

WISDOM FROM ABOVE EPISTLE OF JAMES

DEACON ALEX JONES

DVD STUDY GUIDE & WORKBOOK

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Exploring Faith, Values, and History



Deacon Alex Jones: WISDOM FROM ABOVE Epistles of James STUDY GUIDE.

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HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This study guide was designed for use with Deacon Alex Jones' *WISDOM FROM ABOVE Epistle of James* DVD series in a variety of religious educational settings. It is designed for individual use, or for use in schools and parishes.

You may make copies for your personal, group, church, or school use as long as you do not sell the guide for a profit.

The questions are ordered by the title of each DVD episode in the order discussed on the DVD. Answers to the questions can be found by watching the DVD, studying the passages of the Bible and the Catechism of the Catholic Church as referenced below each question, and occasionally some independent research will be required, which with the Internet is very easy and productive. Places to check first on the Internet include the Catholic Encyclopedia, the Vatican website, Bible Search Engines, and the Catechism of the Catholic Church. The hardback edition of the Catechism includes a Glossary of terms and other helpful indexes such as a Bible cross reference.

Please send your suggestions to StudyGuides@NinevehsCrossing.com or write to us at P.O. Box 29, Novi, MI 48376 U.S.A. 1-877-606-1370.

To use this Study Guide and DVD in your instruction you'll need a DVD player, a television, or projector and sound system suitable for everyone participating to see and hear clearly. Each student will need a copy of the student portion of this Study Guide, a Bible, and the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

There are a number of ways this guide can be used in study and educational applications. Here are a few ideas.

- A. First, watch the episode, then use just the **QUESTIONS** portion of the guide to write out the answers to each question. Don't look at the answers until after you're done.
- B. As a group, watch the episode, and discuss. Then, hand out the **QUESTIONS** only for that episode and instruct participants to answer in the spaces provided at home. Next time you meet as a group, share the answers and discuss the lesson further.
- C. To hook participants, or yourself individually, first try to answer the **QUESTIONS** portion of the guide for a particular episode. Second, watch the episode. Third, revise your answers written out before watching the episode. Fourth, check your answers against those in the **ANSWER** portion.
- D. Divide the group into teams by families, gender, or pick sides. Next, watch the episode. Third have a quiz-off, where the teams jump or push a buzzer to be first to answer each question. Give points to each answer and see which team wins.
- E. Individually, use each episode and the study guide for your daily devotion and study of Scripture, using any of the techniques above.

LESSON 1 QUESTIONS

TRIAL AND TEMPTATION

- 1. How was the author of James related to Jesus Christ?**

- 2. To whom was the Epistle of James written?**
(James 1:1)

- 3. In Greek James calls himself the "doulos" of the Lord. What does that mean, and why is that significant?**

- 4. Why was James called "Camel Knees"?**

- 5. Describe how James died?**

- 6. Some Jews from Jerusalem claimed that James's death resulted in what historical event?**

- 7. Before his death what office in the Church did James occupy?**

- 8. What reaction from society did the Early Church consider normal when a Jew became a Christian?**
(Acts 1:3, Matthew 5:10-11, John 15:18-21, James 1:1-4)

- 9. Today, what is typically but inaccurately expected as a Christian Western Civilization versus what should we expect?**
(1 Peter 4:1, James 1:2)

10. Ironically, when should we find joy in our faith, when things are easy, or when life is difficult?

(1 Peter 4:1, James 1:2)

11. If you want to have stronger faith, what should you welcome into your life?

(Acts 1:2, Matthew 5:10-11, John 15:18-21)

12. What can a Christian do to strengthen his or her faith in the midst of trials?

(James 1:3)

13. Why do the poor often have a stronger faith than the rich?

(James 1:9-11)

14. Through what kind of experience did God choose to redeem humanity?

15. Through what in our life do we help to complete the redemption of Christ for the world, and what is it that helps to perfect us?

(Colossians 1:24)

16. In a general sense, what is the purpose of trials and temptations in my life?

(James 1:12)

17. James says that those who persevere through trials and sufferings will receive a "crown of life." What are the multiple meanings?

(James 1:3-5, 2 Timothy 4:7-8)

18. Where does temptation come from? Does it come from God?

(James 1:12-15)

19. Where do our evil desires lead us when they mature?

(James 1:12-15)

20. Does God need to test us at times to discover what we will do?

(James 1:12-15)

21. When do we falter and begin to fail God, breaking fellowship with Him?

(James 1:12-15)

22. How was the writer of James related to the Apostles James the Greater and James the Lesser?

(Search the Internet for: "James in the New Testament")

LESSON 2 QUESTIONS

POVERTY AND RICHES

1. **How do the Old Testament and the New Testament differ in their implicit definitions of wealth and riches?**

2. **Quote the New Testament scripture Deacon Alex uses that is often used to describe the promise of eternal life?**

3. **While God is not against riches, the New Testament and the Epistle of James moves the emphasis to what kinds of intangible wealth?**

4. **Money per se is not evil, but what in relation to money is evil?**
(1 Timothy 6:10)

5. **Why would God bless some people to be wealthy?**

7. **Being poor (or at least not wealthy) can bring what spiritual virtue?**

8. **According to 1 Corinthians 1:26-29, what can shame the wise and the strong?**

9. **Using the parable of the beggar Lazarus and the Rich Man from Luke 16:19-31, who faired better, Lazarus or the rich man? Where did the two end up?**

10. **According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church what does the "disordered desire for money" produce?**
(CCC 2424)

11. What is the relationship between those that laugh or mourn now and what will happen later?

(Luke 6:25, Matthew 5:4)

12. Whether we are rich or poor, what should be our goal as Christians?

(Philippians 4:11-12)

13. What do some rich individuals do that will condemn them and ensure them miseries?

(James 5:1-6)

LESSON 3 QUESTIONS

WISDOM FROM BELOW

1. How does Deacon Alex define "wisdom" that comes from above?

2. How does the book of Job define a wise person?
(Job 28:28)

3. How does James define a wise person with good understanding?
(James 3:13, 17)

4. What kind of behavior is evidence of "demonic wisdom?"
(James 3:3:14-16)

5. Why does James tell us to count it all joy when we enter into trials and tribulations? Or, what is the redemptive component to suffering?
(James 1:2-5a)

6. When we are blind-sided by suffering and problems that perplex us or hurt us, how should we approach God? Or, what should we ask of God?

7. What does the Bible mean when it refers to the "testing of our faith"? Does it mean that God is testing us to see how we'll do because he doesn't know how we'll do?
(James 1:2-5a, Psalm 139)

8. How can our integrity be proved to others?

9. How can our suffering help others?

10. To teach Peter not to be prejudiced against Gentiles who wanted to become Christians, describe the vision that God gave to Peter three different times.

11. In what five ways can God's wisdom from above be applied to our lives?

12. What does James say is a hallmark of wisdom when asking God for something?

LESSON 4 QUESTIONS

WISDOM FROM ABOVE

- 1. What human attitudes of the heart does James associate with "earthly, unspiritual, and demonic"?**
(James 3:14-16)

- 2. How do jealousy, envy, and selfish ambition -- rather than just being secret or hidden sins in our heart -- affect others around us?**

- 3. The secular, academic pursuit of wisdom seeks intellectual knowledge and understanding. In contrast, what does Biblical wisdom concern itself?**

- 4. In the description of Lucifer found in Isaiah 14:12-14, what word or phrase illustrates the devil's selfishness and blind ambition? How many times does it appear?**

- 5. What happened to Persia's Prime Minister, Haman, when his bitter envy and blind ambition attempted to destroy the Jews living in Persia during the reign of King Ahasuerus?**
(Esther, chapters 3-7)

- 6. King Nebuchadnezzar lost his kingdom and became a beast of the field for a while because of what kind of thinking?**
(Daniel 4)

7. **What did Adam do because he wanted to be like God, and what happened to Adam as a result of his selfish ambition?**
(Genesis 3)

8. **In Philippians 2:1-2 what human characteristics do we find that illustrate the wisdom from ABOVE?**
(Philippians 2:1-4)

