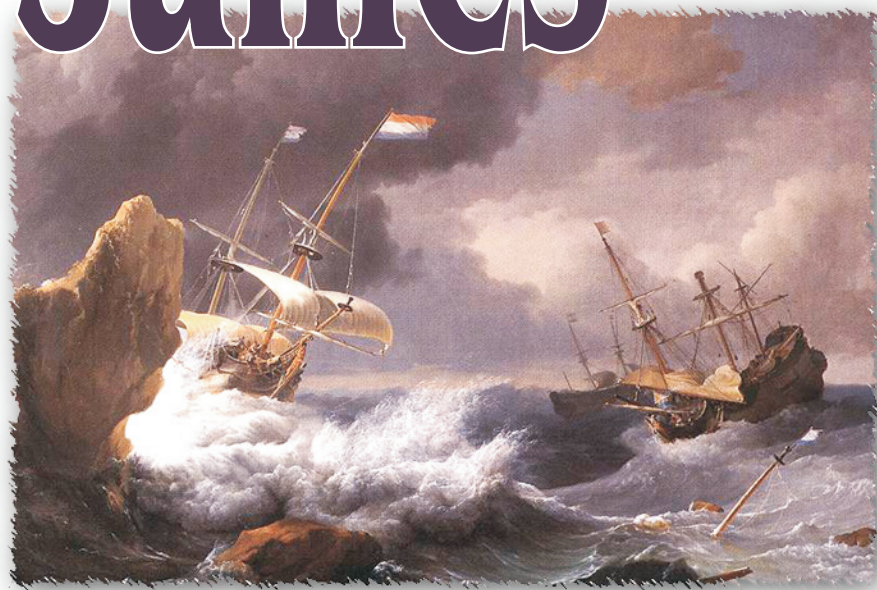


The Anchor of Faith James



"But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind." - James 1:6 (RSV)

by Ron Bontrager



THE BOOK OF JAMES



INTRODUCTORY NEW TESTAMENT STUDIES

By
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The Epistle of James Study Guide

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quotations within critical articles and reviews, including translation.

DISCLAIMER

The textbook used in this course was selected because we consider it to be the best book available and well adapted to this course of study. ***“James & Jude”*** by Gary Holloway contains a wealth of knowledge which will increase your understanding of this important and practical book. Other books you might want to use with this course is Warren B. Weirsbe’s book on James, and Ken Wilson’s book entitled: ***“Faith That Makes A Difference.”*** As with all books written by men, there may be some things with which you and I would not agree. The principle, “use what is good and discard what is not good” applies to all textbooks used with our courses. Please be wise enough to discard any and all teaching that is not biblical.

Instructions and Requirements for Level II Students (Non-Transferrable)

Each lesson is built around the instruction on either the VHS tape, DVD, CD, or audio cassette tape. Listen to the lecture on the tape as you follow along in the course Study Guide book.

Reading: You are required to read the Book of James three (3) times during the course of this study. **(5% of your total grade)**

Tests: There will be only two tests to complete for this course. One test is to be done at the end of lesson six (6), and the other one at the end of lesson twelve (12).

Memory Work: Memory work will be done on the honor system. Eleven (11) verses for this course: Each student will write out his/her memory verses in class and then grade them with different colored pen and turn it in to the test administrator or quoted to the test administrator. **(This will be worth 10% of your total grade).**

Due with the Mid-Term: (6 verses)

James 1:2-4, 13-14, 27;

Due with the Final Exam: (5 verses)

James 2:14, 17, 19; 4:13-14

- * The self exams for each lesson is to be read previous to listening or viewing the material on the tapes.
- * All Self-Exams are to be completed at the end of each lesson. **(This will be worth 5% of your total grade).**
- * Level II must obtain a 70% or better on each test to pass the course. **(This will be worth 80% of your grade).**
- * All assignments must be completed to pass the course.

The material in this book may not be reproduced in any manner for any purpose.

Grade Scale:

Reading:	5%
Memory Work	10%
Study Guide	5%
Exams	<u>80%</u>
TOTAL	100%

Instructions and Requirements for Level III Students (Transferrable)

Each lesson is built around the instruction on either the VHS tape, DVD, CD, or audio cassette tape. Listen to the lecture on the tape as you follow along in the course Study Guide book.

Textbooks Required: One book will be required, "*James & Jude*" by: Gary Holloway, Published by College Press. The section on "**James**" is the only part of the book that must be read by the end of the course. A one page evaluation of this section of the book must be sent in with the final exam. **You are to read the book of *James* one time before each class. (12 times total)** (Your reading assignments and evaluation paper will be 10% of your total grade).

Memory Work: You will have only thirty-five (35) Bible verses to memorize. Memory work will be done on the honor system. You are asked to write your verses from memory on your test in the presence of the administrator **after** you have completed and turned in your test. Correct the verses with a different colored pen before sending in. Or you may quote them to the administrator during the course. He will keep track of the verses completed and report them to us. Please be diligent in doing your memory work. All memory work must be completed to pass this course. **(This will be 10% of your grade)**

Due with the Mid-term Test: (13 verses)

James 1:2-6, 13-18, 27; 2:1.

Due with the Final Test: (22 verses)

James 2:14-19, 26; 3:8-12, 17-18; 4:7-8, 13-14, 17; 5:9, 12, 16.

Assignments:

- You must complete all the "Self Exam" questions in your Course Guide. **(These will be worth 5% of your total grade).**
- You must complete the two tests in this course with the grade for each being 70% or better. **(These test will be worth 75% of your total grade).**

All Assignments must Be Completed and Turned in to Pass the Course.

Grade Scale:

Reading:	10%
Memory Work	10%
Study Guide	5%
Exams	<u>75%</u>
TOTAL	100%

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LESSON ONE

INTRODUCTION TO JAMES

INTRODUCTION

Warren Wiersbe in his book entitled, *Be Mature*, wrote that “not everybody who grows old, grows up.” There is a vast difference between age and maturity. Ideally the older we are the more mature we become. But too often the ideal does not become the reality and the result is problems. Problems in our personal lives, problems in our homes, and problems in our churches.

James was written to help us understand spiritual maturity. In the latter part of chapter 1 verse 4 he writes, “that we might be perfect and entire wanting in nothing.” J. B. Philips in his translation of the New Testament wrote: “*And you will find you have become men of mature character. Men of integrity with no weak spots.*” That is what we want. We want to grow into the image of Christ. We want to grow to manhood. We want to be mature in Christ, and James is a book that can help us to do that very thing. And we would ask that God would help us and bless us as we study James to reach this goal of maturity.

LESSON TEXT: Various texts from the book of James.

LESSON AIM: To introduce and become familiar with the letter written by James and discover who this James is and the people to whom he wrote.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will . . .

1. Examine the authenticity of the book by looking at the events which surround the acceptance of James into the Canon.
 2. Learn five reasons Martin Luther objected to the book being added to the Canon.
 3. Become acquainted with the background of the book in relation to the book’s author, date, recipients and form of the letter.
-

THE CANONIZATION OF JAMES

A. The Authenticity of the Book of James

1. The book of James was one of late acceptance.
 - a. James was not included in the Muratorian Canon of A.D. 180. (A “canon” was a group of books, compiled by Christians, believed to

- belong to the New Testament, based on their criteria to determine genuineness.)
- b. James was not quoted by Tertullian, a third century scholar.
 - 1) Tertullian quoted over 7,000 verses from the rest of the Bible.
 - 2) He did not quote from the Book of James.
 - c. Other early church fathers such as Cyprian, Irenaeus, or Hippolytus, did not write concerning the Book of James.
2. The first traces of James appear in the writings of Origen in the early third century.
 - a. He was aware that it was not universally accepted but believed that James belonged in the Scriptures.
 - b. He said that, “James, the brother of our Lord Jesus, was the author of the book that was called James.”
 3. Other books such as Jude and 2 Peter did not gain immediate acceptance, and James was in that group.
 4. Eusebius (A.D. 325) placed James among the New Testament books that were challenged, but stated it was well known and approved by many.
 5. Jerome’s version of the Latin Vulgate (late 4th century), the standard text of the Roman Catholic church for over 1,000 years included James in the Canon.

B. Martin Luther’s Objections to James. (He called it “an epistle full of straw” “. . . the epistle of James is an *epistle full of straw*, because it contains nothing evangelical.”¹)

1. Reasons he opposed James as part of the Canon.
 - a. Because James was **not an evangelistic book**, that is, James did not present the gospel.
 - 1) Nothing written about Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection.
 - 2) The name Christ is mentioned only twice but nothing is said *about* Him or His redemptive work.
 - b. Because it is **non apostolic in authorship**. It was not written by an apostle.
 - c. Because of James’ **reference to the Jewish Law**.
 - d. Because he believed there was a **contradiction between James’ and Paul’s** teaching on the means of salvation.
2. Later in life he did place James in the Canon because he said it contained “many good sayings.”

¹ *The Letters of James and Peter*, Barclay, William, pp. 6-8.

NOTE: By the fourth century James was accepted into the Canon and for more than twelve hundred years, without any questions, was believed to be of God and deserving of its place in the Scriptures along with all the other writings.

THE AUTHORSHIP OF JAMES AND DATE OF WRITING

A. Discovering the James Who Wrote the Book. He gives us practically no information about himself. He calls himself simply: “*James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ*” (1:1). There are five possibilities:

1. **James, the brother of Jesus.** He was not an early disciple (John 7:5); he became a pillar in the church at Jerusalem. He was put to death in A.D. 62. Accepted by most to be the author of the Book of James.
 - a. He was well known to the recipients of the letter.
 - b. He is familiar with the recipients. Sixteen times in the book he calls the readers his brethren.
 - c. He is very familiar with the Sermon on the Mount.
 - d. He is familiar with the ethical instructions of the Old Testament. See Leviticus chapter 19.
 - e. He was familiar with the topography and customs of Palestine, having grown up in Galilee.
 - f. One to whom the resurrected Lord appeared (1 Corinthians 15:7).
2. **The apostle James,** the brother of John whose father was Zebedee. He was killed by Herod in about A.D. 44 before the book of James was written in about A.D. 60 (Acts 12).
3. **James, the son of Alphaeus** (Mark 3:18). The writer of James does not identify himself as an apostle and this James doesn’t seem to be well known.
4. **James “the less” or younger** (Mark 16:1). Little is known of this James.
5. **James, the father of the apostle named Judas,** or Thaddaeus, as he is called in Mark 3:18.
6. **A Pseudonymous author.** Suggested because the Greek is too elegant (surpassed only by Hebrews) to have been written by an uneducated man.
7. **Whoever he was,** we know that he was . . .
 - a. Blunt and to the point.
 - b. Familiar with the reading audience (“brethren,” used 16 times) and their problems of partiality, worldliness, etc.
 - c. Familiar with ethical instructions of the Old Testament (“holiness code,” Leviticus 19:12-18). See Holloway, p. 19.
 - d. Familiar with Sermon on the Mount and other events in the life of Jesus, as recorded in Matthew.
 - e. Familiar with Palestine (eg. 1:6, 10f; 3:4, 5b, 11f; 5:7).

NOTE: The author of James was most likely so well known to the early Christians that he didn't need a descriptive term to distinguish him from others; James, the brother of Jesus, was a witness of the resurrection (1 Corinthians 15) and the most logical selection as the author.

Summary:

1. Best argument is for a well-known author.
2. James, the apostle, died in A.D. 44; James, the brother of Jesus, died in A.D. 62. Date and familiarity would favor the brother of Jesus.
3. Content of letter is consistent with James, the brother of Jesus.
 - a. The writer is well-known and speaks with authority.
 - b. He knows the Law.
 - c. He knows the teachings of Jesus.
 - d. He knows Palestine (1:11; 3:11, 12; 5:7).

