (NASB)

Journal: Write down any scriptures that resonate, stick out, or speak to your heart. Use this as an opportunity to expand on any of the questions above.

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Stepping out the boat:

Deeper questions for a more intimate relationship

“...And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.”

The Book of Matthew, Chapter 14, verses 22—32

The Epistle of James – Chapter 1 – a Study Guide

Week 2, Day 7—Individual Study & Review

Prayer: My Lord Jesus, I thank you for walking this path with me and for strengthening my wisdom, knowledge and understanding in you. I pray you give me a heart to love everyone you put in my path and I pray you guide me in your word to act on my faith, in deeds and love towards others . Amen.

Read: *The Epistle of James, chapter 2*, aloud and answer these questions.

- 1) How do all these passages and scripture in this chapter speak to my sin struggle?
Think: Do they bring me to a place to face my inner sin struggles so I can experience freedom in Christ?
- 2) How can these passages and scripture in this chapter draw me closer to the Lord?
Think: Should facing my sin struggles draw me closer to, or push me further away from the Lord?
- 3) Do these passages and scripture in this chapter speak to the gospel message?
Think: Is the message of redemption from a savior who took the penalty for my sins, exist within this scripture?

The Epistle of James – Chapter 1 – a Study Guide

- 4) How can I start applying this scripture to develop my knowledge, wisdom, understanding and intimacy with the Lord?
Think: Where does faith come from? Where does my temptation to do evil come from? How can I grow in the knowledge of the Lord?
- 5) Is the Holy Spirit revealing my message of personal redemption I can share with others?
Think: Is Christ bringing me to a place of greater understanding and is this message of salvation, and the change happening in my heart—worthy of sharing with others? Do you want the redemption to be felt by those you love?
- 6) Who can I begin praying for, so that they also learn of the redemption offered in Christ?
Write: Create a list of people you can begin praying for today!
- 7) If you believe you are a sinner, saved by the gift of grace, chosen and redeemed by the Lord, and set free in Christ—are you prepared to walk further into deep waters with the Lord, to grow in your faith and become a living testament to the goodness of the gospel message?
Elaborate and write a prayer to the Lord, asking Him for greater intimacy.

The Epistle of James – Chapter 1 – a Study Guide

Recite from memory: James Chapter 1, verses 2-4

Recite from memory: James Chapter 1, verses 13 & 14

Recite from memory: James, Chapter 1, verse 22

Journal: Write down any scriptures that resonate, stick out, or speak to your heart. Use this as an opportunity to expand on any of the questions above.

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The Epistle of James – Chapter 1 – a Study Guide

Summary and Commentary:

I have heard it said many times—the book of James is a blueprint for the Christian walk. One of the simplest, yet most lacking areas of the Christian life is that of discipleship—or, as I like to say—walking along side others in their faith. It is an imperative aspect of living a Christian lifestyle. Jesus didn't die on the cross so we can be free and delivered from our sins, only to wake up and find ourselves weighted down by tasks lists and to-do's, or worse, burdened with religious attempts at earning salvation. That is the beauty of grace—unmerited or undeserved favor and love from the Lord. There is nothing you can do to earn your salvation—it is a gift. It is a choice. Choosing to receive the Lord into your heart and choosing again to follow Him is the fundamental principle of *being* a Christian.

This first chapter of James prepares us to face the inevitable—tests and trials—as part of that learning and development. Tests in academics or in athletics, or the arts, are all purposed to prepare us for the “big game” or “performance.” As Christians, we should embrace these tests and trials as a means of strengthening our trust in the God we serve. What good is a *lifejacket* if you are not willing to jump in the water to test and see that it will keep you afloat? That is how we should view tests and trials—not as some means to destroy us—but rather, a method to prune us and refine us and strengthen our trust, confidence, and faith in the Lord.

James also reminds us to evaluate the status of our own hearts—so we can see and discern the difference between tests and trials designed to strengthen our faith, and the temptations that result as unfaced sin in our hearts. He shows us that sometimes we fall from the choices we make, and those choices are a direct reflection of a sin struggle we have not dealt with. These types of enticement to sin vary from person to person, as each of us struggles with different aspect of sin. The good news—neither is designed to keep you under shame and guilt, but rather—to give you encouragement in your growth and awareness of where you need to step into the Lord's grace.

He finishes this chapter with a reminder to be a doer—not just a hearer—of the Word. He challenges us to walk away from traditional man-made religious rules and instead, pursue the wisdom and knowledge of the Lord through His Word, so that you too, can become an encouragement and light to those who are struggling and walk alongside others as you grow in your faith. We should shout for joy in the freedom we experience through Christ and share that *good news* with others, who will turn to you and ask something like, “Why do I keep facing so many struggles?” or “Why is this happening to me?”