9. **What did Jesus do that was opposite of Lucifer, Haman, Nebuchadnezzar and Adam; and what result did it have for all eternity?**
(Philippians 2:5-11)

10. **What practice did Jesus institute by demonstration to help Christians humble themselves before other Christians, especially Christian leaders before the common membership of the Church?**
(John 13:1-17)

LESSON 5 QUESTIONS

HEARING AND DOING THE WORD

1. **According to Deacon Alex, in what year was the Epistle of James likely written, thus giving us a view of the Early Church?**

2. **When we hear the lector reading the Scripture at Mass, who is really talking to us?**

3. **True or False: God will never ask us to do something we don't want to do.**

4. **What is the best evidence of our faith?**

5. **When speaking of our Christian faith, what are the necessary components of "believing?"**

6. **What does James compare to a man who looks in a mirror, walks away, and then forgets what he looks like?**

7. **What well-known parable of Jesus is about two men, one who does what God says, and one who doesn't?**
Matthew 7:24-27

8. **Are we going to be judged on what we know or what we have done?**

9. **How can a "law" that dictates a restriction to our lives, bring about "freedom" to our lives?**

10. Fill in the blanks: The law comes to _____ us, not to _____ us.

11. What personal traits must we practice to reject temptation and grow in faith and become closer to Christ?

12. Deacon Alex talks about two kinds of blessings. What are they?

13. For the Christian, what is one of the benefits of suffering?

(1 Peter 4:1)

14. What are four behavioral requirements for individuals who think they are good Christians?

(James 1:26-27)

LESSON 6 QUESTIONS

WARNING AGAINST PARTIALITY

1. **Between what two different classes of society does James warn us against being partial, or biased?**

(James 2:1-4)

2. **How had the very early Church changed with respect to the attitudes toward those with wealth and those in poverty from the time of Pentecost to when James was written about 60-62 A.D.?**

(Acts 4:32-35)

3. **In what ways does the life of Jesus identify with the poor?**

(Luke 9:58, 2 Corinthians 8:9, CCC 544)

4. **Because it is a human tendency to prefer the rich, what does James suggest we show preference for instead?**
-

5. **To whom is Jesus sent to preach, and to whom does Jesus declare blessed because "theirs is the kingdom of heaven."**

(Luke 4:18; Matthew 5:3)

6. **Before God, the rich and the poor — all people, have what?**
-

7. **In what ways are the poor who love God, rich?**

(James 2:5)

8. **What is part of the Catholic Church's "constant tradition" and what is the source of this tradition?**

(CCC 2444)

9. **Compared to most of the poor in the world and in history, what was different about the poverty that Jesus, St. Paul and many other church leaders like Mother Teresa of Calcutta, experienced -- and why was their poverty different?**

10. **Even though some of us could not be classified as poor or needy, how do we become stronger in faith?**

11. **How does God show partiality between the Jew and the non-Jew, between a slave or a free man, or between men and women?**

(Galatians 3:28)

12. **After we die and are judged by God, will He be partial to us in terms of how well we kept some of his laws and not others?**

(James 2:10-13)

13. **What is the solution to sin against another person or against God and how is that solution applied to our lives?**

(CCC 1420 and following)

LESSON 7 QUESTIONS

FAITH AND WORKS

1. **What is the fundamental, beginning basis of salvation, faith or works?**
(Romans 3:28-30)

2. **Can the works we do get us to heaven?**

3. **Fill in the blank. Faith without works is _____.**

4. **Put another way, can faith without good works get us into heaven?**

5. **When Christians say that *we are saved by faith alone*, what error in Biblical interpretation is being made?**
(James 2:14-17)

6. **How does St. Paul in his letter to the Galatians instruct us that faith and works must work together?**
(Galatians 5:6)

7. **Fill in the blank: Out of an _____ of faith in a person's heart comes forth _____ works.**

8. **Some Christians who promote that we are saved by faith alone cite St. Paul. But, what does St. Paul say before King Agrippa about the need for good works to prove one's faith?**
(Acts 26:20)

9. **What derogatory term did Martin Luther give to the Epistle of James, because it stresses the need to demonstrate good works.**
-

10. **In Matthew 7:21-23 Jesus says that not everyone who calls him "Lord" will enter the kingdom of heaven. Why is that?**

(Matthew 7:21-23)

11. **In Jesus' parable of the Wedding Feast, the King found a man that was not dressed properly and had him thrown "into the darkness outside where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth." The guest's lack of proper attire was symbolic of what?**

(Matthew 22:1-14)

12. **When you meet a destitute person who appears to need help, in what situation is it clear that God requires you to act, and live out your faith with good works?**

(James 2:15-17)

13. **Many people will say they "believe in God" or they "believe in Jesus" but their lives are not transformed by said belief. What are some of the ways that Deacon Alex suggests are proofs of a transformed life?**
-
-
-

14. **Who "believes in God" but has not been transformed?**
-

15. **Where does Deacon Alex suggest is the best place to start to be an evangelist for Christ?**
-
-

16. How was Abraham justified before God by his action?

(Genesis 22)

17. How was Rahab the harlot justified before God by her action?

(Joshua 2 and 6)

LESSON 8 QUESTIONS
THE TONGUE

1. Deacon Alex makes the point that gossip is what kind of problem?

2. The tongue is very small, yet it can destroy what?

3. What makes a rumor believable and why it is dangerous to pass on?

4. What's the best way to stop a rumor and speak the truth in love?

5. What are the three sinful uses of the tongue?

6. What is one good way to protect and build up the Christian community and not tear it down?

7. What is a healthy selfish reason to be careful what we say about others?

8. What reveals to others, and to God, the inner motivations of our heart?
(Matthew 12:34-37)

9. What does Jesus say we will give an accounting for on the day of judgment?

(Matthew 12:34-37)

10. What simple actions of an individual can destroy a life, and what simple action by others have destroyed many lives?

(James 3:6)

11. What can be easier to tame than our tongue? What do we need to control what we say?

(James 3:6-12)

12. When we are aggravated by stressful situations or people, and feel angry, what might we say graciously instead of being mean?

13. If you're a person who has used profanity against another person, what will you never be likely to talk to that person about?

(James 3:12)

14. As Christians we are called to reach out to help other people, to be salt and light toward others in the world. What is "salt" and "light" symbolic of in terms of our speech?

15. When we curse others, what are we also cursing, albeit inadvertently?
(James 3:9)

16. If we are known as the people of God, and if God is in your heart, then what should be coming out of your mouth?

LESSON 9 QUESTIONS

FRIENDSHIP WITH THE WORLD

1. In Mark chapter 9 we read about Jesus, Peter, James and John going up on a mountain where Jesus was gloriously transfigured and Moses and Elijah appeared and talked with Jesus. They wanted to stay there and build temples to memorialize the event. Then they had to come down from the mountain-top where they met with the problem of the epileptic boy. To what contemporary events in our life is this similar?

2. What regular event in our normal Catholic life should be a mountain-top experience for us, that allows our hearts and minds to soar and be rejuvenated?

3. How does Deacon Alex relate the events of Mark 9, namely the Transfiguration of Jesus on the mountaintop and then returning to the valley to find His disciples arguing with religious leaders?

4. What specific kinds of sin does James say existed *in the Church*?
(James 4:1-17)

5. What is the common moral problem we share with the Children of Israel and Lot, i.e. when the Israelites left the wilderness and entered Palestine, and when Lot left Abraham to live in the fertile valley?

(Genesis 13, Deuteronomy 6, Acts 4, James 4)

6. What is our challenge or endeavor as Christians living in the world?
(Romans 12:1-2a)

7. How do children sometimes argue to be part of the world, and what can be a parent's good retort?

8. Quote Joshua 24:15.

9. Not conforming to this age means taking a stance for what politically incorrect moral practices?

10. What is the secret of obeying God and not being part of the world and its sin?
(Romans 12:1-2)

11. How is our mind renewed, and what is the danger associated with the process?

12. What would a sinner do in heaven?

13. A lover of the world makes himself _____.
(James 4:4)

14. Many people are of two minds, wanting to be part of both God and of the world. To be a Christian, what is required?
(James 4:7-10)

LESSON 10 QUESTIONS

JUDGING AND CORRECTING A BROTHER

1. After Cain killed his brother Able, God asked Cain where his brother was. Cain responded by asking God, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Do we have any responsibility for our brother and sister Christians? And if so, what is it?

