

JAMES

Conversational Version

Salutation

1:1James, servant of God and the Lord Jesus Christ^{Messiah}, to the twelve tribes in the Dispersion. Greetings.

Temptation, Wisdom, Humility

2Consider temptation something to be glad about. **3**It challenges your faith to produce stamina, **4**and stamina gives you the ability to finish what you're doing.

5If you need wisdom, ask God. He gives it generously to everybody without blaming *them for asking*. **6**Trust him when you ask. If you doubt, you're like an ocean wave blown around by the wind. **7**Don't suppose you'll get anything from God. **8**If you can't make up your mind, you're unsettled about everything you do. **James 1:1-8**

9Disciples in humble circumstances should take pride in their high position. **10**Rich disciples should take pride in their humble circumstances because their wealth will fade away like a flower in the grass. **11**The sun climbs high and joins the hot wind to dry up the grass and wilt the flowers, and their beauty fades away. That's how it is with rich people: they wither away in what they're trying to do. **James 1:9-11**

12When you hold up under temptation you're blessed. When approved, you'll receive life as a crown. That's what the Lord has promised people that care about him. **13**When you face temptation, don't say, "*God's tempting me.*" Evil isn't tempting to God, and he doesn't tempt anybody. **14**Your own lusts are what tempt you, lure you away, entice you. **15**When lust conceives, it bears sin, and sin grows up to produce death. **James 1:12-15**

Listening, Doing, Controlling the Tongue

16Don't get misled. **17**Every good and perfect gift comes down from the Father that enlightens us. There's no wavering or hint of inconsistency with him. **18**He took the initiative in bringing us forth by the message about the truth so we've become a kind of firstfruits among people he created. **James 1:16-18**

19Know *this*: people must be willing to listen, be careful about what they say, and be slow to get mad. **20**People's anger doesn't produce God's goodness. **21**So get rid of filthy ways of living and the excesses that evil brings; humbly yield to the implanted message that can save you. **James 1:19-21**

22Do the word; don't just listen to it and kid yourselves. **23**If you hear *it* and don't do *it*, you're like a fellow that looks in a mirror **24**and forgets what he looked like. **25**When you stare

into the perfect “law,” the law of liberty, and continue as a doer, not just a hearer, you’ll be blessed in what you do.

James 1:22-25

²⁶If you consider yourself religious but don’t control your tongue, you’re fooling yourself; your religion is useless. ²⁷Pure, undefiled religion with God the Father is this: looking after orphans and widows in their hardship and keeping yourselves from getting stained by the world.

James 1:26-27

No Discrimination Against the Poor

²¹Fellow Christians, don’t discriminate against people while claiming to have faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ. ²If a man comes into your assembly dressed nice with a gold ring on his finger, and a poor man comes in wearing shabby clothes, ³and you give preference to the one in fine clothes and say, “*You sit here in a nice place,*” and you say to the poor man, “*You stand over there,*” or “*Sit by my footstool,*” ⁴haven’t you discriminated and made judgments based on bad motives?

James 2:1-4

⁵Listen, hasn’t God chosen poor people to be rich in faith and inherit the kingdom he promised to people that care about him? ⁶But you’ve looked down on poor people. Don’t rich people bully you and take you to court? ⁷Don’t they slander the good name you wear? ⁸But, you do well to fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, “***Love your neighbor as yourself***” [Lev 19:18]. ⁹If you discriminate, you sin, and the Law convicts you of being a sinner. ¹⁰Whoever keeps the whole Law but stumbles in one point, has become liable to the Law *as such*. ¹¹The One that said, “***Do not commit adultery***” [Ex 20:14; Deut 5:18] is the same One that said, “***Do not murder***” [Ex 20:13; Deut 5:17]. If you don’t commit adultery, but commit murder, you’re still a law breaker. ¹²Speak and do like people that are evaluated by a “law” of liberty. ¹³Condemnation is without mercy to the one that hasn’t shown mercy. Showing mercy is better than criticizing. **James 2:5-13**

Doing vs. Believing

¹⁴What good is it to say you believe but don’t do? Believing can’t save you, can it? ¹⁵When a brother or sister needs clothes or daily food, what good is it ¹⁶if somebody says, “*Have a good day; keep warm and eat well,*” but doesn’t give them what they need? ¹⁷It’s the same way if belief doesn’t do anything; it’s dead by itself.

James 2:14-17

¹⁸Somebody might say, “*You have belief; I have deeds.*” Show me your belief without doing anything, and I’ll show you my belief by what I do. ¹⁹You believe there’s one God; that’s nice. Demons believe *that* too—and tremble. ²⁰Can’t you see that believing without doing is useless? ²¹Wasn’t our ancestor Abraham justified by what he did when he sacrificed his son Isaac? ²²Belief combined with his deeds; his deeds completed his belief. ²³He fulfilled the scripture that said, “***Abraham believed God, and God considered him righteous***” [Gen 15:6], and he was called “God’s friend” [2 Ch 20:7; Is 41:8]. ²⁴That shows we’re justified by what we do, not

simply by what we believe. ²⁵The same with Rahab the prostitute; wasn't she justified by what she did when she received the messengers and sent them out a different way? ²⁶As the body is dead if it doesn't breathe, believing is dead if it doesn't do anything.