B. The Date of Writing – A.D. 60

1. If the writer is the well-known James, the apostle, the date must be before A.D. 44. He was killed in 44 A.D.
2. If the writer is the James, the brother of Jesus, the date of writing would be before A.D. 62.
3. If “the coming of the Lord” (5:7-9) refers to the destruction of Jerusalem, then the book has to be written before A.D. 70.
4. Holloway's arguments.
 - a. If written before Acts 15 (A.D. 50): the reference to “dispersed abroad” could be a reference to the Acts 8 persecution; thus, James would be chronologically the first New Testament book.
 - b. Familiarity with Sermon on Mount: how did he know this? Oral tradition, or familiarity with Matthew's gospel; if the latter, in the 60s.
 - c. Between the time that James became a church leader (A.D. 40) and his death (A.D. 62).
 - d. **Most likely and accepted date: c. A.D. 60.**
5. Traditional date of James' death was the year A.D. 62. Thus the book would have to be written before this date.
6. Written before the Destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (5:7).

C. The Recipients of the Letter

1. The twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad = spiritual Israel.
2. The readers were those who are very heavily influenced by Judaism but had become Christians.
3. Christians that are scattered – not in their homeland.
 - a. God's people - Christians – are away from home.
 - b. The people of God live here on earth as aliens.
4. The dispersed;

- a. Diaspora: a scattering, as Israelites were scattered during times of captivity; perhaps persecution of Acts 8:1.
 - b. New Testament Christians living among the Gentiles; sojourners away from home (wanting to return); cf. 1 Peter 1:1.
5. The book has the substance and authority of the Prophets and the style and beauty of the Psalms.

D. The Form of the Letter

- 1. The introduction contains the author's name and a greeting to the readers.
- 2. He does not give a salutation at the end of the letter in the typical way.
- 3. There seems to be no central theme running through the epistle.
 - a. There are several small unrelated sections.
 - b. Seems to be very little connection from one section to another.
 - c. Some have suggested that the book of James is a collection of sermons for Christian living.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON ONE:

1. Give two (2) reasons for the late acceptance by the early church for James into the cannon.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____

2. What solidified James' place in the cannon in the late 4th Century?

3. Who called James "an epistle full of straw"? Give the four reasons he did so.

 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____

4. Identify four (4) possible men who could be considered to be the writer of James.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____

6

3) _____

4) _____

5. Who do you think is the writer? Does your thinking coincide with the instructor's? _____

6. Give five (5) things we know about the author of James.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

7. What is the accepted date of writing of James? _____

Give two logical reasons for accepting this date.

1) _____

2) _____

8. Describe the recipients of the letter and explain who they were.

9. Define the word "Diaspora" and indicate who it describes both physically and spiritually. _____

LESSON TWO

INTRODUCTION (II)

INTRODUCTION

As we continue to examine the characteristics of the book of James, we are going to look at the “Purposes” of the book. Understanding the purpose of any writing helps the reader(s) to better comprehend what the author wanted those reading the letter to know.

There are several repeated subjects James will present to his readers. We will be examining several of these in our lesson today.

“One of the major problems in the church was a failure on the part of many to live what they professed to believe. Furthermore, the tongue was a serious problem, even to the point of creating wars and divisions in the assemblies. Worldliness was another problem. Some of the members were disobeying God’s Word and were sick physically because of it; and some were straying away from the Lord and the church.”

“As we review this list of problems, does it appear to be much different from the problems that beset the average local church today? Do we not have in our churches people who are suffering for one reason or another? Do we not have members who talk one way, but walk another way? Is not worldliness a serious problem? Are there not Christians who cannot control their tongues? It seems that James is dealing with very up-to-date matters!”²

LESSON TEXT: Various sections of James

LESSON AIM: To acquaint the student with the over all content of the letter of James.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will. . .

1. Discover James’ purposes involved in the writing of the book.
 2. Look at and discuss several recurring subjects addressed by the author.
 3. Learn a 5 point outline of James.
-

²Warren Wiersbe, The Bible Exposition Commentary

THE PURPOSE AND MAJOR THEMES OF JAMES

A. The Purpose of James' Writing

1. To give instruction that would lead to maturity.
As we read through the book of James we see a lot of immaturity being written about and being corrected.
2. To correct problems that existed in the fellowship of Christians living in a foreign environment.
The problems don't seem too immense, but still James deals with those. And in the very straight forward language, he tries to correct these problems.
3. To unite belief and behavior (1:22).
 - a. It is very important as God's people to believe the teachings of God.
 - b. It is equally important that it be put into practice (2:15).

B. Recurring Subjects Covered in the Book

There is not one single dominant theme running throughout the book. May be a collection of sermons preached by James.

1. A call to Christian maturity (1:2-4). God's people needing to grow.
 - a. Perfect (*TELIOS*) defined: "brought to its full end, finished; wanting nothing necessary to completeness; perfect. . . . of men, full-grown, adult; of full age, mature," This and other forms of *TELIOS*, used 8 times in James (twice in 1:4; once in 1:17, 25; 2:8, 22; 3:2; 5:11).
 - b. Complete: (*HOLOKLEROS*) complete in all of its parts, entire, whole.
 - c. Lacking in nothing: "to leave, leave behind, forsake . . . to lag, be inferior," "lack," 1:5; "destitute," 2:15.
 - Double-minded: (*DIPSUCHEO*) "a. wavering, uncertain, doubting . . . divided in interest," translated "double-minded" in 1:8; 4:8.
 - c. Abraham's faith "was made complete" (*TELIO*) (2:22).
Lit. means basically to become a whole man. To become all that you can be.
2. Patience/Endurance during hard times (1:2-12, 5:1-11).
 - a. *HUPOMONE*, 1:3, 4, 12; 5:11 (2); "steadfastness, constancy, endurance; in the N.T. the characteristic of a man who is unswerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and suffering," cf. patience, perseverance; literally, "to remain under;" steadfastness = to stay firm.
 - b. Longsuffering (5:7- 8, 10).
 - 1) "To persevere patiently and bravely in enduring misfortunes and troubles.
 - 2) "To be patient in bearing the offences and injuries of others; to be mild and slow in avenging; to be long-suffering, slow to anger, slow to punish."

- c. Usually in the New Testament, this word refers to enduring difficult circumstances, also relates to enduring difficult people.
- 3. Wisdom – Definition: “broad and full intelligence” (that which is gained when knowledge is put into practice) (1:5-8; 3:13-18).
- 4. Prayer (1:5-8; 4:1-10; 5:13-20).
- 5. Rich and Poor (Martin, “the chief theme;” “a socially sensitized conscience . . . explicitly champions the cause of the economically disadvantaged”), 1:9-11; 2:1-13; 4:13-16; 5:1-6.
- 6. The tongue (1:19-21, 26; 2:14; 3:1-12; 4:11-12; 5:9).
- 7. Judging others (2:1-13; 3:1-2; 4:11-12; 5:9, 12).
- 8. Belief and behavior (1:22, 25; 2:12, 17; 3:13; 4:17; 5:16).

C. Outline, based on the theme, Spiritual Maturity; Wiersbe, p. 14

See also Holloway’s outline, p. 25; and David’s (NIGTC), pp. 27-28.

The Marks of the Mature Christian:

- 1. He is Patient in Testing, ch. 1
- 2. He Practices the Truth, ch. 2
- 3. He has Power over his Tongue, ch. 3
- 4. He is a Peacemaker, not a Troublemaker, ch. 4
- 5. He is Prayerful in Troubles, ch. 5

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON TWO:

1. List three purposes given for the writing of James.

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____

2. Write below the eight (8) recurring subjects found in the book of James.

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____
6) _____
7) _____
8) _____

3. Write out the five point outline of the book of James.

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____

LESSON THREE

PATIENT IN SUFFERING

INTRODUCTION:



ur introductory statement comes from Wm. Barclay. “In order to attain Christian maturity and holy conduct it is essential to have a firm foundation. The believer must be able to stand with confidence. He dare not be pushed down by trials. He must not be pulled over by temptation. ‘Push, pull—stick, stick’ must be his motto. How can such stamina be achieved? A believer can stand by pursuing, perceiving, and practicing the Word of God. Trials from without and temptations from within are no match for a Christian who stands in the truth from above.”

“All too often trials prompt groanings and complaints. This kind of response does not contribute to Christian maturity. It only makes matters worse. Trials are not to be seen as tribulations but testings. A test is given to see if a student can pass, not pass out. James gave sound advice on how to score high on every test. One who brings the right attitude to the trial, who understands the advantage of the trial, and who knows where to obtain assistance in the trial will certainly end up on God’s honor roll.”

LESSON TEXT: James 1:1-12

LESSON AIM: To understand the place of trials and temptations in growing into perfection and maturity. All too often trials prompt groanings and complaints. This kind of response does not contribute to Christian maturity. It only makes matters worse. Trials are not to be seen as tribulations but testings.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will. . .

1. Come to know how trials, from without, shapes and strengthens faith and perseverance.
 2. Discover that “wisdom” is the element which empowers us to endure trials.
 3. See that an unswerving faith is necessary for answered prayers.
 4. Understand that Christ brings to the poor man a new sense of his own value and to the rich man a new sense of humility.
-

THE PLACE OF TRIALS IN GAINING MATURITY

A. Ten Teaching Sections in James

1. Trials and Temptations (1:2-18).
2. Hearing and Doing (1:19-27).
3. Following the Royal Law (2:1-13).
4. Faith In Action (2:14-26).
5. Problems With The Tongue (3:1-12).
6. The Two Kinds of Wisdom (3:13-18).
7. Quarreling or Humility (4:1-12).
8. Planning According to the Lord's Will (4:13-18).
9. Punishment and Patience (5:1-12).
10. Prayer and Faithfulness (5:13-19).

B. The Right Attitudes in the Midst of Trials – Joy (vs. 2-4)

1. "Consider" "to think, account."
 - a. Our own decision.
 - b. The way things are should not prevent this joy.
 - c. Joy is not the same as happiness.
2. "Trial" – "testing or trying" towards an end. Same word translated "tempted" in verse 13. Context determines the correct translation.
 - a. To be human is to suffer. No exceptions!
 - b. "Various trials" hence no specific trials in mind.
 - c. A general statement on things in life that "upset the apple cart," and mess things up in our lives. Consider the case of Job.
 - d. Such trials are "proving grounds" to make us stronger.
 - e. The important idea here is how do we respond to it when it happens (v. 3).
 - f. We regularly encounter these trials.

NOTE: The Christian's response to trials is not whether or not life is fair and whether we deserve the things that are happening to him, but his response to trials is determined by his own attitude and knowledge concerning trials.

3. Trials produce "endurance." "Endurance" – steadfastness, constancy, enduring difficult times; unswerved from purpose; weathering the storm regardless of the trials, we can endure, which will strengthen us and "perfect" us.
 - a. Endurance makes us three things:
 - 1) It makes us perfect.
 - 2) It makes us complete.
 - 3) It makes us deficient in nothing.
 - b. Paul's teaching on this same subject (Romans 5:2-4; Romans 8:28).

C. The Right Strength or Power in Overcoming Trials (vs. 5-8)

1. Wisdom and faith.
 - a. Wisdom – Broad and full intelligence; knowledge of diverse matters; knowledge acquired by experience.
 - b. The source of our wisdom is not our own intelligence – but the treasure house of God’s wisdom (3:17).
2. The method of attaining wisdom – **prayer of faith** as mentioned in 5:15.
3. “Without reproach” – does not hurl request back in our teeth.
4. Two things to remember concerning wisdom:
 - a. Remember how God gives – generously without reproach.
 - b. Remember how to ask – without doubt, expectantly. God has both the power and the desire to give!
5. The unstable man – on again off again, cannot keep his feet down.
 - a. He is a “doubting” man – doubting the nature and ability of “the giving God.”
 - b. God is willing and able to give (cf. *“every good thing given and every perfect gift is from. . . the Father. . .”* v. 17).
 - c. “This doubting shows that the praying person has not committed himself fully to trust in God.” (Roberts, p. 39).
 - d. The disposition of doubt places the character of God in question (as in Matthew 21:21; Romans 4:20) and blocks our access to His bounty.