(1 Corinthians 12:12-26)

2. What does speaking evil about a brother or sister entail?

(James 4:11)

3. Regarding speaking about another person, what is Deacon Alex's recommendation that we can follow?

4. Under what limited conditions should you pass on detrimental information about a person?

5. How do we sin when we pass judgment on another person?

6. How we judge others determines what?

(Matthew 7:1)

7. What should slow us down when we're tempted to judge another's sin?

(Matthew 7:1)

8. When the scribes and the Pharisees brought the adulterous woman to Jesus for judgment, what does Deacon Alex suspect Jesus wrote in the sand, which caused the woman's accusers to leave?

(John 8:1-11)

9. When a situation does arise that prompts us to correct a brother or sister, what is the first thing that St. Paul (and Deacon Alex) reminds us to be sure of our own lives?

(Matthew 7:1, Galatians 6:1)

10. What kind of spirit should occupy me when I correct a brother or sister?

(Galatians 6:1)

11. When we must correct a brother or sister, what must we also be careful about and on the lookout for?

(Matthew 7:1, Galatians 6:1)

12. After correcting the person, what can we do with them to ease their burden?

(Galatians 6:2)

13. When people have stopped participating in the sacramental life of the Church (coming to Mass, going to Confession), what can we do to restore them to it?

14. Deacon Alex tells the story of going door-to-door with an older lady parishioner inviting people back to church. One man they met had stopped coming to Mass over 20 years before, after being offended by the parish priest. After their visit, the man returned to Church the next week. What did the woman say to the man, which healed the rift?

LESSON 11 QUESTIONS

WARNING AGAINST BOASTING

1. When James chides us about going to another city tomorrow to make money what is he not warning us against, and what is he warning us against?

(James 4:13-14)

2. How does Deacon Alex summarize Proverbs 3:5-6 which reads, "In all your ways acknowledge the Lord and he will direct your paths"?

3. Why did Job say, "My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle"?

(Job 7:6)

4. How can our speech and plans be laced with an acknowledgment of God?

(James 4:15)

5. What happened to the skilled farmer who arrogantly tore down his old barns and built bigger ones to store his bumper crops?

(Luke 12:16-21)

6. How did Jesus change the concept of "wealth" from the Old Testament Deuteronomy concept?

7. Many people think that God will only judge us on the sins that we commit, these are called sins of "commission". But what other kinds of sin will we be judged on, and what are they called?

(James 4:17)

8. List several sins of omission or failing to do good when good is called for.

(Matthew 25:41-46)

9. When James tells us not to "swear by heaven or earth or anything else," what moral direction is he giving us?

(Matthew 5:37, James 5:12, CCC 2466)

LESSON 12 QUESTIONS
PATIENCE AND HUMILITY

1. **James 5:7-8 speaks of patience about what expectant event for all Christians?**

2. **How does Deacon Alex describe the thinking of the Apostles and early Christians in regard to the Second Coming of the Lord — the Messiah?**

The return of the Messiah would:

3. **What was a problem for the Early Church when Jesus did not return within the first generation of Christians?**

(2 Peter 3:3-4)

4. **What did Early Church teachers and believers fail to realize about God's timing of his revelations throughout history?**

5. **As Christians, how should we be prepared emotionally for Christ's Second Coming, as if it were tomorrow?**

6. **Is the Second Coming of Christ the same thing as the Rapture?**

7. **While we do not know when or how Christ will return, what does the Bible tell us that we must do in preparation for his coming?**

8. **List some of the ways the Lord comes to us in addition to his first coming in the form of Jesus Christ.**

9. **What sacrament helps us to be continually "converted" and turned back to the Lord?**

10. For the Sacrament of Reconciliation to be effective in our life, and for Christ to come into our lives effectively, with what state of mind must we come?

11. What attitude prevents many from taking advantage of the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

12. God gave Solomon several criteria by which the people of Israel could be forgiven. What were they?

(2 Chronicles 7:14)

13. When God forgives us, what does he do for us?

(2 Chronicles 7:14, James 5:7)

God will:

14. Jesus didn't come into the world to condemn us but to _____.

(John 3:17)

15. Since Deacon Alex was once a Protestant Pentecostal and is now Catholic, what has he learned in a general sense?

16. What is the useful adage that Deacon Alex reminds us about when, in judgmental accusation, we point our finger at others?

17. In the end what must we remember about the Lord, as we contemplate our need to be patient and humble?

LESSON 13 QUESTIONS
PRAYER AND CONFESSION

1. **Because of Vatican II's research into the Sacrament of Anointing, what changes were made in its use?**

2. **List some of the ways John Paul II identified that we can suffer, but that do not involve sickness.**

(Salvifici Doloris, John Paul II, 6)

3. **Who does James say should be the ones who do the anointing with oil and praying over the sick?**

(James 5:13-16)

4. **In the New Testament what were symbols and tonics of healing?**

(Luke 10:25-37)

5. **According to the Church's interpretation can both the deacon and the priest administer the Sacrament of Anointing?**

(CCC 1516)

6. What graces and gifts does the Anointing of the Sick convey?
(CCC 1520)

7. Why does the priest touch the sick during the Sacrament of Anointing?

8. Can we request the Sacrament of Anointing for illnesses that are not life threatening like the common cold?

9. Job's friends made a mistake in diagnosing the cause of his suffering. We may make the same mistake with our friends. What was that mistake?

10. But sometimes sin is the cause of sickness and suffering. What did Jesus sometimes say to the person he had just healed?
(John 5:14)

11. If calamity comes upon you, and you've done all that you know to do, and there's nothing in your life that would impede the grace of God, and you're still suffering, what must you know?
(Romans 8:28)

12. Pertaining to sickness and sin, what two sacraments can only be administered by a priest and not a deacon?

13. Can a deacon hear your confession and give you absolution?

14. In the early centuries of the Church what three sins could force you to life of deprivation, and keep you from The Eucharist until you were on you death-bed?

15. Quote the Scriptures from the Gospels that give the Church's authority to forgive sin, or not forgive them?

(Matthew 16:19, John 20:23)

16. What are the several reasons why the Sacrament of Reconciliation is administered in the presence of another human being—a priest?

(Isaiah 45, Philippians 2:13, Matthew 9:8, CCC 1456, Matthew 16:19, John 20:23)

17. What is required for a sin to be classified as a mortal sin?
(CCC 1857-1859)

18. What is a venial sin?
(CCC 1862-1863)

19. What did Deacon Alex like about James telling us that Elijah was "human like us"?
(James 5:17)

20. How is earnest prayer categorized?
(Luke 18:1-8)

ANSWERS

LESSON 1 ANSWERS

TRIAL AND TEMPTATION

1. How was the author of James related to Jesus Christ?

James was Jesus' half brother through Joseph. He was not the biological son of Mary.

2. To whom was the Epistle of James written?

(James 1:1)

First to the dispersed 12 Jewish tribes of Israel, and then to other Christians scattered throughout the world.

3. In Greek James calls himself the "doulos" of the Lord. What does that mean, and why is that significant?

"Doulos" is Greek for "slave."

4. Why was James called "Camel Knees"?

Because of the callouses on his knees from kneeling to pray so much.

5. Describe how James died?

He was murdered for claiming that Jesus was the Messiah. First he was thrown off the temple parapet, and then, when the fall didn't kill him, he was bludgeoned to death with a fuller's club.

6. Some Jews from Jerusalem claimed that James's death in 62-63 AD resulted in what historical event?

The destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in 70 A.D. as God's retribution for allowing James to be killed.

7. Before his death what office in the Church did James occupy?

(Acts 15)

Bishop of Jerusalem.

