

## **LISTEN UP!**

- Selections from the book of James  
Written and arranged by: Chuck Goodin

*For Drama Troupe A*

*4 or more actors*

*The book of James can feel dry, like a book of the law from the Old Testament. Yet these truths were given to us so that we can experience more life in Christ. To that end, the goal of this piece is to present these selections in an engaging way. The best way to do that is for your group to study the passages, determine what the scripture is saying, then find your own way to present what you have learned.*

*The main rule for this piece is to have fun and make it your own. As an example, check out some YouTube videos of various Godspell productions where the teachings of Jesus are presented in fun ways.*

*The actions and ad-lib lines given in the script are examples and do not have to be followed. However, the main lines are scripture and should be kept intact. If a line of scripture is broken up by action then try to keep the pauses as brief as possible to keep the thought complete. This will take rehearsal and study.*

*The director should feel free to reassign the lines to any actor as needed.*

All the actors start in a line with  
a neutral expression.

FOUR

Selections from the book of James.

ONE

Listen up brothers and sisters!

The actors move about to set up  
their first look.

TWO

You must all be:

Everyone moves about very quickly

ALL

Quick!

Everyone stops

THREE

To listen,

Everyone moves again but this time  
in slow motion.

ALL

Sloooooooooow-

Everyone stops.

FOUR

to speak,

The group quickly splits into two  
lines facing one side to STAGE LEFT  
and the other to STAGE RIGHT.

On the next line the two sides  
charge each other.

ALL

Aaaaaaaaaaand!

ONE

(yelling)

Slow!

Everyone stops. ONE stands between  
the two groups to stop the attack

ONE

-to get angry! Human anger does not produce the righteousness  
God desires.

Everyone puts down their fists and  
shakes hands with the other side.

THREE

So!

FOUR  
Get rid of all filth and evil!

ONE, TWO, and THREE look at each other unsure what to do. Suddenly they all get the same idea. ONE starts scrubbing the floor, TWO starts dusting everything and everyone with an imaginary duster, and THREE starts sweeping the floor.

FOUR  
(ad-lib)  
Stop! No not like that!

Everyone stops and looks at FOUR.

THREE  
Then how?

FOUR approaches THREE-

FOUR  
Humbly accept the word God has planted in your hearts-

ONE extends a Bible to TWO. TWO turns away, laughing in ridicule.

FOUR  
-for it has the power to save your souls.

TWO turns around, looking back at ONE and the Bible. TWO reconsiders. TWO receives the Bible and crosses with ONE.

ONE  
(teaching)  
But don't just listen to God's word.

TWO  
(excited)  
You must do what it says!

FOUR  
Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves.

THREE  
For if you listen to the word and don't obey,

ONE holds out an imaginary mirror to TWO.

ONE

It is like glancing at your face in a mirror.

TWO primps in front of the  
imaginary mirror.

FOUR

You see yourself, walk away-

TWO turns and walks away. Stops.

TWO

(ad-lib)

Hey!

FOUR

And forget what you look like.

TWO runs back to the mirror to  
recheck image.

ONE

But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you  
free-

ONE replaces the mirror with the  
Bible.

TWO

And if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard,

THREE and FOUR walk toward ONE and  
TWO.

FOUR

Then God will bless you for doing it.

ONE

If you claim to be religious-

THREE jumps up on a box.

THREE

(ad-lib, extreme preacher  
voice)

I said repent! You evil sinners.

FOUR accidentally bumps THREE  
knocking THREE off box.

THREE

(ad-lib)

Idiot!

Everyone gasps in horror.

ONE  
BUT you don't control your tongue,

TWO  
You are fooling yourself, and your religion is-

ALL  
Worthless!

ONE  
Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God means...

All actors form a supply line  
facing the audience. They mime  
handing out food and supplies to  
imaginary people passing by

TWO  
-caring for orphans and widows in their distress!

THREE hands and item to FOUR and  
FOUR hands item to TWO.

THREE  
(ad-lib)  
Blanket.