D. The Right Approach to Trials – Humility (vs. 9-11)

1. Christ brings to the poor man a new sense of his own value.
 - a. He learns that he matters in the church.
 - b. He learns that he matters in the world.
 - c. He learns that he matters to God.
 - 1) He is priest of the most High God!
 - 2) He reigns with Jesus over the world!
 - d. The poor man has been “dispersed abroad,” and his home is somewhere else. Therefore trials come and attempt to bring him down, but they aren’t of tantamount importance because we understand our high position.
2. Christ brings to the rich man a new sense of humility. He is to “glory” in his humiliation. See the contrast between the rich and poor, in this life and the one to come in Luke 16:19-31.
3. Illustration from nature/ Palestine/ familiar surroundings – “flowering grass.”
 - a. Reminder to the rich – he will fade away.
 - b. So, whatever state you are in, give glory (boast in) to God *in that state or circumstance*.

E. The Right Reward of Persevering in Trials (v. 12) The Victor’s Crown!!

1. The END of trials, met in the right way produces joy! Here and hereafter.

- a. In this life – a man proved and approved (cf. 1 Peter 1:5-7).
- b. In life to come – crown of life (2 Timothy 4:8).
2. Two Greek words for “crown.” The one used here is *STEPHANOS* which refers to the victor’s crown.

FOR FURTHER STUDY:

Three concepts surrounding the *STEPHANOS* crown:

1. The crown of flowers was worn at times of joy, at weddings and at feasts (a sign of happy and festive joy).
2. The crown (diadem) was the mark of royalty. It was worn by kings and by those in authority.
3. The crown of laurel leaves was the victor's crown in the games, the prize which the athlete coveted above all other rewards (Cf. 2 Timothy 4:8).
4. The crown was the mark of dignity and honor.
The Christian's crown can be a combination of all those meanings, joy, royalty, victory, dignity and honor. The Christian is blessed and controlled by God.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON THREE

1. What attitude is the Christian to have in the midst of trials? _____
2. Give a definition of the word “trials” as used in verse 2. _____

3. What is the desired product of trials in the Christian’s life? _____

4. Endurance makes us what three things?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
5. What is the right strength or power in overcoming trials? _____

6. What are two important things to remember concerning wisdom?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
7. Describe the character of the “unstable” man. _____

8. What is the Christian approach to trials? _____
9. What are three things which bring to the poor Christian man a new sense of his own value.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
10. What promise is given to the man who perseveres under trial? _____

LESSON FOUR

WISDOM IN TEMPTATIONS

INTRODUCTION:

From the beginning of time it has been man's first instinct to blame others for his own sin. The ancient writer who wrote the story of the first sin in the Garden of Eden was a first-rate psychologist with a deep knowledge of the human heart. When God challenged Adam with his sin, Adam's reply was, "*The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate.*" And when God challenged Eve with her action, her answer was, "*The serpent beguiled me, and I ate.*" Adam said, "Don't blame me; blame Eve." Eve said, "Don't blame me; blame the serpent" (Genesis 3:12-13). Man has always been an expert in evasion. Robert Burns wrote:

"Thou knowst that Thou hast formed me
With passions wild and strong;
And listening to their witching voice
Has often led me wrong."

LESSON TEXT: James 1:13-21

LESSON AIM: To grow in our understanding of the source of temptations, the nature of God and our responsibility as a result of these. Christians are in danger of falling before the attacks and pressures of trials. But they are also subject to falling before the attractions and pleasures of temptation. Just as a wrong reaction to testing will obstruct spiritual growth and maturity, so will a wrong response to temptation.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will. . .

1. Learn that temptations do not come from God but from our own lust and desire.
 2. Discover that God gives only good gifts, including the choosing of us through rebirth by the word.
 3. Discover that because we are His offspring we have a responsibility to control our speech and actions.
-

In effect, he is saying that his conduct was as it was because God made him as he was. The blame is laid on God. So men blame their fellows, they blame their circumstances, they blame the way in which they are made, for the sin of which they are guilty. James sternly rebukes that view. (Barclay, pp. 60-61)

TEMPTATIONS - THEIR SOURCE AND OUTCOME

A. The Correct Understanding of Temptations – Not From God (v. 13)

1. God does not tempt (*PEIRASMO*, a verb, is used 4 times in this verse; cf. “trials,” v. 2) anyone.
2. God cannot be tempted – with evil.
 - a. There is nothing in God to which evil can make an appeal.
 - b. God is literally “untemptable.”
 - c. God often tests, but He never tempts.

NOTE: God’s motive for trying or testing men is that they be proven faithful (v. 12) not to tempt to sin!

B. The Source of Temptation – From Within (v. 14)

1. A person’s own evil desire, lust, or inner craving.
2. He is dragged away and enticed.
 - a. To draw out, to lure forth; as in hunting and fishing, so a person may be lured forth from the self-restraint of sin.
 - b. Enticed – to beguile, allure, entice – by his own lust.
 - c. So a person both builds and baits his own trap.
3. Ascribe evil not to the “Father of lights” but to the “Prince of darkness.”

C. The Steps in Temptation – The Genesis of Sin (vs. 15-16)

1. Four stages described:
 - a. The **desire** (lust) – the appetite draws the person towards evil indulgence.
 - b. The **will** yields to the desire – brings action.
 - c. Sin then is **born** – the grotesque offspring of the unhallowed union between will and desire – or lust.
 - d. Sin then matures and produces its own offspring, **death!**
2. The deceiving power of Satan – He is a deceiver!
 - a. We must not be deceived; temptation can lead to death.
 - b. To survive temptations, we need to know:
 - 1) Satan’s work
 - 2) Ourselves
 - 3) God (vs. 17-18)
 - 4) God’s word (v. 19)

NOTE: James warned his dear brothers and sisters who were to read this “genealogy” not to be deceived or led astray. Just as a right response to trials can result in growth to full spiritual maturity, so a wrong response to lust will result in decline to abject spiritual poverty and ultimately to death.

THE GOODNESS AND GIFTS OF GOD AND OUR RESPONSE

A. Every Good Thing Is from God (v. 17)

1. God is a giving God (v. 5).
 - a. *DOSIS* – the act of giving – reflects the character of the giver! (Every good giving – gift).
 - b. *DORESMA* – the gift itself – reflects the character of the gift.
 - c. *TELIOS* (perfect) – complete, full-grown, mature.
2. “Every good and perfect gift is from above,” – literally, “every good act of giving (*DOSIS*) and every perfect gift (*DORESMA*) is from above.”

NOTE: In stark contrast with the morbid scene of death that descends from unbridled lust is the bright scene of new life that emanates from the Word of truth (v. 18). The father of darkness–Satan (Acts 26:18; Colossians 1:13) – generates the offspring of sin and death. The Father of the heavenly lights (God, who created the starry universe) gives salvation and life and is unchanging. Shadows from the sun shift, but not the One who made the sun!

B. God’s Choice and the Result (v. 18)

1. In the exercise of His will (He chose, and carried out His plan).
2. He brought us forth (“birthed” us).
 - a. Contrast this with “gives birth” to sin (v. 15).
 - b. Since God chose us why would we think He would try to tempt us to sin.
3. The medium of begetting – accomplished by the word of truth. His word begets life – “the truth shall set you free” (John 8:32; cf. James 1:21; 1 Peter 1:22-25).
4. We become a kind of first fruits among His creatures. – That which is devoted or dedicated to God (Revelation 14:4; Jeremiah 2:3).
 - a. In the Old Testament, the first crops were dedicated to God in sacrifice (Exodus 23:16; Leviticus 2:12).
 - b. Those who are born through the word of truth also present themselves as sacrifices to God (cf. Romans 12:1).
 - c. First fruits might also imply that those born anew are a preview of the new creation (cf. Romans 8:22-23).

NOTE: The solution for temptation is to be found in a close relationship with the Father and a constant response to His Word. One must rest in the unchangeable Lord of light and rely on His life-giving “Word of truth” (cf. Ephesians 1:13; Colossians 1:5; 2 Timothy 2:15).

C. The Proper Response to the Knowledge of God’s Character – A Controlled Disposition (vs. 19-21)

1. The importance of “knowing” and “being.”

- a. Quick (*TAXUS* = speedy) to hear. Likely referring to the Word of truth (v. 18) which begets and sustains life.
 - b. Slow (dull, inactive) to speak. Guard your words (cf. 3:1-12).
 - c. Slow to anger (*ORGE*). This is the “calm” anger” – usually seeks revenge. Anger fails to yield the righteous life that God desires, the goal to which this epistle is committed.
2. The importance of doing: Three things to do:
- a. Putting aside filthiness – that which defiles one morally; moral filth.
 - b. Putting aside all that remains – abundance, superfluity, the residue of wickedness (evil, desire to injure).
 - c. Receive the word – the life-giving breath from God.
 - 1) In humility (meekness).
 - 2) It is able to save your souls.

NOTE: If we do not receive the implanted Word, then we are deceiving ourselves. Christians who like to argue various “points of view” may be only fooling themselves. They think that their “discussions” are promoting spiritual growth, when in reality they may only be cultivating the weeds.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON FOUR:

1. Complete this sentence: From the beginning it has been man's instinct to _____
2. What does the correct understanding of temptations involve according to verse 13? _____
3. What is God's motive for trying or testing men? _____
4. What are the four stages or steps in temptation – the genesis of sin?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
5. To survive temptations we need to know what four things?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
6. Complete the two following sentences:
The father of darkness – Satan _____
The Father of the heavenly lights – God _____
7. What does the term “first fruits” indicate concerning the Christian? _____
8. The proper response to the knowledge of God's character is seen in doing what three things?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____

LESSON FIVE

THE RELATION OF HEARING AND DOING

INTRODUCTION:

Ultimately the key both to responding to trials and resisting temptation is to be found in one's reaction to God's Word. Receptivity to the Word, responsiveness to the Word, and resignation to the Word are essential to spiritual growth. One must accept God's Word, act on it, and abide by it.

James has already made it clear that one's attitude toward receiving the saving word is of the utmost importance to his response to that word. It is essential to put away all the abundance of evil, in humbly receiving the implanted word. Now James is going to impress upon us the fact that it is not sufficient to simply "receive" the word, one must respond to it in active obedience. The command is clear, Do not merely listen to the Word. . . Do what it says.

LESSON TEXT: James 1:22-27

LESSON AIM: To understand that one must not only attentively hear the word but he must also respond to the word and practice that word in his daily living.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will. . .

1. Review the importance of receiving the word in humility and gentleness.
 2. Examine the necessity of being responsive to that received word in such a way that your obedience to it is evident to those around you.
 3. Discover at least three (3) fruits of pure and undefiled religion produced in one's life.
-

THE EFFECT OF THE WORD IN OUR LIVES

A. Responsiveness to the Word (1:22-25)

1. It is not sufficient to merely receive the Word.
 - a. Must respond to it in active obedience.

- b. One must “become,” or “keep on becoming” (*GINESTHE*), a doer of the Word and not just a hearer.
- c. Self-deception is possible. The deceived are those who do not put into practice the things they have heard.
- d. “Deceiving” is from a verb used in the New Testament only here and in Colossians 2:4.
 - 1) It means “to cheat or deceive by false reasoning.”
 - 2) The deception comes from thinking they have done all that is necessary when actually listening to the word is only the beginning.