8. What reaction from society did the Early Church consider normal when a Jew became a Christian?

(Acts 1:3, Matthew 5:10-11, John 15:18-21, James 1:1-4)

Trials, persecution, hatred, and suffering.

9. Today, what is typically but inaccurately expected as a Christian Western Civilization versus what should we expect?

(1 Peter 4:1, James 1:2)

Many Christians in Western Civilization expect Christianity to be an easy road. But we should expect to suffer as Christ did.

10. Ironically, when should we find joy in our faith, when things are easy, or when life is difficult?

(1 Peter 4:1, James 1:2)

Hang on to your faith and joy in the midst of your suffering.

11. If you want to have stronger faith, what should you welcome into your life?

(Acts 1:3, Matthew 5:10-11, John 15:18-21, James 1:1-4)

Trials, suffering, difficulty

12. What can a Christian do to strengthen his or her faith in the midst of trials?

(James 1:3)

Pray, asking God for perseverance and patience.

13. Why do the poor often have a stronger faith than the rich?

(James 1:9-11)

The poor are often stronger in faith than the rich because the poor must depend on God rather than their wealth to solve problems.

14. Through what kind of experience did God choose to redeem humanity?

Suffering.

15. Through what in our life do we help to complete the redemption of Christ for the world, and what is it that helps to perfect us?

(Colossians 1:24)

Our sufferings.

16. In a general sense, what is the purpose of trials and temptations in my life?

(James 1:12)

To test our faith and make us strong.

17. James says that those who persevere through trials and sufferings will receive a "crown of life." What are the multiple meanings?

(James 1:3-5, 2 Timothy 4:7-8)

The "crown of life" refers both to a purposeful life on earth that can approach "perfection without lack of anything," as well true perfection when we enter into eternal life in heaven and eternal glory.

18. Where does temptation come from? Does it come from God?

(James 1:12-15)

God does not tempt us, but rather we are tempted by our own desires, lusts, and concupiscence.

19. Where do our evil desires lead us when they mature?

(James 1:12-15)

Sin and Death.

20. Does God need to test us at times to discover what we will do?

(James 1:12-15)

No. God is omniscient, he knows all things. He may allow us to be tempted to strengthen us, but not to see what we will do.

21. When do we falter and begin to fail God, breaking fellowship with Him?

(James 1:12-15)

When we say "yes" to temptation and sin.

22. How was the writer of James related to the Apostles James the Greater and James the Lesser?

(Search the Internet for: "James in the New Testament")

Scholars are not absolutely sure, but most agree that these were three different men. The Apostle James (the Greater) was the son of Zebedee and brother to the Apostle John; the Apostle James (the Lesser) was the son of Alphaeus; and James the writer of the Epistles, who was called "James the Just" was also the "brother" of Jesus and was the Bishop of Jerusalem.

LESSON 2 ANSWERS

POVERTY AND RICHES

1. **How do the Old Testament and the New Testament differ in their implicit definitions of wealth and riches?**

The Old Testament emphasized physical and material wealth because there was no promise of eternal life in heaven. In the New Testament Jesus says, "Blessed are the poor," and the promise is for eternal life in heaven.

2. **Quote the New Testament scripture Deacon Alex uses that is often used to describe the promise of eternal life?**

John 3:16: For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whoever believed in him shall not perish but have everlasting life.

3. **While God is not against riches, the New Testament and the Epistle of James moves the emphasis to what kinds of intangible wealth?**

Having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, a fulfilled life, being restored to a sinless, forgiven condition, eternal life, interior joy, peace, hope, faith in God.

4. **Money per se is not evil, but what in relation to money is evil?**

(1 Timothy 6:10)

The LOVE of money, oppressing those who are less fortunate, and stripping people of their dignity in order to gain more wealth.

5. **Why would God bless some people to be wealthy?**

So that they can use the excess of their wealth to help those less fortunate to have a better life.

7. **Being poor (or at least not wealthy) can bring what spiritual virtue?**

Humility.

8. **According to 1 Corinthians 1:26-29, what can shame the wise and the strong?**

The wise are shamed by things that are foolish, and the strong by things that are weak.

9. **Using the parable of the beggar Lazarus and the Rich Man from Luke 16:19-31, who fared better, Lazarus or the rich man? Where did the two end up?**

On earth the rich man fared better. In eternal life, Lazarus did. The rich man ended up in hell, and the beggar ended up in the bosom of Abraham—heaven.

10. **According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church what does the "disordered desire for money" produce?**
(CCC 2424)

Perverse effects that disturb the social order... destroys human dignity, leads to idolizing money and contributes to the spread of atheism.

11. **What is the relationship between those that laugh or mourn now and what will happen later?**

(Luke 6:25, Matthew 5:4)

Those that laugh now will later mourn. Those that mourn now will later laugh. Those that mourn will be comforted.

12. **Whether we are rich or poor, what should be our goal as Christians?**
(Philippians 4:11-12)

To be content with what we have and reflect Christ's grace to others in all we do.

13. **What do some rich individuals do that will condemn them and ensure them miseries?**

(James 5:1-6)

While living in luxury and pleasure they have withheld just wages from their workers, abused them and even taken their lives. God pays attention to how we treat others.

LESSON 3 ANSWERS

WISDOM FROM ABOVE

1. How does Deacon Alex define "wisdom" that comes from above?

The application of knowledge (which we gain by study and learning) into everyday life that can be defined as "common sense." Wisdom is open, honest, contains no hypocrisy, no duplicity that tries to deceive or beguile others.

2. How does the book of Job define a wise person?

(Job 28:28)

Someone who departs from evil and fears the Lord.

3. How does James define a wise person with good understanding?

(James 3:13, 17)

A wise person leads a good life in humility, and demonstrates through his works (or deeds) purity, peace, gentleness, mercy, and good fruits without inconsistency or insincerity.

4. What kind of behavior is evidence of "demonic wisdom?"

(James 3:14-16)

Bitter jealousy, selfish ambition, disorder, foul practice, the ability to dupe and manipulate others.

5. Why does James tell us to count it all joy when we enter into trials and tribulations? Or, what is the redemptive component to suffering?

(James 1:2-5a)

If we are trusting God, we will learn perseverance as God develops virtues in us that will make us happier in the long run.

6. When we are blind-sided by suffering and problems that perplex us or hurt us, how should we approach God? Or, what should we ask of God?

Ask God to give you wisdom about how you should act. What should you do, what should you say, and how should you respond?

- 7. What does the Bible mean when it refers to the "testing of our faith"? Does it mean that God is testing us to see how we'll do because he doesn't know how we'll do?**

(James 1:2-5a, Psalm 139)

God doesn't test us to know us. He knows us perfectly. He knows what we'll do in every situation. God tests us so we can know ourselves, so we can work to strengthen our faith, like a body builder goes into the gym to lift weights—there's pain and suffering involved, but the end result is a healthier, stronger body.

- 8. How can our integrity be proved to others?**

Emotional stress and physical fatigue caused by suffering, injustice, injury, or pain will expose our deepest values and convictions. When others see us live righteously through such pressure-filled experiences then they know we are a man or woman of God.

- 9. How can our suffering help others?**

When we suffer particular trials, as a Christian, we learn how to redeem the suffering to bring about something better and good. That wisdom can then be shared with others in similar circumstances, and help them see the meaning and ultimate joy that God intends for them.

- 10. To teach Peter not to be prejudiced against Gentiles who wanted to become Christians, describe the vision that God gave to Peter three different times.**

When Peter was in Joppa preparing lunch, he saw a vision of something like a sheet coming down from heaven. Inside the sheet were four-footed creatures, reptiles and birds. Peter then heard a voice telling him, "Get up, Peter; kill and eat." But Peter refused because the animals in the sheet were unclean. The voice said to him, "What God has made clean, you must not call profane." This happened three times, and then three Gentiles came from Caesarea asking Peter to come to the house of Cornelius and speak to the God fearing men and women who had gathered there.