FOUR  
Blanket

TWO  
Blanket.

THREE  
Pillow.

FOUR  
Pillow.

TWO  
Pillow.

THREE  
Sandwich.

FOUR  
Sandwich.

TWO  
Uh... Sandwich.

TWO doesn't give out the sandwich but turns slightly away from the others and tries to take a bite, but ONE grabs the sandwich just in time, confronting TWO.

ONE

Caring for orphans and widows in their distress AND refusing to let the world corrupt you.

ONE takes the sandwich and gives it out. TWO lowers head in shame.

THREE jumps on a box.

THREE

Brothers and sisters, how can you claim to have faith in Jesus if you favor some people over others?

FOUR crosses STAGE RIGHT and opens an imaginary door, welcoming people.

THREE

For example, suppose someone comes into your meeting dressed in fancy clothes and expensive jewelry,

ONE walks through the door strutting with a swagger as if owning the place.

ONE

(ad-lib, affected snobby voice)

Good evening darling. So good to see you.

FOUR scrambles, pushes THREE off the box, and moves the box DOWN STAGE RIGHT so that ONE has a place to sit. FOUR dusts off the seat and then politely offers it to ONE. ONE crosses and sits on box.

THREE

Then another comes in who is poor and dressed in dirty clothes.

TWO walks through door, innocently, with messed up hair and trying to rub out imaginary stains from shirt.

FOUR immediately smells that TWO stinks and waves hand in front of nose to get fresh air.

THREE

If you give special attention and a good seat to the rich person, but you say to the poor one,

FOUR points UP STAGE.

FOUR

You can stand over there, or else sit on the floor.

TWO walks UP STAGE and sits on the floor. THREE walks over to FOUR to confront face to face.

THREE

Doesn't this discrimination show that your judgments are guided by evil motives?

FOUR grabs mouth in shock, realizing what has just been done.

THREE

Listen up, dear brothers and sisters. Hasn't God chosen the poor in this world to be rich in faith?

THREE points UP STAGE toward TWO who is kneeling and praying fervently.

THREE

Aren't they the ones who will inherit the Kingdom he promised to those who love him? But you dishonor the poor!

ONE stands. Looks around and takes assessment of the place

ONE

(ad-lib, affected snobby voice)

What a nice little church.

FOUR

(ad-lib)

Oh thank you!

ONE

(ad-lib, affected snobby voice)

I'm going to buy it. Tear it down, and build a shopping mall.

FOUR

(ad-lib)

Wait, what?!

THREE

Isn't it the rich who oppress you and drag you into court?  
Aren't they the ones who slander Jesus Christ?

FOUR nods head in agreement.

FOUR

(getting it)

It is good when you obey, "Love your neighbor as yourself."  
But if you favor some people over others, you are committing  
a sin.

THREE

What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you  
have faith but don't show it by your actions?

FOUR gestures toward TWO.

FOUR

Suppose you see a brother or sister who has no food or  
clothing, and you say,

ONE turns toward TWO and crosses  
STAGE LEFT toward the imaginary  
door.

ONE

(ad-lib, affected rich voice)

Good-bye, have a good day; stay warm and eat well.

FOUR moves to confront ONE.

FOUR

But then you don't give that person any food or clothing.  
What good does that do?

THREE coming center. Everyone  
joining.

THREE

So you see, faith by itself isn't enough. Unless it produces  
good deeds, it is

ALL

Dead

THREE

And

ALL

Useless.

THREE

In conclusion, if you are wise and understand God's ways,



ALL

Prove it!

TWO

By living an honorable life, doing good works with humility.

THREE

As the Scriptures say,

ONE

"God opposes the proud

FOUR

But He gives grace to the humble."

ONE

So

Everyone drops to their knees.

ALL

Humble

ONE

-yourselves before God.

Everyone brings one foot forward  
and makes a cross with their arms.

ALL

Resist

TWO

-the devil, and he will flee from you.

Everyone bows.

ALL

Come close to God

THREE looks up expectantly.

THREE

-and God will come close to you.