NOTE: The growing numbers of sermon-sippers who flit from one doctrinal dessert to another like helpless hummingbirds are deceiving themselves. A fitting illustration of the “sit, soak, and sour” crowd follows.

- 2. A comparison to give power to the teaching.
 - a. One man “looks” – another man “looks intently.”
 - b. One man “goes away” – another man “continues” to look.
 - c. One man “immediately forgets” – another man is a “doer and blessed.”

B. To Look into the Mirror of the Word of God Involves an Obligation (v. 25)

The intent and sustained look with a ready response is the key to spiritual strength and continued maturity.

- 1. The word for “looks intently into” (*PARAKYPSAS*) literally means “to stoop down” in order to have a good close look.
 - a. The intent and sustained look with a ready response is the key to spiritual strength and continued maturity.
 - b. See the example of this concept in John 20:5-6 as Peter and John arrive at the empty tomb and John “bent over” to peer into the tomb.
- 2. The Law of liberty – the Law that gives freedom.
 - a. Law seems to imply restraint and therefore a lack of freedom.
 - b. Not so with God’s Law. His perfect Law provides true freedom. “*Hold to my teaching,*” Christ said, “*then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free*” (John 8:31-32).
- 3. The proper approach to the Law of Liberty.
 - a. Look intently.
 - b. Abide in it – to remain; continue near by, or “continues to do this.” (NIV)
 - c. Not as a forgetful hearer.
 - d. An effectual doer of the Law of Liberty.
 - e. One who does what God decrees will find full liberty and **will be blessed in what he does.**

- 1) John 13:17 – *Once you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.*
- 2) Luke 11:27f – *He replied, ‘Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it.’*

THE FRUIT OF THE WORD IN OUR LIVES

A. In the Life of the One Who “Thinks” Himself to Be Religious (vs. 26-27)

1. Refers to one fearing or worshiping God.
2. “Religion” refers to religious worship, often the external, that consists in ceremonies.
3. “Worthless” – devoid of force, truth, success, result; useless, to no purpose if it is not put into practice.

NOTE: What James says here is that a “show” of worship to God is vain/worthless, if it is not combined with a devoted-to-God heart and required obedience (action of faith). Religion must be translated into life.

B. In the Life of the One Who Continually Puts the Word into Practice

1. Here’s what **pure and undefiled religion in the sight of *our* God** is (i.e., that which is acceptable to Him);

These three import “practices” of true religion–

- a. There must be Self-Control of the tongue: **If anyone . . . does not bridle his tongue but deceives his *own* heart . . .** James will have much more to say about the tongue. Here he stresses the importance of restraining it, as one would bridle a horse and thus have it under his control. One who is truly religious will demonstrate it by controlled speech!
- b. There must be Compassion toward widows and orphans (or, in general, we must show selfless acts of kindness to those in need): **to visit** = to look upon or after, to inspect, examine with the eyes in order to see how he/she is.

Orphans and widows. God has always demanded that His people take care of those who are hurting. Jesus further explained it by telling the parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37).

- 1) Looking after orphans and widows – referring to one’s conduct.
- 2) Keep oneself from being polluted – referring to one’s character.
- 3) God’s emphasis is not on religious ritual but on right living.
- c. There must be Purity in our hearts and lives (what we are and what we do): **and to keep** (to guard; keep one in that state in which he is) **oneself unstained** (spotless; free from censure, irreproachable) by the world.

- 1) The world is our greatest enemy. It is easy to get close, enjoy,

participate, and think it's not hurting us spiritually. Consider the exhortations in Romans 12:1-2; 1 John 2:15-17.

- 2) "From being polluted" translates one word *ASPILON*, "spotless" (cf. 1 Timothy 6:14; 1 Peter 1:19; 2 Peter 3:14), in contrast with moral filth (1:21).
 - 3) A believer with God-pleasing "religion" helps others in need – and thus is **faultless**, and keeps himself **pure**.
2. Our goal: hear the life-giving Word, be transformed by it, and manifest a religion that *does* the will of God.

SUMMARY:

This is not a definition of religion but rather a contrast to mere acts of worship and ritualistic observances that are commonly called "religion." Again, the goal is a mature Christian walk and practical holiness. What does it take to achieve that goal? The first step is to stand with confidence. Trials or temptations will not topple one who is anchored in God's truth and is applying that truth to his life.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON FIVE:

1. What is the major subject of this section of Scripture?

2. James indicates that self-deception is possible. The deceived are those who:

3. Fill out the comparison of the two men described by James in verses 22-25.
 - 1) _____ — _____
 - 2) _____ — _____
 - 3) _____ — _____
5. What is the end result of one who “thinks himself to be religious” but does not control his speech?

6. What three things characterize the man who manifests “pure religion?”
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
7. Looking after orphans and widows refers to one’s _____
8. Keeping oneself unspotted from the world refers to one’s _____
9. Our goal is:
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____

LESSON SIX

FOLLOWING THE ROYAL LAW

INTRODUCTION:



ne who is properly related to the Bible is also properly related to the body of Christ. He who stands with confidence serves with compassion. James just made it clear that true religion finds an outlet in service, a service which demands that a believer learn to accept others without prejudice and to assist others without presumption.

James became increasingly specific and direct in his admonitions and instructions. He was obviously displeased with the inconsistencies among the brethren. He attacked the attitudes these believers displayed toward others and then complained of their failures to act as they should. He first condemned the attitude of favoritism and gave suggestions on how to combat this obstacle to spiritual maturity. One must learn to accept others, whatever their status or class. He must show courtesy to all, compassion for all, and consistency to all. Equity, love, and fidelity are the vital ingredients.

LESSON TEXT: James 2:1-13

LESSON AIM: Respect of persons is the New Testament phrase for undue and unfair partiality. It is our aim to examine the ungodly practice of judging a person based solely on outward appearance and the tragic results of such practice.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will. . .

1. Discover the destructive power of discrimination in the body.
 2. Learn eight (8) statements which describe the destructive nature of discrimination.
 3. Be able to write on a test the four (4) questions James asked concerning the fallacy of pre-judging.
 4. Remember three things which provide the solution to the problem of discrimination.
-

ATTITUDE TOWARD FAVORITISM/DISCRIMINATION

A. Discrimination is Prohibited – Contrary to Faith in Christ (2:1)

“Respect of persons” literally means “face receiving.”

1. Faith is destroyed by prejudice/favoritism because prejudice: (8 truths)
 - a. Is incompatible with faith in Christ (vs. 1, 9).
 - b. Causes divisions among brethren (vs. 2, 9a).
 - c. Makes evil judges out of Christian brothers (v. 4).
 - d. Makes our choice contrary to God’s choice (v. 5).
 - e. Causes one brother to dishonor another brother (v. 6).
 - f. Dishonors the name “Christian” and thus Christ (v. 7).
 - g. Is contrary to the Law of Moses (vs. 8-11).
 - h. Brings judgment without mercy (vs. 12-13).
2. The very concept of “brethren” is contradictory to prejudice.
3. Faith in Christ is the basis of love which contradicts the attitude of prejudice.
4. The attitude of personal favoritism. The fault of one who when called on to requite or to give judgment has *respect to the outward circumstances of men and not to their intrinsic merits* (Thayer, p. 551).

B. Favoritism is Illustrated – Proof of Their Guilt (2:2-4)

1. The entrance:
 - a. A gold-fingered and brilliantly clothed man comes into the meeting place.
 - b. A poor man (*PTOCHOS* - a beggar, one dependent on the charity of others) in shabby clothes also enters.
 - c. Special attention (“to gaze upon”) and preferential seating is given to the rich man, and standing room only or an inferior seat on the floor (“under my footstool”) is afforded the poor man.
2. The illustration is followed by a penetrating inquiry: “*Have you not discriminated among yourselves?*”
 - a. The rhetorical question requires an affirmative answer, “Yes”!
 - b. They are guilty of not only discriminatory divisions but also of assuming the role of judges with evil thoughts of partiality.

NOTE: A modern-day “click” is just as bad if we judge people by appearance and exclude them from our group; otherwise, a click (a group of friends with things in common) may be OK. The problem is not with the group, but the attitude toward others outside the group!

COMPASSION FOR ALL (2:5-9)

A. The Sin of Preferential Judgment (vs. 5-7)

1. Four questions to prove James’ point:

- a. First – “*Has not God chosen those who appear poor materially, but are rich spiritually, to inherit His promised kingdom?*”
 - b. Second – “*Are not the rich the ones who are consistently guilty of oppression, extortion, and slander*” (2:7, lit., “blasphemy”).
 - c. Third – “*Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court?*”
 - d. Fourth – “*Are they not the ones who slander Jesus’ noble name?*”
2. Believers belong to **HIM**, not to the rich exploiters. James’ readers would have to agree with these contentions, and to recognize that insulting the poor and favoring the rich was wrong and totally unreasonable.

B. The Solution to the Problem – Judge as God Does (vs. 5-9)

- 1. View the poor as God views them:
 - a. They are His chosen ones (*EKLEGO* - to pick out, select, to choose for oneself).
 - b. They are rich in faith – possesses the most valuable thing in time and eternity (v. 5).
 - c. They are heirs of the Kingdom – They are in it and possess it – they are equal heirs with all other family members! (v. 5).
- 2. Observe the “royal” law – “*Love your neighbor as yourself.*”
 - a. The law is royal or regal (*BASILIKON*, from *BASILEUS*, “king”) because it is decreed by the King of kings, is fit for a king, and is considered the king of laws. The phrase reflects the Latin *lex regia* known throughout the Roman empire.
 - b. Obedience to this law, non-preferential love, is the answer to the evident disobedience to God’s Law, that is, prejudicial favoritism.
- 3. Understand the testimony of the Law (vs. 10-11).
 - a. James was aware there would be some who would tend to dismiss their offense of prejudice as a trivial fault.
 - b. They would hardly consider themselves as lawbreakers. James went on to make it clear that this was no small offense.
 - c. Whoever keeps the whole Law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.
 - d. There are no special indulgences. Utilizing the extreme instances of adultery and murder, James showed the absurdity of inconsistent obedience.

C. Total Obedience is the Key (vs. 12-13)

- 1. One must both habitually speak and act as those to be judged by the Law of liberty.
- 2. God’s Law, because of its wise constraints, brings true freedom (1:25).
- 3. Disobedience to God’s Law brings bondage; and to those who have not been merciful, God’s judgment is without mercy.
- 4. Just as love triumphs over prejudice, mercy triumphs over judgment. The

verb “triumphs” or “exults over” (*KATAKAUCHATAI*) appears only here, in 3:14, and in Romans 11:18.

5. God’s mercy is necessary to salvation (Titus 3:3-7; Matthew 18:23-35), therefore we must show mercy to others.

SUMMARY

God has ordained unalterable laws. Complete and consistent obedience is required if spiritual maturity is to be attained. The believer is commanded to accept his brother with courtesy, compassion, and consistency.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON SIX:

1. List the eight (8) statements (truths) which describe the destructive nature of discrimination.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____
- 6) _____
- 7) _____
- 8) _____

2. Is all discrimination wrong? Explain your answer.

3. List the four (4) questions James asked to refute favoritism.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____

4. Give the three actions which would solve the problem of discrimination.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

LESSON SEVEN

FAITH IN ACTION

INTRODUCTION:



he readers need to grow to maturity in Christ; they must unite belief and behavior. In this situation, they can manifest their faith by helping (when they are able to help) their brothers who are in need.

This passage has played an important part in Biblical interpretation for centuries. James' affirmation that "a man is justified by works and not by faith alone" (2:24) greatly disturbed Martin Luther (Paul had written, ". . . *by works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight*," Romans 3:20), and thus, had a significant effect on the entire reformation movement.