- 11. In what five ways can God's wisdom from above be applied to our lives?**

- a. By seeking the virtues that come through trials and sufferings.
- b. By being doers of the Word and not hearers only.
- c. By not showing partiality toward another person because of their wealth, poverty, or race.
- d. By living out our faith with our works. That is, by being obedience to God and the Church's teachings. To live out the Word we've received.

e. By living in peace within the Church community. There should be no war between God's people.

12 . What does James say is a hallmark of wisdom when asking God for something?

Believing in faith without doubting that you'll receive what you're asking for, provided it is within God's will.

LESSON 4 ANSWERS

WISDOM FROM BELOW

1. **What human attitudes of the heart does James associate with "earthly, unspiritual, and demonic"?**

(James 3:14-16)

Bitter jealousy and selfish ambition.

2. **How do jealousy, envy, and selfish ambition -- rather than just being secret or hidden sins in our heart -- affect others around us?**

Jealousy can bring about strife and our attempts to overcome another person. Envy brings bitterness and dislike for another person. If we live in community with others, jealousy, envy, and selfish ambition will disrupt the order of the community as we seek selfish control over others.

3. **The secular, academic pursuit of wisdom seeks intellectual knowledge and understanding. In contrast, what does Biblical wisdom concern itself?**

How we live in humility with others and how we live in fear of God's justice.

4. **In the description of Lucifer found in Isaiah 14:12-14, what word or phrase illustrates the devil's selfishness and blind ambition? How many times does it appear?**

The phrase "I will..." appears five times.

5. **What happened to Persia's Prime Minister, Haman, when his bitter envy and blind ambition attempted to destroy the Jews living in Persia during the reign of King Ahasuerus?**

(Esther, chapters 3-7)

Haman was hanged on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai.

6. **King Nebuchadnezzar lost his kingdom and became a beast of the field for a while because of what kind of thinking?**

(Daniel 4)

Selfish arrogance of his might and glory that put him, in his mind, above the God of heaven.

7. **What did Adam do because he wanted to be like God, and what happened to Adam as a result of his selfish ambition?**

(Genesis 3)

Adam and Eve ate fruit from the forbidden tree in the center of the Garden of Eden so that they would have knowledge of good and evil and be like God. They were consequently condemned to work and pain, driven from the Garden forever, and began to experience the damnation of sin and death.

8. In Philippians 2:1-2 what human characteristics do we find that illustrate the wisdom from ABOVE?

(Philippians 2:1-4)

In Christian community with the help of the Holy Spirit...being of the same mind, with the same love, united in heart, thinking one thing. Do nothing out of selfishness or out of vainglory; rather humbly regard others as more important than yourselves, each one looking out for the interests of others.

9. What did Jesus do that was opposite of Lucifer, Haman, Nebuchadnezzar and Adam; and what result did it have for all eternity?

(Philippians 2:5-11)

Jesus, although he was God, humbled himself, gave up his glory, and became a slave and servant for the sake of others. Because of Christ's obedience to the Father, he was highly exalted above all others.

10. What practice did Jesus institute by demonstration to help Christians humble themselves before other Christians, especially Christian leaders before the common membership of the Church?

(John 13:1-17)

Washing one another's feet.

LESSON 5 ANSWERS

HEARING AND DOING THE WORD

1. **According to Deacon Alex, in what year was the Epistle of James likely written, thus giving us a view of the Early Church?**

60-62 A.D., the first few decades of the Christian church.

2. **When we hear the lector reading the Scripture at Mass, who is really talking to us?**

God.

3. **True or False: God will never ask us to do something we don't want to do.**

False.

4. **What is the best evidence of our faith?**

Doing works of obedience to God.

5. **When speaking of our Christian faith, what are the necessary components of "believing?"**

Doing and obeying.

6. **What does James compare to a man who looks in a mirror, walks away, and then forgets what he looks like?**

A man who hears God's Word but does not do it.

7. **What well-known parable of Jesus is about two men, one who does what God says, and one who doesn't?**

Matthew 7:24-27

The wise and foolish men who built their houses respectively upon rock and sand.

8. **Are we going to be judged on what we know or what we have done?**

What we have done.

9. **How can a "law" that dictates a restriction to our lives, bring about "freedom" to our lives?**

The law sets up limits to our action that if the limits are exceeded would bring harm, but within the limits we are free to act without danger.

10. **Fill in the blanks: The law comes to _____ us, not to _____ us.**

The law comes to guide us not to condemn us.

11. **What personal traits must we practice to reject temptation and grow in faith and become closer to Christ?**

Perseverance and discipline to obey God.

12. **Deacon Alex talks about two kinds of blessings. What are they?**

Material blessings and the blessings of eternal life, peace, and joy of the Lord that passes all understanding.

13. **For the Christian, what is one of the benefits of suffering?**

(1 Peter 4:1)

He who suffers ceases from sin.

14. **What are four behavioral requirements for individuals who think they are good Christians?**

(James 1:26-27)

(1) Control of their speech. (2) Care for orphans. (3) Care for widows in affliction. (4) Keep unstained from sin.

LESSON 6 ANSWERS

WARNING AGAINST PARTIALITY

1. **Between what two different classes of society does James warn us against being partial, or biased?**

(James 2:1-4)

The rich and the poor.

2. **How had the very early Church changed with respect to the attitudes toward those with wealth and those in poverty from the time of Pentecost to when James was written, about 60-62 A.D.?**

(Acts 4:32-35)

The Church had shifted from holding all material things in common to favoring the rich and marginalizing the poor.

3. **In what ways does the life of Jesus identify with the poor?**

(Luke 9:58, 2 Corinthians 8:9, CCC 544)

He was born in a stable, his parents were essentially homeless, his first visitors were poor shepherds, his father was a lowly carpenter and not royalty or politically powerful. In his life he experienced hunger, thirst, and privation. Jesus never had a home and he died a criminal's death with only his clothes as possessions. Although he was God he voluntarily led the life of service to the spiritually and physically needy.

4. **Because it is a human tendency to prefer the rich, what does James suggest we show preference for instead?**

The poor.

5. **To whom is Jesus sent to preach, and to whom does Jesus declare blessed because "theirs is the kingdom of heaven."**

(Luke 4:18; Matthew 5:3)

The poor and the poor in spirit.

6. **Before God, the rich and the poor — all people, have what?**

Equal dignity. God does not love one person over another.

7. **In what ways are the poor, who love God, rich?**

(James 2:5)

They are rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom of God.

8. **What is part of the Catholic Church's "constant tradition" and what is the source of this tradition?**

(CCC 2444)

The Church's love for the poor is inspired by Jesus's teachings in the Beatitudes, the poverty of Jesus, and His concern for the poor.

9. **Compared to most of the poor in the world and in history, what was different about the poverty that Jesus, St. Paul and many other church leaders like Mother Teresa of Calcutta, experienced -- and why was their poverty different?**

Their poverty was voluntary,-- so that they could identify with and serve the poor and needy with true compassion and understanding.

10. **Even though some of us could not be classified as poor or needy, how do we become stronger in faith?**

We trust in the Lord for our well being by exercising our faith when we enter into times of need or suffering.

11. **How does God show partiality between the Jew and the non-Jew, between a slave or a free man, or between men and women?**

(Galatians 3:28)

God does not show partiality between any Christians. We are all one in Christ Jesus.

12. **After we die and are judged by God, will He be partial to us in terms of how well we kept some of his laws and not others?**

(James 2:10-13)

No. If we are guilty of violating one law, we will be found guilty of violating all of God's law. Sin is sin, regardless.

13. **What is the solution to sin against another person or against God and how is that solution applied to our lives?**

(CCC 1420 and following)

As we show mercy and forgiveness to others, God will show mercy and forgive us. We show mercy and forgiveness by making restitution for our wrong actions toward others, and by partaking in the Sacrament of Reconciliation or Penance so that God can show us his mercy and give us his forgiveness.

LESSON 7 ANSWERS

FAITH AND WORKS

1. **What is the fundamental, beginning basis of salvation, faith or works?**
(Romans 3:28-30)

Faith.