Oh, what an opportunity that is! It is such a blessing to have that chance to share the joy of your own personal growth and development, through the trials, tests and even some of the temptations you have wrestled with along your own path! Your story—or your testimony—is the GREATEST encouragement to others. Daring to be known and vulnerable is part of the freedom that comes with Christ—knowing, you are no longer bound by the burdens of your sins, but free to live out from under the shame and guilt of your past!

Be a light to the world around you.

Your brother in Christ.

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The Epistle of James – Chapter 1 – a Study Guide

Group Study

“Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may **spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together**, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”

The book of Hebrews, chapter 10, verses 22--25

“**As iron sharpens iron**, so one person sharpens another.”

The book of Proverbs, chapter 27, verse 17

“Therefore, **confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another** so that you may be healed. A prayer of a righteous person, when it is brought about, can accomplish much.”

The book of James, chapter 5, verse 16

The Epistle of James – Chapter 1 – a Study Guide

The Schedule—Group Study Overview

We are called by Christ to not forsake fellowship with one another (Hebrews 10:25). Being an active member of a community of believers is one of the fundamental actions of the church body. We should meet regularly to pray for one another, encourage one another, learn from one another, break bread together and sharpen one another against the Word of the Lord.

This can be done as part of a church or community small group, or as a family at home!

To start your weekly bible study gathering....

- Choose what day of the week you will meet or how frequently you plan to gather
 - You can rotate houses, use virtual/online tools, and pitch in for snacks and drinks
 - This should be an exciting time to gather and dive into the word together!
- Choose the duration or how long you plan on meeting
 - We all have busy lives—but should never be too busy to schedule fellowship and community time
 - Considering some members may have children or family members requiring care and attention—it's best to agree on a start and end time to help those who have other commitments
- Choose someone to help facilitate the meeting (you can rotate this duty)
 - This person is not the boss—but someone who manages the time and helps keep the rhythm and schedule moving
 - This person would help ensure the environment is SAFE for collaboration and sharing
- Make it a SAFE place
 - Fellowship time in the Lord should be a time of learning and encouragement—not a time to ridicule, insult or attack one another; we are all brothers and sisters in Christ and we all fall short of the glory of God!
 - Decide together what questions you want to discuss openly
 - You may not complete every question in the study guide, or every question you choose for the session—but that's the beauty of this—the group is done with this study when the group feels they are done, collectively. This is not a race to finish quickly—but to finish together!
 - Use a roundtable format; go around the circle and allow a safe space for people to share
 - If someone isn't comfortable sharing, that's okay!
 - Avoid cross-talk! Allow a speaking member space to speak freely
 - The facilitator of the group can help manage that
 - Remember—its about respecting one another and learning from one another
 - When someone is sharing personal answers, it isn't for us to judge—but listen. The group will become closer with space for encouragement and empathy

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Group Study—Review

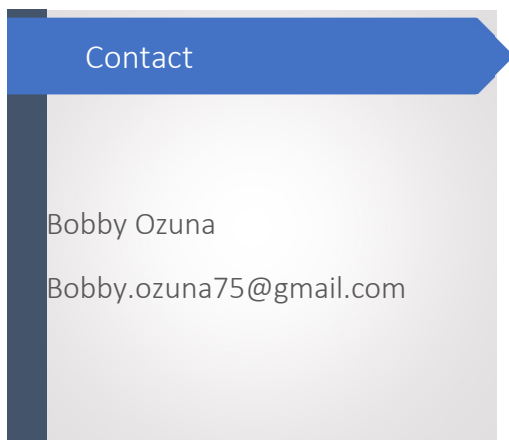
- I. Choose a facilitator to manage time, facilitate the questions, and maintain a SAFE space for sharing
- II. Choose someone to open the group in prayer
- III. Choose the questions your group will review and discuss openly
- IV. Avoid crosstalk (create a SAFE space for sharing); let one person speak at a time
- V. Be kind—remember, we are there to grow in the knowledge of the Lord—together, not pass judgement on one another
- VI. When time ends, decide to continue in the same chapter or proceed to the next
- VII. Pray for one another to close the session; ask for prayer requests and close the group

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Journal: Use this space to take notes, capture the group questions or anything else you are inspired to share and write down.

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Endnotes / Reference Page

ⁱ"G3986 - peirasmos - Strong's Greek Lexicon (KJV)." Blue Letter Bible. Web. 9 Nov, 2020.
<<https://www.blueletterbible.org//lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongsg=G3986&t=KJV>>.

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