The key to understanding the passage is this: "what *kind* of works" is under discussion? Is it meritorious works (i.e., works that are done to "earn" one's justification), which was refuted by the apostle Paul in his writings, or simply the works/deeds that are done by believers? Other important questions that must also be answered regarding both texts are "who is working," "why is he working," and "what is each writer's purpose in referring to Abraham?"

LESSON TEXT: James 2:14-26

LESSON AIM: Just as the law of love gives no excuse for respect of persons, so the possession of faith gives no license to dispense with good works. A believer must not only demonstrate his love by ready acceptance of others, but he must also demonstrate his faith by responsible aid to others. Our aim is to emphasize the expression of true faith, to outline the evidence of true faith, and finally to cite examples of true faith.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will. . .

1. Learn how James is using the word "works" and that Paul and James do not contradict each other.
 2. See how James defines and illustrates true faith.
 3. Consider the logic James uses to verify his definition.
 4. Examine the historical examples used by James to substantiate his argument.
-

James and Paul do not contradict one another (as Luther affirmed), but compliment one another. Consider, for example, two different types of works, mentioned by Paul

in the same passage, that have never been considered by anyone to be contradictory: Ephesians 2:8-10.

THE EXPRESSION OF TRUE FAITH

A. The “Lack of Faith” Situation That Prompted the Discussion

1. A rhetorical question – “*What use is it, my brethren . . . ?*” (v. 14).
 - a. There is great use when faith is lived out. But faith without works?
 - b. Can that action-less faith save (keep one saved)?
 - c. James is writing to Christians. Receiving salvation is not under discussion; remaining saved is.
2. Case in point – the illustration (vs. 15-16). – a “*. . . brother or sister is without clothing [naked], and in need of daily food [i.e., the day’s supply of food], this one is told be warmed and be filled.*”
 - a. The emphasis is not on the true nature of faith but on the false claim of faith.
 - b. It’s as if he is saying, “Good luck to you; go in peace,” while he walks away, having failed to “love his neighbor.”
 - c. This brother’s ability to help is not in question—he is able—only his faith is in question. What use (cf. v. 14) is that kind of faith?
Do you see the anger in James’ face?

B. The Truth Stated Bluntly and Boldly (v. 17)

“*So faith . . . being by itself, with no works, is dead.*”

1. Faith is seen; it is to be manifested. How does anyone know if you/I have faith?
2. Workless faith is worthless faith; it is unproductive, sterile, barren, dead!
 - a. Great claims may be made about a corpse that is supposed to have come to life, but if it does not move, if there are no vital signs, no heartbeat, no perceptible pulse, it is still dead.
 - b. The false claims are silenced by the evidence.
3. Similar statements are made in verses 20 and 26.

THE EVIDENCE OF TRUE FAITH PRESENTED

A. An Imaginary Respondent with an Unproven Faith (v. 18). “*But someone will say, You have faith; I have deeds.*”

1. Someone (there always is) might try to justify his action (or rather, lack of action).
 - a. Similar to the Jews who boasted, “*We are sons of Abraham,*” as an excuse to justify their “we’re ok” lifestyle.
 - b. To handle the argument, James does not present the objection, but seems to argue for what is right. “*You have faith and I have works.*”

Show me your faith without the works and I will show you my faith by my works.” James’ response: show me!

2. Unproductive faith is a demonic quality of faith (v. 19).
 - a. It is good to believe that God is one, but that is not enough. “*Even the demons believe this, and shudder.*”
 - b. James did not say that works are *essential* to faith, or that faith is unimportant. His argument was that works are *evidence* of faith.
3. James (v. 18b) challenged the “someone” to show his faith without deeds – the point being that it cannot be done!
 - a. James said that faith can be demonstrated (only) by what one does (v. 18c).
 - b. The demons’ “belief” in God is inadequate. Such a so-called but unreal faith is obviously unaccompanied by deeds on their parts.
(Cline Paden, former director and founder of Sunset International Bible Institute, asked a member of the church of Satan, “do you believe that you are the only ones going to hell?”)

NOTE: Adamson, p. 127: “The point James is now driving home is that a Christian creed without corresponding Christian conduct will save neither devil nor man.”

B. The Truth Boldly Restated, . . . That Faith Without Works is Useless – Dead (v. 20)

1. The foolishness of thinking that faith will stand alone. “*You foolish man.*”
2. The adjective “foolish” (*KENE*) is usually translated “vain,” “empty,” or “hollow” (cf. *MATAIOS*, “worthless, fruitless, useless,” in 1:26).
 - a. Flimsy faith is dead; so are empty, faithless works.
 - b. James’ argument is not pro-works/anti-faith or pro-faith/anti-works. He has simply said that genuine faith is accompanied by good works.
 - c. Spiritual works are the evidence, not the energizer, of sincere faith.

SUMMARY

In verses 14-20: Faith is something that is seen: actions and obedience; things we are doing. A faith without works is an unseen, unknown faith. Faith and works is an important theme in James; cf. “Hearers and doers,” 1:22, 27; 2:1-13. We must help people understand the importance of a living, active, working faith. Saying you have faith proves nothing. We must unite belief and behavior.

EXAMPLES OF TRUE FAITH

“*Are you willing to recognize . . .*” [“do you want evidence,” NIV] Now, James is going to show them how faith without works/deeds is useless by showing them the usefulness (response) of faith accompanied by works. He will illustrate the point with references to Abraham and Rahab.

NOTE: It is important to approach this text with the right understanding of the word “works.” Does it mean “works of merit,” the subject Paul addressed and strongly opposed in Romans, Galatians, etc.? Or, does it simply mean an act—something that was done? This will have a definite effect on our theological thinking, as it did Luther’s.

If you think that one is justified by faith and not by works of merit, and if you think this passage speaks of justification by works of merit, then there’s a contradiction in the Bible, or James does not belong in it.

A. The Historical Example of Our Father, Abraham (vs. 22-24)

1. The supreme example of active faith. “*Was not Abraham our father . . .*”
 - a. Why *our father*? “Father Abraham;” the one the promise was given to; the #1 Israelite; he was considered to be the father of the Jews, and of the faithful.
 - b. Something about him and his faith (more is written about Abraham in Hebrews 11 than anyone else) is an example to ALL who would follow God. He is a true hero of faith.
 - c. “. . . *justified*” (“considered righteous,” NIV); the Greek verb tense is aorist passive; and means to render righteous or such as he ought to be; it never means to make worthy, but to be declared worthy; i.e., he was in “the right relationship” with God when he offered up Isaac.
 - d. “. . . *by works when [because] he offered up Isaac . . .*”—(in Greek, an aorist participle, referring back to “justified”)?
2. In Abraham’s case, Genesis 22, “faith was working” (faith shared in, or cooperated with, his work). The verb tense: imperfect; i.e. this was a normal occurrence; this characterized him. This is NOT to be understood as a single time when he worked, or one specific activity.
3. “. . . *with his works; and as a result of the works, faith was perfected.*” Abraham’s faith reached “completeness” when he offered his son. At that moment, he couldn’t have shown any more that he believed God. Faith is obvious when faith is manifested.

NOTE: Abraham was not “lost” before he did this, and then “saved” because he did this? He *remained* in a state of justification; this action/work showed his faith, but it did not merit his justification. The merit is nowhere considered here; only what he did, as a result of belief.

This work/action **fulfilled** the statement that God had made many years before (before Isaac was even born), recorded in **Scripture**: “*And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness*” (Genesis 15:6).

When/how was Abraham justified? He was justified by God, because he believed God’s statement, “[not Ishmael]. . . *but one who will come forth . . . will be your heir Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars . . . so shall*

your descendants be.” His belief was accounted unto him as righteousness. This put him in the right standing with God. Offering Isaac, another of his acts of faithfulness, manifested that his faith was reaching its complete state.

Abraham was justified (“accounted righteous,” right with God), initially, before this event; v. 23 is from Genesis 15:6; v. 21 from Genesis 22. Abraham believed God and was accounted righteous by God when he believed that God would give him a son, an heir (other than Ishmael). He was justified before Isaac was even born! Because of this work, his faith in God and God’s promise was made obvious, **and he was called the friend of God** (cf. 2 Chronicles 20:7, Isaiah 41:8). Who are the friends of God? Those who believe only, or those whose faith is put into action?

4. A summary statement: *“a man is justified by works and not by faith alone.* Adamson, p. 132: “. . . faith is regarded as complementing works, with which it must be combined. The contrast is between faith minus works, and works minus faith – not between faith and works.” James is not teaching non-Christians are justified by faith and works (of merit). He is teaching Christians that they must be active in showing their faith, or their faith is useless. Works serve as the barometer of justification, while faith is the basis of justification.

B. Another Historical Example, Rahab (v. 25)

1. ***In the same way*** (as the believer Abraham manifested his faith), ***“was not Rahab justified*** (shown to be righteous) ***by works . . . ?”***
 - a. Her actions showed that she believed in God. Hebrews 11:31, *“By faith Rahab . . . did not perish along with those who were disobedient [emphasis mine], after she had welcomed the spies in peace.”*
 - b. She believed that God was sending His people to destroy Jericho (*“I know the Lord has given you the land . . . ,”* Joshua 2:9).
 - c. When she sent the messengers out, she made them swear that her and her family would be delivered. If she didn’t believe in God . . .
 - 1) would she have let them go?
 - 2) would she have believed the army of Israel would destroy her city?
 - 3) wouldn’t she have told their pursuers, “they are here”?

Rahab showed by her action that she had faith. Later, she gave birth to a son, named Boaz, who was the great-grandfather of David (Matthew 1:5f).
2. Two very different examples of faith. Why Abraham and Rahab?
 - a. Adamson, p. 133: “The contrast is deliberate and provocative, carefully designed for maximum effect. Bereft of all the obvious advantages of Abraham . . . this typical heathen Gentile (Canaanite) woman (not man) proselyte, once prostitute, by her conduct and example offered even more compelling proof that faith expresses itself

in works . . . The point James effectively makes is that by itself her ‘faith,’ like Abraham’s, was worthless apart from deeds . . .”

- b. Holloway, p. 72, “. . . of all the Old Testament examples he could have chosen, why pick . . . [Rahab]? The answer may lie in the previous warning against favoritism. Christians are not to prefer rich to poor, so James gives both the rich and powerful Abraham and the despised prostitute Rahab as examples of faith.”
- c. If we can’t identify with the mighty Abraham, we can identify with the lowly Rahab. And we must not despise her because of her “outward circumstances.”

C. The Conclusion is Clear

1. Parallel: “*Just as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead.*” Faith must be manifested, or it is a dead faith.
2. Faith and deeds are as essential to each other as the body and the spirit.

SUMMARY:

Not only is a believer to stand confidently on God’s Word even in the midst of trials and temptations (chap. 1), but also he must serve his brothers and sisters in Christ (chap. 2). He is to accept all members of God’s family without favoritism (2:1-13) and to aid the family with a working faith (2:14-26). To gain spiritual maturity a believer must be what God wants him to be and do what God wants him to do.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON SEVEN:

1. In a proper interpretation of this passage, what two kinds of works must be considered?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
2. Is James discussing the elements of receiving salvation? _____ If not what is he discussing? _____
3. What truth is James stating bluntly? _____
4. What two historical people does James offer as prime examples of faith and works justifying?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
5. Was Abraham justified by his faith before he offered Isaac or did the offering of Isaac justify him?