2. **Can the works we do get us to heaven?**

No. Heaven, like grace and faith, is a gift. But if we have faith, then it must be expressed in good works or good fruit.

3. **Fill in the blank. Faith without works is _____.**

Dead.

4. **Put another way, can faith without good works get us into heaven?**

No.

5. **When Christians say that *we are saved by faith alone*, what error in Biblical interpretation is being made?**

(James 2:14-17)

The Bible isn't used at all, because nowhere does the Bible say we're saved by "faith alone," and in fact James says we are not saved by faith alone.

6. **How does St. Paul in his letter to the Galatians instruct us that faith and works must work together?**

(Galatians 5:6)

The last phrase of the Galatians 5:6 passage says, "faith that works through love." Faith must be associated with good works.

7. **Fill in the blank: Out of an _____ of faith in a person's heart comes forth _____ works.**

Out of an abundance of faith in a person's heart comes forth good works.

8. **Some Christians who promote that we are saved by faith alone cite St. Paul. But, what does St. Paul say before King Agrippa about the need for good works to prove one's faith?**

(Acts 26:20)

"I preached the need to repent and turn to God, and to do WORKS giving EVIDENCE of repentance."

9. **What derogatory term did Martin Luther give to the Epistle of James, because it stresses the need to demonstrate good works.**

An "epistle of straw."

10. **In Matthew 7:21-23 Jesus says that not everyone who calls him "Lord" will enter the kingdom of heaven. Why is that?**

(Matthew 7:21-23)

Because they did not demonstrate faith in Christ with their lives with good works.

11. **In Jesus' parable of the Wedding Feast, the King found a man that was not dressed properly and had him thrown "into the darkness outside where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth." The guest's lack of proper attire was symbolic of what?**

(Matthew 22:1-14)

The guest did not have works to support his faith. He was a hypocrite.

12. **When you meet a destitute person who appears to need help, in what situation is it clear that God requires you to act, and live out your faith with good works?**

(James 2:15-17)

When the destitute person is someone you know personally and you can vouch for his or her need.

13. **Many people will say they "believe in God" or they "believe in Jesus" but their lives are not transformed by said belief. What are some of the ways that Deacon Alex suggests are proofs of a transformed life?**

Faith in God has impelled the person to:

- Live a better life
- Seek the Lord
- Seek a life of love
- Lead a life of forgiveness
- Seek what is best in others
- Deny self in order to help others
- Give of themselves to minister in the Church.

14. **Who "believes in God" but has not been transformed?**

The Devil.

15. **Where does Deacon Alex suggest is the best place to start to be an evangelist for Christ?**

With yourself. Let people see Christ in your life in how you love others.

16. How was Abraham justified before God by his action?

(Genesis 22)

He obeyed God by leaving his home and traveling to where God told him to go, and later by offering his only son Isaac on the altar at God's command.

17. How was Rahab the harlot justified before God by her action?

(Joshua 2 and 6)

When she welcomed the Israelite spies and kept them safe.

LESSON 8 ANSWERS

THE TONGUE

1. **Deacon Alex makes the point that gossip is what kind of problem?**

Gossip is a human problem.

2. **The tongue is very small, yet it can destroy what?**

People's reputations and lives.

3. **What makes a rumor believable and why it is dangerous to pass on?**

A rumor is a half-truth. It's the true element of the story that makes it believable, but because it's probably not the whole truth, passing it on can cause scandal, and sin.

4. **What's the best way to stop a rumor and speak the truth in love?**

Unless you have proof and know first hand the whole story, don't pass it on. That way others will stop passing rumors on to you.

5. **What are the three sinful uses of the tongue?**

Boasting. Malicious Gossip. Profanity.

6. **What is one good way to protect and build up the Christian community and not tear it down?**

Be very careful what we say about others, especially other Christians. Our tongue, driven by our moral decisions, can cause scandal very easily.

7. **What is a healthy selfish reason to be careful what we say about others?**

What we say about others will eventually be said by others about us.

8. **What reveals to others, and to God, the inner motivations of our heart?**

(Matthew 12:34-37)

Our speech -- the words and sentiments that we express about people, places and things.

9. What does Jesus say we will give an accounting for on the day of judgment?

(Matthew 12:34-37)

Every careless word. "By your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

10. What simple actions of an individual can destroy a life, and what simple action by others have destroyed many lives?

(James 3:6)

Malicious speech defiles the "whole body" (our own body and the Church body), and originates in the fires of Hell.

11. What can be easier to tame than our tongue? What do we need to control what we say?

(James 3:6-12)

Wild animals (at times) are easier to control than our tongue. But if we are to be Christians and convey God's grace and mercy to a hurting world, then disciplining our speech to be gracious and merciful is a good place to start.

12. When we are aggravated by stressful situations or people, and feel angry, what might we say graciously instead of being mean?

"God bless you!" "I'm going to pray for you." "God loves you." "Let's ask God to bless it, we need all the help we can get." Get in the habit of regularly and humbly asking God for grace and mercy toward others so we're not explosive and hurtful.

13. If you're a person who has used profanity against another person, what will you never be likely to talk to that person about?

(James 3:12)

You'll never be able to talk to that person about Christianity, because you've demonstrated, through the use of profanity, the opposite kind of fruit in your life.

14. As Christians we are called to reach out to help other people, to be salt and light toward others in the world. What is "salt" and "light" symbolic of in terms of our speech?

"Salt" is symbolic of creating in others (with our speech) a thirst, an interest, and being attractive. We do this by showing others respect, by honoring their dignity before God, and by speaking graciously and showing them mercy, while firmly not tolerating evil. "Light" is symbolic of sharing the truth of a situation and of the way of the Gospel, in a way that leads to redemption and not condemnation.

15. When we curse others, what are we also cursing, albeit inadvertently?

(James 3:9)

The image of God, for men and women are made in God's image.

16. If we are known as the people of God, and if God is in your heart, then what should be coming out of your mouth?

As the people of God we should speak the words of God: love, and forgiveness, and words that are lovely, beautiful, wholesome, life-giving, gracious and merciful.

LESSON 9 ANSWERS

FRIENDSHIP WITH THE WORLD

1. **In Mark chapter 9 we read about Jesus, Peter, James and John going up on a mountain where Jesus was gloriously transfigured and Moses and Elijah appeared and talked with Jesus. They wanted to stay there and build temples to memorialize the event. Then they had to come down from the mountain-top where they met with the problem of the epileptic boy. To what contemporary events in our life is this similar?**

Attending an inspiring spiritual conference or event, and then having to come home and deal with real-life, everyday problems.

2. **What regular event in our normal Catholic life should be a mountain-top experience for us, that allows our hearts and minds to soar and be rejuvenated?**

Celebration of The Eucharist where Christ literally comes into our lives, much like Elijah and Moses came into Peter's, James' and John's lives on the Mount of Transfiguration.

3. **How does Deacon Alex relate the events of Mark 9, namely the Transfiguration of Jesus on the mountaintop and then returning to the valley to find His disciples arguing with religious leaders?**

Deacon Alex drew a parallel between the events described in Mark 9 and our attendance at an inspiring religious conference where we feel the presence of Jesus, and then returning home to argue with our spouse.

4. **What specific kinds of sin does James say existed *in the Church*?**
(James 4:1-17)

Covetousness, murder, adultery, envy, passionate selfishness, immaturity, pride, malicious gossip, presumption, and boasting.

5. **What is the common moral problem we share with the Children of Israel and Lot, i.e. when the Israelites left the wilderness and entered Palestine, and when Lot left Abraham to live in the fertile valley?**

(Genesis 13, Deuteronomy 6, Acts 4, James 4)

We get caught up in friendship with the world, and become like the world; we allow ourselves to be entrapped by sin.

6. What is our challenge or endeavor as Christians living in the world?

(Romans 12:1-2a)

To offer our bodies up to God as living sacrifices, as ministers set apart for the worship and service of God. That is, we must continually strive to be "holy," and not conformed to the sins of this world and age.