James 2:18-26

More about Controlling the Tongue

3:¹Not many of you should try to be teachers; you'll get judged more strictly. ²In lots of ways we all slip up; if we don't slip up in what we say, we're perfect; and we can bridle our whole body. ³We put bits in horses' mouths so they'll obey us, and we guide their whole body. ⁴The same thing with ships. Though they're so big and driven by strong winds, the helmsmen control them with a very small steering paddle wherever they want them to go. ⁵The same thing with the tongue. It's a small part of the body, but it makes big claims.

James 3:1-5

⁶A little spark can set a big forest on fire! ⁷People tame all kinds of animals and birds, reptiles and sea creatures; ⁸but nobody can tame the tongue; *it's* an uncontrollable evil full of deadly poison. ⁹We bless the Lord and Father with it, and *then* curse people made like him. ¹⁰Blessing and cursing from the same mouth! That shouldn't be. ¹¹Brackish and sweet water don't gush out of the same spring, do they? ¹²A fig tree can't bear olives or a vine yield figs, can it? What's salty can't make something sweet.

James 3:6-12

The Importance of Wisdom

¹³Who's wise and understanding among you? Show it in good, humble, wise living. ¹⁴If you're jealous and selfish, don't act proud and lie *to cover it up*. ¹⁵"Wisdom" like that doesn't come from above; it's earthly, unspiritual, demonic. ¹⁶Where there's jealousy and selfishness, people are unstable and exhibit all kinds of bad behavior. ¹⁷Wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceful, gentle, open to reason, merciful, and yielding good fruits. It doesn't waver or show hypocrisy. ¹⁸Peacemakers use peace to plant righteous fruit.

James 3:13-18

Effects of Self-Centeredness

4:¹Where do conflicts and disagreements come from? Don't they come from pleasures at conflict inside you? ²You want and don't have, you kill and covet and can't get, you quarrel and fight and don't obtain because you don't ask. ³When you do ask, you don't receive because you ask with the wrong motive: *you ask* so you can spend it on your pleasures. ⁴Adulterers, you know, don't you, that friendship with the world amounts to hostility toward God? So whoever wants to be friendly with the world makes himself hostile toward God. ⁵Do you suppose the scripture says for no reason, "*The Spirit he put among us yearns to receive exclusive loyalty*"? ⁶He gives more grace, "**God resists the proud, but he gives grace to the humble**" [Pro 3:34 LXX]. ⁷So submit to God. Resist the devil, and he'll run from you. ⁸Come close to God, and he'll come close to you. Clean *your* hands, you sinners; purify *your* hearts, you with divided loyalties. ⁹Be

sad, mourn, and cry. Turn your laughing into mourning, and your lightheartedness into seriousness. ¹⁰Humble yourselves in front of the Lord, and he'll lift you up. James 4:1-10

Ban on Criticism

¹¹Don't gossip about each other. When you criticize your brother or sister, you're acting like a judge. If you do that, you go from being a doer of the law to serving as a judge for the law. ¹²There is one lawgiver and judge that can acquit or execute. Who are you to serve as a judge over your neighbor? James 4:11-12

Recognizing Your Dependent Place

¹³Come, come, now, you that say, "*Today or tomorrow we'll go to such and such a city, spend a year, carry on business, make money.*" ¹⁴You don't know what tomorrow holds. What's your life but a vapor that appears for a while and vanishes? ¹⁵You should say, "*The Lord willing, we'll live and do this or that.*" ¹⁶But you take pride in your bragging; that's not right. ¹⁷If you know to do good and don't do it, you're sinning. James 4:13-17

Futility of Wealth

⁵¹Come, come, rich people. Cry out loud over the miseries heading your way. ²Your wealth has decayed; your clothes are moth-eaten; ³your gold and silver have tarnished. Their tarnish will testify against you and consume you like fire. They're the 'wealth' you've laid up for your last days! ⁴You haven't paid the workers that mowed your fields. Their complaints have gone up to the Lord of hosts. ⁵You've lived in self-indulgence and luxury. You've fattened yourselves up at the expense of people you've ruined. ⁶You've condemned, you've murdered the Righteous One; he doesn't resist you. James 5:1-6

Exhortation to Endurance

⁷So be patient till the Lord comes. A farmer patiently waits for his valuable crop till it gets *its* early and late rains. ⁸You be patient too; strengthen your hearts because the Lord's coming soon. ⁹Don't complain about each other or you'll be complained about; the judge is standing right outside your doors. ¹⁰Take the *LORD*'s prophets as models of suffering and endurance. ¹¹We consider them blessed that endured. You've heard about Job's patience, and you know the Lord's compassionate and merciful in the end. James 5:7-11

Dispensing with Oaths

¹²Above all, don't swear by the sky, the earth, or anything else. Just say "yes" or "no"; otherwise, you fall under condemnation. James 5:12

Calling the Elders

¹³Is anybody suffering among you? He should pray. Is anybody happy? He should sing. ¹⁴Is anybody sick? He should call the church elders. They should pray over him and anoint him with olive oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵Prayer with faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, God will forgive them. ¹⁶Admit your sins to each other and pray for each other so you'll be healed. A good person's prayer can accomplish a lot. ¹⁷Elijah was a man like us, and he prayed sincerely that it wouldn't rain, and it didn't for three and a half years. ¹⁸He prayed again and it rained, and the ground grew its crops.

James 5:13-18

Returning the Stray

¹⁹Fellow believers, if somebody wanders off from the truth and somebody gets him turned around, ²⁰he can be sure that returning a sinner from error will save him from death and cover a host of sins.

James 5:19-20

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