6. How/when was Abraham justified? _____

7. What happens to the body when the spirit is removed? _____
8. What happens to faith when there is an absence of works? _____

LESSON EIGHT

PROBLEMS WITH THE TONGUE TWO KINDS OF WISDOM

INTRODUCTION:

In the early church the teachers were of first rate importance. Wherever they are mentioned, they are mentioned with honor. In the church at Antioch they are ranked with the prophets who sent out Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey (Acts 13:1). In Paul's list of those who hold great gifts within the church they come second only to the apostles and to the prophets (1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11). The apostles and the prophets were forever on the move. Their field was the whole church; and they did not stay long in any one congregation. But the teachers worked within a congregation, and their supreme importance was that it must have been to them that the converts were handed over for instruction in the facts of the Christian gospel and for edification in the Christian faith. It was the teacher's awe-inspiring responsibility that he could put the stamp of his own faith and knowledge on those who were entering the church for the first time.

LESSON TEXT: James 3:1-18

LESSON AIM: Another measure of spiritual maturity is a believer's speech. James devoted a good portion of his letter to attacking a careless and corrupt tongue. He appealed, however, not only for controlled tongues (3:1-12) but also for controlled thoughts (3:13-17). The mouth is, after all, connected to the mind. Both controlled talk and cultivated thought are necessary.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will. . .

1. Consider the power and peril of the misused tongue in the area of teaching.
 2. Learn of two kinds of wisdom – satanic (worldly) and heavenly and the fruits of each.
-

In the New Testament itself we get glimpses of teachers who failed in their responsibility and became false teachers. There were teachers who tried to turn Christianity into another kind of Judaism and tried to introduce circumcision and the keeping of the Law (Acts 15:24). There were teachers who lived out nothing of the truth which they taught, whose life was a contradiction of their instruction and who did nothing but bring dishonor on the faith they represented (Romans 2:17-29).

There were some who tried to teach before they themselves knew anything (1 Timothy 1:6-7); and others who pandered to the false desires of the crowd (2 Timothy 4:3).

But, apart altogether from the false teachers, it is James's conviction that teaching is a dangerous occupation for any man. His instrument is speech and his agent the tongue. As Ropes puts it, James is concerned to point out "the responsibility of teachers and the dangerous character of the instrument they have to use." (William Barclay, pp 93-94).

PROBLEMS WITH THE TONGUE

A. Cautions to Would-be Teachers (v. 1). *"Let not many of you become teachers."*

1. The importance of teaching correctly.
 - a. In teaching, we use our tongue. We must be very careful to control it, lest we discredit the message we teach.
 - b. The tongue can be a wonderful blessing, but it can also lead us into sin.
2. James' teaching on the use of speech (outside of chapter 3).
 - a. *"be slow to speak"* (1:19),
 - b. *"... thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue"* (1:26),
 - c. *"So speak and so act . . ."* (2:12),
 - d. *"What use is it if someone says he has faith . . ."* (2:14),
 - e. *"Do not speak against one another"* (4:11), and
 - f. *"Do not complain against one another"* (5:9).
3. Two lists: sins we commit with the tongue, and good things we do with the tongue (appropriate for Christians) –

lie, deceive	tell the truth
curse	preach the Word of God
blaspheme, revile, insult	praise to God and man
gossip	praise
speak filthy words	build one another up
gripe and complain	encourage
flatter	speak words of comfort
reproach, slander	give thanks
teach or preach false doctrine	teach
criticize (discouraging words)	bless the Lord
silly talk, coarse jesting	confess
boast, brag	
fits of rage and anger	
quarrel and fight	

B. James' Emphasis is on Teaching

1. Teaching the Word is very important:
 - a. We are “*brought forth by the word of truth*” (1:18).
 - b. The word of truth which “*is able to save our souls*” (1:21).
 - c. We must be “*doers of the word, and . . . hearers*” also (1:22).
2. The reason given.
 - a. The teacher will be judged more strictly.
 - b. Teachers know the seriousness of the task.
3. Two essentials for the teachers: **accountability** and **responsibility**.

NOTE: A teacher’s condemnation is greater because, having professed to have a clear knowledge of duty, he is all the more bound to obey it.

C. Teaching must Not Be in a Haphazard Manner

1. The failure of man in the area of perfection. “*For we all stumble in many ways.*”
 - a. This is our goal, moving toward maturity.
 - b. How difficult it is to tame the tongue! This is set in the context of teaching. We must strive to speak (use the tongue) truth.
2. To be able to control the tongue is to be able to control the whole body.

D. The Power of Small Things (vs. 3-5)

1. Bits in the horse’s mouth will control the horse.
2. A very small rudder enables the pilot to direct the ship.
“*So also the tongue is a small part of the body . . . boasts of great things. Behold, how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire!*”
3. The tongue is like an uncontrollable fire.
 - a. **The tongue is a fire . . . a world of iniquity** (unrighteousness).
 - b. **It defiles the entire body.**
We must give great thought to the words we speak, or we can do much damage: to the cause of Christ, to our personal ministries, and/or personal lives.
 - c. The tongue is only the fuse; the source of the deadly fire is **hell** itself.
4. The controlling power of the tongue.
 - a. Like bits in a horse’s mouth controls a horse, and a rudder controls a ship, so also the tongue can control the body.
 - b. The tongue does not control every working part of the body, but it does affect one’s character and reputation (the whole being of man).

E. The Tongue is Like an Untamed Beast (v. 7)

1. The power of “human nature” over “beastly nature.” The animals can be **tamed by the human race**.
2. But no one [really? No one?] **can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison.**
Guard it. Use it correctly. Don’t strike out and poison others. Words can kill relationships.

F. The Tongue is Polluted (vs. 9-10)

1. The good use of the tongue – **bless our Lord**.
2. The wrong use of the tongue – . . . **and curse men** (made in His likeness).
cf. Matthew 5:21f (general disregard for life).
3. That both “praise and cursing” should come from the same mouth is inconsistent – “*these things ought not to be this way.*”
4. Three rhetorical questions:
 - a. Can fresh and bitter water come from the same fountain?
 - b. Can olives come from a fig tree or figs from a grape vine?
 - c. Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring?

NOTE: The point is clear: a believer’s tongue should not be an instrument of inconsistency. Small and influential, **the tongue must be controlled**; satanic and infectious, **the tongue must be corralled**; salty and inconsistent, **the tongue must be cleansed**.

CULTIVATE RIGHT THINKING OR THOUGHT (vs. 13-18)

A key to right talk is right thought. The tongue is contained in a cage of teeth and lips, but it still escapes. It is not intelligence that keeps the lock on that cage; it is wisdom—a wisdom that is characterized by humility, grace, and peace.

A. Godly Wisdom is Meek (Humble – NIV) (v. 13)

1. Another rhetorical question, “*Who is wise and understanding among you?*”
 - a. “Wise” (*SOPHOS*; cf. *SOPHIAS* in 1:5) describes one with moral insight and skill in the practical issues of life.
 - b. “Understanding” refers to intellectual perception and scientific insight.
2. Wisdom is not measured by University degrees but by deeds. “*Let him show it.*”
It is not a matter of acquiring truth in lectures but of applying truth to life.

B. Godly Wisdom is Gracious (vs. 14-16)

1. True wisdom makes no room for “bitter envy” or for “selfish ambition (factious rivalry).
2. Envy and strife are clear indicators that one’s so-called “wisdom” is not from above (cf. 1:17).
 - a. It shows clearly that kind of wisdom is earthly, unspiritual (natural, sensual).
 - b. Envy and selfish ambition can only produce disorder, or confusion and “every evil practice.”
 - c. A truly wise person does not seek glory or gain; he is gracious and giving.

SUMMARY: To achieve “righteousness,” spiritual maturity, practical holiness—the theme of this book—a believer must learn to speak with care. Winsome speech comes from a wise spirit. A controlled tongue is possible only with cultured thought.

A mouth filled with praise results from a mind filled with purity.

A believer should. . .

- **stand confidently** (chap. 1),
- **serve compassionately** (chap. 2), and
- **speak carefully** (chap. 3).

He should

- **be what God wants him to be,**
- **do what God wants him to do, and**
- **speak as God wants him to speak.**

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON EIGHT:

1. What is the warning given by James to would-be teachers? _____

2. List six other places with a quote of what he says in this book in regard to speech.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____
 - 6) _____
3. What are two essentials for the teachers?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
4. What two examples is given concerning the power of small things?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
5. How does James illustrate the destructive nature of the tongue?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
6. What two examples does James use to show the tongue's ability to pollute?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
7. Godly wisdom is described in what two ways in this lesson?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
8. Give the definition for the word "wise" in verse 13. _____

9. In the Summary is given six things a Christian should do and be. List these below.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____
 - 6) _____

LESSON NINE

SUBMIT WITH CONTRITION

INTRODUCTION:

Fights, quarrels, lust, hate, envy, pride, and sin are words that stain this portion of James' letter like inkblots. In stark contrast with the closing words of chapter 3, "*peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness*," chapter 4 opens with "*fights and quarrels*." James confronted this despicable behavior with valor. Furthermore he gave clear advice on how to quell the storms that are so detrimental to spiritual growth and maturity. A believer must turn hatred into humility, judgment into justice, and boasting into belief.

LESSON TEXT: James 3:17 - 4:6

LESSON AIM: There are two choices presented by James in this context: to submit to the will of God or to gratify one's own desires and pleasures. We will present James' answer to these two possibilities.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will. . .

1. Consider the eight attributes of the wisdom from above in 3:17-18.
 2. Discover that the appearance of conflict among the followers of Jesus stirred James to intense indignation.
 3. Learn that James will reveal the cause of conflict, outline the consequences of conflict, and propose a cure for conflict.
-

CULTIVATE RIGHT THINKING OR THOUGHT

A. Contrast of Two Wisdoms (vs. 17-18)

1. Wisdom from "above" in contrast to wisdom that is "earthly."
2. Characteristics of "from above" wisdom.
 - a. "Pure" or holy.
 - b. "Peaceable" – peace-loving (NIV).
 - c. "Gentle" – suitable, fair, gentle; "considerate" (NIV).
 - d. "Reasonable" – easily obeying, compliant; "*easy to be entreated*. . ."
 - e. "Full of mercy."
 - f. "Full of good fruits" – beneficial to self and others.

- g. “Impartial and sincere” – unwavering.
- h. “Without hypocrisy.”
- 3. **Peace** is the seed sown that yields a **harvest of righteousness**. The truly wise man is a man of peace.

B. Righteousness and Peace Go Together

TURN HATRED INTO HUMILITY (4:1-6)

A. The Cause of Conflict (vs. 1-2)

1. James introduced this new section with a rhetorical question.
 - a. The penetrating question: “*What causes fights and quarrels among you?*” Definition: (“state of war,” *POLEMOI*) and “quarrels” (lit., individual disputes or “battles,” *MACHAI*).
 - b. The condemning answer: “*from your desires that battle within you.*”
 - c. Conflict comes out of (*EK*) inner sensual lusts or pleasures.
 - d. Hedonism, the playboy philosophy that makes pleasure mankind’s chief end, still wages battles in people’s hearts.
2. War is the fruit of illicit wants. Lust brings about murder. Covetousness results in the frustration of not obtaining the hotly pursued desires. It all leads to the “quarrels” and “fights,” that “battle” against people.
3. James revealed the clear source of conflict deep in covetous human hearts. “*You do not have, because you do not ask God,*” is best taken with what follows.

B. The Consequence of Conflict (4:3-4)

1. The correct way for Christians to have their legitimate needs met is by asking God.
2. Two reasons prayers are not answered:
 - a. When asked “**with wrong motives**” (lit., “evilly” or “amiss,” *kakōs*). The verb “ask” is in the middle voice, meaning, “ask for yourself.”
 - b. When desired for the **wrong purpose**. “*that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.*”
 - 1) “Spend” could be translated “squander.”
 - 2) “Pleasures” is again the Greek word *hēdonais* (cf. v. 1). God will never provide for “hedonistic squandering!”