7. How do children sometimes argue to be part of the world, and what can be a parent's good retort?

Children tell their parents that "everybody is doing it"; implying that whatever "it" is, it must be all right to do. Parents might say, "Well, this is not everybody's house. Your mother and I love the Lord, and certain things can't come into this house if we're trying to convert people to Jesus Christ."

8. Quote Joshua 24:15b.

"As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."

9. Not conforming to this age means taking a stance for what politically incorrect moral practices?

Marriage only between one man and one woman.
Protecting life from the moment of conception to natural death.
Not coveting anything owned by our friends.
Not committing adultery or fornication in our hearts, minds or bodies.
Being generous to those in need.
Speaking graciously even to our enemies while not tolerating evil.
Being humble in spirit and giving God glory.

10. What is the secret of obeying God and not being part of the world and its sin?

(Romans 12:1-2)

Being transformed by the renewal of your MIND.

11. How is our mind renewed, and what is the danger associated with the process?

Our mind is renewed in two steps, continually repeated over a lifetime: (1) Listening to and studying the Bible, and the voice of God, and then (2) acting upon it. The danger is that if we don't listen or don't act, then we are not transformed, and we won't get to heaven.

12. What would a sinner do in heaven?

Nothing that would be of any interest to him or her.

13. A lover of the world makes himself _____.

(James 4:4)

An enemy of God.

14. Many people are of two minds, wanting to be part of both God and of the world. To be a Christian, what is required?

(James 4:7-10)

1. Resist the devil and temptation.
2. Draw near to God and pray.
3. Cleanse your hands and stop doing those things that God is not pleased with.
4. Purify your hearts and be sorrowful for your sins. Get to confession regularly.

LESSON 10 ANSWERS

JUDGING AND CORRECTING A BROTHER

1. **After Cain killed his brother Able, God asked Cain where his brother was. Cain responded by asking God, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Do we have any responsibility for our brother and sister Christians? And if so, what is it?**

(1 Corinthians 12:12-26)

Christians are members of the family of God, we are parts of the same body. When members stray into dangerous territory, it is often up to us to attempt to warn them and plea with them to change their ways before they are destroyed and the body scandalized.

2. **What does speaking evil about a brother or sister entail?**

(James 4:11)

Participating and passing along slander, lies or gossip about another Christian without knowing the facts.

3. **Regarding speaking about another person, what is Deacon Alex's recommendation that we can follow?**

"If I can't say anything nice about you, I won't say anything at all. I will not be guilty of destroying your reputation."

4. **Under what limited conditions should you pass on detrimental information about a person?**

If (a) you know first hand that the information is true, and (b) when passing it on will save some other person from danger or scandal.

5. **How do we sin when we pass judgment on another person?**

We wrongly judge a brother or sister when we condemn them rashly, harshly, or uncharitably based on incomplete information, rumor, first impressions, narrow-mindedness, conceit or mistaken views of suffering.

6. **How we judge others determines what?**

(Matthew 7:1-2)

How we will be judged.

7. What should slow us down when we're tempted to judge another's sin?

(Matthew 7:1)

The fact that we are sinners, too.

8. When the scribes and the Pharisees brought the adulterous woman to Jesus for judgment, what does Deacon Alex suspect Jesus wrote in the sand, which caused the woman's accusers to leave?

(John 8:1-11)

The Bible does not say exactly what Jesus wrote in the sand, but Deacon Alex suspects it was a list of the accusers' sins.

9. When a situation does arise that prompts us to correct a brother or sister, what is the first thing that St. Paul (and Deacon Alex) reminds us to be sure of our own lives?

(Matthew 7:1, Galatians 6:1)

That we are living by spiritual principles: love, forgiveness, purity, prayer and holiness, which then suggest that we are capable of rightly discerning spiritual things in others.

10. What kind of spirit should occupy me when I correct a brother or sister?

(Galatians 6:1)

I should have a spirit of gentleness and brokenness, recognizing that I too am a sinner; and I should express my love for the person and want him or her to be in the right place with Christ and the Church.

11. When we must correct a brother or sister, what must we also be careful about and on the lookout for?

(Matthew 7:1, Galatians 6:1)

We must be careful that we are not tempted ourselves and fall into the same sin as our brother or sister.

12. After correcting the person, what can we do with them to ease their burden?

(Galatians 6:2)

Suffer with that person who has fallen. Share their burden, because they are part of your body in Christ; you should be hurt as well.

- 13. When people have stopped participating in the sacramental life of the Church (coming to Mass, going to Confession), what can we do to restore them to it?**

Call them and invite them back to the parish. Tell them to come home because you love them and miss them. Do not condemn them or judge them.

- 14. Deacon Alex tells the story of going door-to-door with an older lady parishioner inviting people back to church. One man they met had stopped coming to Mass over 20 years before, after being offended by the parish priest. After their visit, the man returned to Church the next week. What did the woman say to the man, which healed the rift?**

The woman apologized to the man and asked his forgiveness for the priest that had long ago left. She said she had remembered him and she missed him.

LESSON 11 ANSWERS

WARNING AGAINST BOASTING

1. **When James chides us about going to another city tomorrow to make money what is he not warning us against, and what is he warning us against?**

(James 4:13-14)

James is not warning us against planning or being accountable to a schedule, as we should in a world that is time-bound. He is warning us that we do not have complete control over our future; we are not even sure we'll be alive tomorrow.

2. **How does Deacon Alex summarize Proverbs 3:5-6 which reads, "In all your ways acknowledge the Lord and he will direct your paths"?**

Put God first.

3. **Why did Job say, "My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle"?**

(Job 7:6)

In the eternal scheme of reality, our individual lives are not totally under our control. We have no control over how long time languishes as our *weft* life flies between the alternating *warp* yarns of the universe.

4. **How can our speech and plans be laced with an acknowledgment of God?**

(James 4:15)

Qualify our plans like this, "If the Lord wills it..."

5. **What happened to the skilled farmer who arrogantly tore down his old barns and built bigger ones to store his bumper crops?**

(Luke 12:16-21)

That night he died and Jesus warned, "This is how it will be for anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God."

6. **How did Jesus change the concept of "wealth" from the Old Testament Deuteronomy concept?**

Wealth is not measured in the abundance of material goods, but is knowing and obeying the Father in Heaven. Poverty is not measured in the absence of material goods, but in not knowing nor obeying the Father in Heaven.

7. **Many people think that God will only judge us on the sins that we commit, these are called sins of "commission". But what other kinds of sin will we be judged on, and what are they called?**

(James 4:17)

It is a sin if we know we should do something but don't do it. These are called sins of omission.

8. **List several sins of omission or failing to do good when good is called for.**

(Matthew 25:41-46)

- When someone is sick and we don't visit and encourage them.
- When someone is hungry and we don't give them food.
- When someone is in prison and we do not visit them.
- When someone is without clothing or shelter and we don't give them clothing and shelter.
- When we factually know of a false witness against someone and we do not defend them.

9. **When James tells us not to "swear by heaven or earth or anything else," what moral direction is he giving us?**

(Matthew 5:37, James 5:12, CCC 2466)

That we should be men and women of our word. What we say can be trusted regardless of the circumstance and that we do not have to "swear by God" or anything else for people to believe us.

LESSON 12 ANSWERS

PATIENCE AND HUMILITY

1. **James 5:7-8 speaks of patience about what expectant event for all Christians?**

The Second Coming of Jesus to Earth.

2. **How does Deacon Alex describe the thinking of the Apostles and early Christians in regard to the Second Coming of the Lord — the Messiah?**

The return of the Messiah would:

- Convert Israel and the whole world
- Set up Christ's Kingdom on Earth
- Regulate temple worship
- Purify the priests
- Bring the tribes of Israel home
- Rebuke the Roman Empire
- Bring peace to the whole earth

3. **What was a problem for the Early Church when Jesus did not return within the first generation of Christians?**

(2 Peter 3:3-4)

Christians stopped believing that Jesus would return and so they began to scoff at Christian teaching of the Second Coming and returned to their life of sin.

4. **What did Early Church teachers and believers fail to realize about God's timing of his revelations throughout history?**

That there were very long periods of time (even 1,000 years) between God's revelations and his action.

5. **As Christians, how should we be prepared emotionally for Christ's Second Coming, as if it were tomorrow?**

With great excitement and anticipation, for upon His Return the world will change only for the better...no, make that the best. The world will be straightened out and we can live forever with Him in glory.

6. Is the Second Coming of Christ the same thing as the Rapture?

Not necessarily. The term "Rapture" is derived from the Latin of 1 Thessalonians 4:17, which means "we will be caught up." But the Catholic Church avoids the term because it is not historically taught as an event separate from Christ's Second Coming; and today the term can be confused with *multiple* theories of the end times introduced by Protestant sources only since the 1800s, and made popular in the early 1900s most notably by *footnotes* in the Scofield Reference Bible. Close examination of Scripture or other Early Church teachings give no clear understanding of exactly what events will occur at Christ's Second Coming, thus the Church makes no claim other than that time is a mystery.

7. While we do not know when or how Christ will return, what does the Bible tell us that we must do in preparation for his coming?

Be spiritually ready ... through obedience, faith, and holiness.

8. List some of the ways the Lord comes to us in addition to his first coming in the form of Jesus Christ.

1. Christ comes to us in CONVERSION.
2. Christ comes to us in the FINAL DAYS of OUR DEATH.
3. Christ comes to us in The PAROUSIA, the Second Coming of Christ.

9. What sacrament helps us to be continually "converted" and turned back to the Lord?

The Sacrament of Reconciliation, or Penance, popularly known as Confession.

10. For the Sacrament of Reconciliation to be effective in our life, and for Christ to come into our lives effectively, with what state of mind must we come?

Sorrowful humility, determined to turn from sin.

11. What attitude prevents many from taking advantage of the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

Arrogance, that we do not need to humble ourselves before God's representative...a much more difficult and humbling task than asking God in private prayer.

12. God gave Solomon several criteria by which the people of Israel could be forgiven. What were they?

(2 Chronicles 7:14)

God's people must:

- Humble themselves before God
- Pray to God for forgiveness
- Seek God's face
- Turn from sin

13. When God forgives us, what does he do for us?

(2 Chronicles 7:14)

God will:

- Hear
- Forgive
- Pour out blessings
- Fill us with consolation
- Restore us in knowing we are forgiven.

14. Jesus didn't come into the world to condemn us but to _____.

(John 3:17)

Save us.

15. Since Deacon Alex was once a Protestant Pentecostal and is now Catholic, what has he learned in a general sense?

That there are a lot of things he does not know, so he does not judge others; he does not know what else God is doing in the universe.

16. What is the useful adage that Deacon Alex reminds us about when, in judgmental accusation, we point our finger at others?

We have three other fingers pointing back at ourselves. (Try it.)

17. In the end what must we remember about the Lord, as we contemplate our need to be patient and humble?

The Lord is compassionate and merciful.

LESSON 13 ANSWERS

PRAYER AND CONFESSION

1. **Because of Vatican II's research into the Sacrament of Anointing, what changes were made in its use?**

The Sacrament of Anointing is now used for individuals who are gravely ill but may not die. This brought back the use of the Sacrament as it was used in the Early Church. In recent times, the Sacrament had inadvertently evolved into only being used for those who were surely about to die.

2. **List some of the ways John Paul II identified that we can suffer, but that do not involve sickness.**

(Salvifici Doloris, John Paul II, 6)

Danger of death, death of one's own children, lack of off-spring, nostalgia for the homeland, persecution and abandonment, remorse of conscience, hostility of the environment such as mockery or scorn, loneliness, the prosperity of the wicked and the poverty of the righteous, unfaithfulness of family and neighbors, the misfortune of one's own nation.

3. **Who does James say should be the ones who do the anointing with oil and praying over the sick?**

(James 5:13-16)

The leaders of the Church, not those with the gift of healing.

4. **In the New Testament what were symbols and tonics of healing?**

(Luke 10:25-37)

Oil and wine.

5. **Can a deacon or a priest administer the Sacrament of Anointing?**

(CCC 1516)

Not a deacon, but only a priest.

6. **What graces and gifts does the Anointing of the Sick convey?**

(CCC 1520)

Strengthening in the Holy Spirit against anxiety, discouragement, and temptation, and conveys peace and fortitude.

7. Why does the priest touch the sick during the Sacrament of Anointing?

So that the sick person is reminded of Christ's healing touch (in the New Testament stories). The priest's hand also acts as a symbol of the community of believers to remind the sick that they are not alone emotionally or physically in their time of suffering.

8. Can we request the Sacrament of Anointing for illnesses that are not life threatening like the common cold?

No.

9. Job's friends made a mistake in diagnosing the cause of his suffering. We may make the same mistake with our friends. What was that mistake?

That all sickness and suffering is the consequence of sin. Suffering may be the result of some sin, either practically or supernaturally, but such a connection should not be assumed.

10. But sometimes sin is the cause of sickness and suffering. What did Jesus sometimes say to the person he had just healed?

(John 5:14)

Go and sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you.

11. If calamity comes upon you, and you've done all that you know to do, and there's nothing in your life that would impede the grace of God, and you're still suffering, what must you know?

(Romans 8:28)

The suffering is for a noble divine purpose and "it shall be well". We may not know the purpose of the suffering, but we know the end of that purpose is God's goodness for us and His Kingdom.

12. Pertaining to sickness and sin, what two sacraments can only be administered by a priest and not a deacon?

The Sacraments of Confession (or Reconciliation) and Anointing.

13. Can a deacon hear your confession and give you absolution?

A deacon can hear your confession just like any friend can. But only the priest can give you absolution.

14. Quote the Scriptures from the Gospels that give the Church's authority to forgive sin, or not forgive them?

(Matthew 16:19, John 20:23)

"I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 16:19); and "Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained" (John 20:23).

15. Why is the Sacrament of Confession officially named the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

Because the forgiveness of sins reconciles us to the Father and to the community of Christians, both represented by the priest.

16. What are several reasons why the Sacrament of Reconciliation is administered in the presence of another human being—a priest?

(Isaiah 45, Philippians 2:13, Matthew 9:8, CCC 1456, Matthew 16:19, John 20:23)

- From the beginning of time God has chosen to work primarily through his representatives and His creation in the persons of prophets, priests, kings, doctors, gardeners and even angels. For example, God can heal us directly, but he prefers that we go to a doctor and receive his grace through skilled hands that he has created. Even faith (a gift of the Holy Spirit) comes to us principally through preaching or the written proclamation of the Gospel by humans.
- Jesus ordained that the Church care for itself through other persons.
- Confession to a person requires a greater commitment of sorrow and repentance than doing it privately. Face-to-face confession humbles us and deepens a contrite heart.
- Hearing the words of absolution in physical time and space (from the priest) makes tangible God's forgiveness, which we do not experience with private confession.
- Jesus ordained the Church to forgive and retain, to loose or bind the sins of men.

17. What is required for a sin to be classified as a mortal sin?

(CCC 1857-1859)

"Mortal sin is sin whose object is *grave matter*, and which is also committed with *full knowledge* and *deliberate consent*." Mortal sins break us from God's grace.

18. What is a venial sin?

(CCC 1862-1863)

A venial sin is a less serious matter than a mortal sin, when a moral law is disobeyed but *without full knowledge, or without complete consent, or not dealing with a grave matter*. Venial sins detract but do not separate us from God's grace.

19. What did Deacon Alex like about James telling us that Elijah was "human like us"?

(James 5:17)

We think of Elijah as a very spiritual man. When he prayed miraculous things happened. But he was "human" James says, and no doubt experienced the same temptations to sin as all of us. For that reason Elijah is a role model that we can aspire to. When he prayed that it would not rain, it did not rain, and when he prayed that it would rain, it rained.

20. What is earnest prayer?

(Luke 18:1-8)

When we pray without becoming weary or discouraged. When we do not stop praying until you get an answer, yes or no.