NOTE: Be careful when you ask for things from God; if you don’t receive what you request, it may be because of selfish reasons. Is God teaching us something, by not giving us what we ask for? But then sometimes, we do receive . . . that God might teach us a lesson. (See Numbers 11:31-34; 1 Samuel 8:1-22, cf. the quail; “give us a king.”).

3. At war with God. Instead of the customary “my brothers,” James bristled with “you adulterous people.”
 - a. Again he asked a pointed question: “*Don’t you know that friendship (PHILIA) with the world is hatred toward God?*”
 - b. The logical outcome: Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes (lit., “is constituted”) an enemy of God.

NOTE: The consequence is worse than ending up empty-handed. A rebellious Christian who has an illegitimate relationship with the world is at enmity with God!

4. James has already called them murderers and fighters; now he calls them “adulteresses.”
 - a. In both the Old and New Testaments, God is depicted as a husband, and His people (the church, in the New Testament), His bride.
 - b. His bride must be faithful to him.

NOTE: We have to choose our friends, and we must be involved in the lives of those “in the world” to evangelize them, but we can’t choose both the world and God.

C. The Cure for Conflict (4:5-6)

This is one of the most difficult verses to translate in the entire letter. A very literal translation would be, “*Or think you that vainly the Scripture says to envy yearns the spirit which was made to dwell in you, but He gives great grace.*”

1. Is the “spirit” the Holy Spirit or the human spirit? Is the spirit to be taken as the subject of the verb “yearns” or as its object? Is “envy” to be seen as “unrighteous desire” or as “righteous jealousy”?
2. Possible translations:
 - a. “*The Spirit who indwells you jealously yearns [for you] and He gives more grace.*”
 - b. “*He [God] yearns jealously for the Holy Spirit which indwells you and He gives more grace.*”
 - c. “*The [human] spirit which indwells you yearns to envy, but He [God] gives more grace.*” The NIV favors the latter idea: “*Or do you think that the Spirit He caused to live in us tends toward envy, but He gives us more grace?*” (v. 6)

NOTE: There are two alternative renderings which in the end give much the same sense. “He (that is, God) jealously yearns for the devotion of the spirit which he has made to dwell within us,” or, “The Spirit which God has made to dwell within us jealously yearns for the full devotion of our hearts.”

In either case the meaning is that God is the jealous lover who will brook no rival, and who will share the human heart with no other love. The Old Testament was never afraid to apply the word *jealous* to God. Moses says of God to the people: “*They provoked Him to jealousy with strange gods*” (Deuteronomy 32:16). (William Barclay, p. 122).

3. James’ question, typically rhetorical, “. . .*or do you think Scripture says without reason*” (*KENŌS*, - “vainly”), introduces the section.
 - a. The sentence that follows is not a direct quotation of any passage in Scripture.
 - b. We might assume that James quoted some other sacred book, or some unknown Greek translation of the Old Testament, or that he simply referred to the general sense of Scripture,
 - c. It seems reasonable to assume that he focused on the quotation in verse 6, a statement clearly taken from Proverbs 3:34: “*God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble*” (also quoted in 1 Peter 5:5).
4. Bottom line teaching: “God opposes the proud.”
 - a. The word “opposes,” or “resists,” is *ANTITASSETAI*, a military term meaning “to battle against.”
 - b. Gives grace to the humble.
 - c. The call is to shun pride and to submit humbly to God’s authority.

NOTE: The cure for conflict is a humble spirit which is rewarded by God’s unmerited favor. James continued by showing in verses 7-12 how humility is related to peaceful justice.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON NINE

1. List eight (8) characteristics of “from above” wisdom.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____
- 6) _____
- 7) _____
- 8) _____

2. What is the source of fights and quarrels according to James?

3. The correct way for Christians to have their legitimate needs met is by _____

4. Give James’ two reasons prayers are not answered.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____

5. What is the definition of the Greek word *hēdonais* and what does it involve?

6. What is the logical outcome of being friends with the world?

7. What is God’s attitude/action toward:

The proud? _____

The humble? _____

LESSON TEN

SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF WORLDLINESS

INTRODUCTION

There is an almost inevitable reaction to this picture of God as the jealous lover. If God is like that, how can any man give to Him the devotion He demands? James's answer is that, if God makes a great demand, He gives great grace to fulfil it; and the greater the demand, the greater the grace God gives.

Apparently the Jewish believers to whom James wrote tended not only to conflict and jealousy but also to condemnation and judgment. Justice, not judgment, is what God requires. Upright, righteous relationships are essential to spiritual growth. Pointed advice for justice is given, the clear advantage of justice is revealed, and the divine author of justice is named.

LESSON TEXT: James 4:6-17

LESSON AIM: The man filled with pride sets himself against God and shuts himself off from God, but the man with the humble spirit opens himself up to receive greater grace from the gracious God. We want to see that humble submission is the solution to worldliness.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will. . .

1. Learn several areas of response of the humble and the outcome of the submissive spirit.
 2. Consider the danger of making life's plans without considering God and His providential oversight.
 3. Discover a more correct view of the statement James makes in 4:17.
-

TURN JUDGMENT (JUDGING) INTO JUSTICE

In verses **7-9** a whole series of commands (10 aorist imperatives) are given which, if followed, contribute to harmony and holiness. James called for commitment (v. 7), cleansing (v. 8), and contrition (v. 9).

A. Advice For Justice (4:7-9). The Avenue to Exaltation

1. What is the response of the humble, the one who does not make himself a friend of the world?
 - a. **Submit to God** – a military term meaning, “to arrange under, to subordinate; to yield to another.”
 - b. **Resist the devil** – “to take a stand against” (cf. 4:6).
 - c. **Draw near to God** – to come near, approach, “to turn one’s thoughts to God” (cf. Hebrews 4:16).
 - d. **Cleanse your hands, purify your hearts** (a call to repentance; to “clean up your act”).
 - 1) **...you double minded**, (*DIPSYCHOI*; cf. 1:8) – they were double minded (having the mind and/or one’s allegiance divided) when they sought to be friends with both God and the world.
 - 2) It is this kind of person—one with clean hands and a pure heart—that David said can stand in God’s holy place (Psalm 24:3-4).

NOTE: Both “wash” and “purify” are verbs that refer to ceremonial cleansing, a figure that spoke eloquently to Jewish converts. The need for cleansing is clear from the way James addressed his readers, “you sinners” and “you double-minded.”

2. Recognition of the tremendous need for cleansing allows no room for merriment.
 - a. James’ candid advice (v. 9). “*Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning.*”
 - b. Exchange merriment for “mourning” and gaiety for “gloom” (lit., “a downcast look, lowered eyes”).
 - c. A contrite spirit of confession is essential for God’s cleansing.

NOTE: Holloway, p. 102: “Grieving, mourning, and weeping are the typical prophetic words for humbling oneself under the judgment of God (cf. Isaiah 22:4; 33:9; Jeremiah 4:28; 9:1, 18; 14:2; Lamentations 1:4; Ezekiel 7:27; Revelation 18:11, 15, 19).

B. Advantage of Justice (4:10-11)

1. Next response (the general response; all are related to this).
 - a. They must, “*humble yourselves*” (to make or to bring low; to be ranked below others who are honored; to have a modest opinion of one’s self; to behave in an unassuming manner devoid of all haughtiness).
 - b. An individual, willful decision – “yourselves” before God, “in the presence of the Lord” (you should have already drawn near to Him).
2. The result, “... *and He will exalt*” (to lift up on high; to raise to the summit of opulence and prosperity) “*you.*”

3. Humility always precedes (and guarantees) exaltation. cf. Matthew 18:1-4, 23:12; Luke 14:11, 18:14; Philippians 2:1-11; 1 Peter 5:6.

NOTE: The way up is down. The lowly one becomes the lifted one. There is a marked advantage to humility – eventually it brings honor.

4. Now, back to the subject . . . of the fighting, expressions of arrogance and selfishness (3:14-16, 4:1-4). And, another instruction on being careful with the words we speak (use of the tongue) . . .
 - a. “*Do not speak against*” (to speak against one, to criminate; cf. 1 Peter 2:12).
 - b. English synonyms: (to slander, defame) “*one another, brethren.*”
 - c. The one who does this or “*judges his brother speaks against the law and judges the law.*”
 - d. To judge the Law is equal to saying that the Law isn’t good or practical for our lives.
 - e. Which law: the Law of Moses? The perfect law that gives liberty (1:25)? The royal law (2:8, “*love your neighbor . . .*”)? The idea of God’s “all encompassing” law? Contextually, a very strong argument could be made for the royal law, since they weren’t exactly practicing love for one another (in the way they were fighting with each other).
 - f. Those who “*judge the law*” are not “*doers of the law.*” We are to be doers (1:22, et. al.) of the law, and not judges of the law.

C. The Author of Justice (4:12)

1. Only One is above the Law. He alone has the right to modify or overrule it. God is the “*one Lawgiver and Judge.*”
 - a. “Lawgiver” is a compound noun used only here in the New Testament (*NOMOTHETĒS*, from *nomos*, “law,” and *TITHĒMI*, “to set, place, constitute, or lay down”).
 - b. God not only authored the Law; He also administrates the Law. He serves as both the executive and judicial branches of the divine government.
2. God is Judge; He upholds and enforces His Law. He is “*the One who is able to save and destroy.*”
3. This reminder of a truth well known by James’ Jewish readers was also a rebuke to their haughty attitudes and judgmental actions. “*But you—who are you to judge your neighbor?*” Is another of James’ typical penetrating rhetorical questions.
4. A humble attitude and just actions are essential for spiritual growth. James then went on to show how these qualities of life militate against empty boasting.

NOTE: Is this a prohibition against any type of judgment (critical analysis; having some criteria of right and wrong that leads to a fair evaluation) of a brother? We live in a polite, don't-be-judgmental, mind-your-own-business kind of society. We must speak against sin, in love. We must be careful, as we speak against sin, not to be overly critical, acting like fault-finders.

TURNING BOASTING INTO BELIEF

In addition to conflict and a judgmental spirit among the brethren, bragging was also apparently prevalent. James gave an example of a boastful statement, struck a condemnatory sentence on such boasting, and offered a practical solution for boasting.

A. Statement of Boasting (4:13)

The interjection both goads the reader and gains his undivided attention. The offender attacked by James is a fairly typical businessman who makes his plans apart from God.

1. He is **self-assertive in his travel plans**: “*we will go to this or that city.*”
2. He is **self-confident in his time schedule**: “*spend a year there.*”
3. He is **self-centered in his trade relationships**: “*carry on business and make money.*” A vivid picture of the Jewish merchant James tried to correct is a go-getter salesman out drumming up business for the bottom-line objective: “Make money!”

B. Sentence On Boasting (4:14)

1. To the selfish hustlers James simply stated, “*Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow.*”
 - a. Man's plans are always tentative.
 - b. His plans are not his own.
 - c. Time is not his own. In fact, life is not his own.
2. James then fired another of his famous questions: “*What is your life?*” The answer is “*a mist*” (“vapor, a puff of steam”). Believers need this godly perspective on their earthly sojourn. Among other things, it blasts boasting right out of the selfish, proud quagmire from which it emerged.

C. Solution For Boasting (4:15-17)

1. In place of vain boasting one should “*say, If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that.*” These are not so much words to be used like some charm but a realistic attitude that affects all of one's being and behavior.
2. To make sure his readers understood, James reiterated that to “*boast and brag . . . is evil*” (v. 16).
 - a. Self-centered bragging must be replaced by God-honoring trust.
 - b. The cure for boasting is belief and humility.
3. It is likely that the concluding sentence in chapter four, “*Anyone, then, who*

knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins," is related not only to the matter of boasting but also to all the advice given thus far in the epistle.

SUMMARY:

Here, understanding Scripture in its context is extremely important. Be careful here with a verse that many have made a “catch all” for just about any kind of activity that is left undone.

Is it wrong to make plans to earn money? Yes, if one is guilty of any of the following—

1. Planning and thinking about tomorrow without any regard for the reality of the transitory and temporary nature of humanity.
2. Planning with no view of the eternal, while ignoring the “vapor.”
3. Planning with no thought about the Lord’s will in your life.
4. Being filled with arrogance as you make plans.

Result: Knowing the right thing to do and not doing it is sin.

To attain spiritual maturity a believer must do the good he now knows. He must stand confidently on God’s Word even in trials and temptations. He must compassionately serve his brethren without prejudicial favoritism but with practical faith. He must speak carefully with a controlled tongue and wise, cultivated thought. He must submit in contrition to his all-powerful Father, Law-giver, and Judge with a humble spirit, just action, and a trusting heart. He must be what God wants him to be, do what God wants him to do, speak as God wants him to speak, and sense what God wants him to sense.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON TEN

1. What is the response of the humble man to God's instruction concerning separation from the world?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
2. What is God's response to the humble man who submits and obeys His word concerning sin in his life?

3. What accusation does James make concerning the one who speaks against one another in verse 11?

4. Give three statements of boasting by the businessman addressed in 4:13-16.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
5. Is it wrong to make plans to earn money? List four truths that reflects wrong thinking in planning to earn money.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____

LESSON ELEVEN

PUNISHMENT AND PATIENCE

INTRODUCTION

James continued his attack on self-centered merchants who seem to succeed in their business plans and not only turn a profit but are considered rich with their hoarded wealth. Such wealth James declared waste. Spiritual access is found in sharing, not hoarding, possessions. To those who may have been the victims of the heartless conduct of the rich, or who may have been tempted to turn to similar shortsighted goals, James recommended patience. Finally, to all believers, whether blessed, burdened, or backslidden, James appealed for praise, prayer, and persuasion.

The instruction begun in the concluding section of chapter 4 is carried into chapter 5 but with greater concentration and condemnation. The rich are denounced. James appears to have included all rich people, both believers (cf. 1:10) and unbelievers (cf. 2:6). There is no plea for reform, only a grim warning that hoarded wealth brings consternation, ends up in corrosion, and results in condemnation.

LESSON TEXT: James 5:1-12

LESSON AIM: James' concluding remarks center on sharing—sharing one's possessions, sharing with patience, and sharing in prayer. Our aim in this lesson is to show the destructive nature of hoarded riches.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will. . .

1. Discover that hoarded wealth will result in consternation, corrosion, and condemnation.
 2. Learn that when James speaks of the last days or "the judge is standing at the door" he refers to God coming in judgment, probably on Jerusalem in A.D. 70.
 3. Consider the necessity, nature and some examples of patience and perseverance.
-

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF STEWARDSHIP (5:1-6)

A. Consternation from Wealth (5:1)

1. The condition of the selfish rich.
 - a. The "rich people," so often the object of envy, were the object of James' condemnation.

- b. He put down those who placed their arrogant trust in things which were doomed to decay.
- 2. The charge to the selfish rich.
 - a. “Weep and howl,” could be elaborated as “burst into tears” and “howl with grief.”
 - b. Money brings merriment only temporarily; hoarded wealth eventually results in “misery.”

B. The Corrosion of Wealth (5:2-3)

- 1. The temporary nature of riches.
 - a. Riches rot, and fine “clothes” may be chewed up by “moths.” The story is not from “rags to riches” but from “riches to rags.”
 - b. “Gold and silver” – though they do not rust, they do become “corroded.”
- 2. The testimony of riches.
 - a. “Their corrosion” (*ios*, or “poison,” as in 3:8 and Romans 3:13) is a testimony to the rich man’s folly.
 - b. Will consume his “flesh like fire.” As metals lose their luster, the poison of greed eats up people.
- 3. The corrosion of “wealth” is testimony to this sickness of the wealthy.
- 4. Hoarding for “the last days” only gives more fuel for the fire that will consume the lost.
 - a. The time is soon.
 - b. The language (both here and in the following section, 5:7-11) indicates that their doom is imminent.

NOTE: What happens to the treasures when “in the last days” come? They don’t go with us; they stay behind for others – those who might continue in the same futility, or those who might learn about God and the proper use of earthly treasures.

C. The Condemnation in Wealth (5:4-6)

- 1. The greedy attitude toward wealth condemned
 - a. Not the wealth itself that is condemned. It is the greedy attitude toward it and the grisly actions with which it was obtained.
 - b. God is not deaf to the cries of injustice that rise both from **wages** withheld in fraud and from the laborers who have been oppressed by the rich.
 - c. God has always been concerned for the poor, and **has only briefly tolerated their mistreatment.**
- 2. The Law’s attitude toward greed. Jewish converts were well aware of God’s Law forbidding holding back on wages (Exodus 2:23-24; Leviticus 19:13; Deuteronomy 24:15) and oppressing the poor (Proverbs 3:27-28; Amos 8:4-6; Malachi 3:5).

- a. The life of “luxury” (*ETRYPHĒSATE*, “to lead a soft life,” used only here in the New Testament).
- b. “Self-indulgence” (*ESPATALĒSATE*, “to live voluptuously or wantonly,” used only here and in 1 Timothy 5:6), is like so much fat for the “slaughter.”

NOTE: The sarcastic illustration was vivid for Jewish believers who had seen many fattened sheep and oxen meet their fates in sacrifice.

- 3. The misuse of power and influence (v. 6).
 - a. In the scramble for more wealth, the rich used their influence in courts of justice, and in the process were guilty of bringing condemnation and even death to “innocent men” who offered no resistance.
 - b. “Innocent men” is lit., “the righteous one” though it probably refers to a class of people rather than to one individual.
 - c. The poor man does not resist the rich because he can’t resist the rich. He is powerless, and a silent testimony, similar to that of Jesus (also, see Isaiah 53).

NOTE: What began as an interest in money ended as an insensitivity to murder. A believer who seeks spiritual growth dare not become caught up in the accumulation of wealth for himself. He should share his possessions for God’s glory and the good of others.

SUMMARY: Who are the rich . . .

- 1. Christians? The language, here and then followed by v. 7, is similar to 1:9-11; they are not called “brethren,” as are those who need patience (cf. “the brother of humble circumstances,” 1:9).
- 2. An argument (weak as it is) in favor of Christians, is that this letter was written to brothers; why then, would James be addressing those who wouldn’t even be reading the letter? (Answer: To let Christians know what was about to happen to the rich).
- 3. Both Christians and non-Christians. (See Holloway’s comments on this point)
- 4. The rich represent the Jewish nation that had gotten “fat” while rejecting God and His teachings, and mistreating others. James, writing 8-10 years before A.D. 70, is speaking of the coming judgment on Jerusalem, which had rejected God and made life difficult for Christians. See Matthew 21:33-45 (the parable of the landowner), and Matthew 24 & 25, where Jesus makes it clear that Jerusalem and Judaism were about to face destruction.

NOTE: Preference: James is referring to those who are outside the family of God for he turns his attention to “brothers” in verse seven.

THE NECESSITY AND BENEFITS OF PATIENCE

From the rich, James turned to the restless. For these he again used the friendly address, “brothers.” The tone turns from stark condemnation to sensitive consolation. James condemned the rich but encouraged the receptive. He appealed to his brethren to be patient. He defined the essence of patience, gave some examples of patience, and indicated an evidence of patience.

A. The Essence of Patience (vs. 7-9)

1. The exhortation: “*Be patient, therefore brethren,*” said James as a direct corollary to the coming judgment on the wicked rich.
 - a. “Be patient” (*MAKROTHYMĒSATE*) comes from a compound of “long” (*MAKROS*) and “temper” (*THYMOS*).
 - b. The idea is to set the timer of one’s temper for a long run. Think long. Focus on the final lap in the race of life. Have a long fuse.
 - c. Look ahead to “*the Lord’s coming.*”
 - d. The example of patience is seen in the farmer who waits patiently for the needed rains and the ultimate valuable (lit., “precious”) crop.
 - e. The brothers must wait, and be patient, AND be assured that “the Lord of Saboath” will come and punish the rich.
2. The promise: “*The coming of the Lord*” – Historically, in the Old Testament, there were times when God “came” to bring judgment on ungodly and disobedient people.
 - a. “*At hand*” means “to bring near, has come nigh, in proximity.”
 - 1) Should be taken literally.
 - 2) Thus, “*the coming of the Lord*” had to have happened, long ago.
 - b. The rich were told that they would be weeping, their goods would be rusting, and God had heard the cries of the laborers.
 - c. And, the brothers will be told that “*the Judge is standing right at the door,*” 5:9). The language that their day was coming indicates soon and complete punishment. Probably the Lord’s coming in judgment on the nation of Israel in A.D. 70.
3. Four things to be done while waiting upon the Lord:
 - a. Be patient (vs. 7-8).
 - b. Strengthen your hearts (v. 8).
 - c. Do not complain against one another (v. 9).
 - d. Remember the past (vs. 10-11).

B. Examples of Patience (vs. 10-11)

1. The need for patience – exemplified by the Prophets of old.
 - a. Examples of suffering and shame endured.
 - b. As they spoke out “in the name of the Lord.”
2. An accepted truth: “*As you know*” (lit., “behold”), “*we consider blessed*” (lit. “happy or fortunate” – *MAKARIZOMEN*) “*those who have persevered.*”

3. The need for endurance/perseverance – exemplified by Job.
 - a. The Lord honored **Job’s perseverance** with multiplied blessings (cf. Job 42:12).
 - b. James did not say that Job had *MAKROTHYMIA*, “patience,” but that he had *HYPOMONĒN*, “steadfastness, endurance, perseverance” (cf. James 1:3; Colossians 1:11).
 - c. Job endured and he was steadfast, though he was impatient with God!
4. The outcome: God showed that He is “*full of compassion and is merciful.*”

C. Patience in Practice (v. 12)

1. More instruction on the tongue – “*do not swear.*”
2. Keep speech simple and trustworthy – “*Let your yes be yes, and your no, no.*”
3. Not a prohibition against taking oaths or vows.
4. Jesus spoke against this (Matthew 5:33-37; cf. Exodus 20:7), and made oaths; e.g., Matthew 26:63-64 and Mark 14:61-62.
5. This is strong reference to honesty; let your words be dependable, trustworthy; speak in such a way that others can consider your words to be true. Both Jesus (in Matthew 5) and James were “reacting” against the practice of those who were taking oaths that were meaningless.

NOTE: The soon return of the Lord, the Judge who stands at the door (5:9), is motivation enough for this kind of honesty and trustworthiness, lest one “be condemned” (lit., “fall under judgment”).

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON ELEVEN

1. There is no plea for reform for the selfish rich, only a grim warning that hoarded wealth brings _____, ends up in _____, and results in _____.
2. What two charges did James give to the selfish rich?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
3. How did James describe/illustrate the temporary nature of riches?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
4. What, about the riches, testified against their owners? _____
5. It is not the wealth itself that is condemned, but the _____ toward it and _____ actions with which it was obtained.
6. Describe the two following words or phrases:
Life of "luxury" _____
"Self-indulgence" _____
7. What conclusion does the instructor arrive at concerning the identity of the rich and why does he think this?

8. Who does James use as an example of patience in verse 7? _____
9. To what does "the Lord's coming" probably refer? _____

10. What four things does James say the Christian should do while waiting?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
11. The need for endurance/perseverance is exemplified by whom? _____

LESSON TWELVE

PRAYER AND FAITHFULNESS

INTRODUCTION

A fitting climax to James' letter is his emphasis on prayer. The greatest assistance any believer can offer another is faithful prayer. Prayer is clear evidence of care. Prayer is the "hotline" to the One who can provide for any need no matter how complex or impossible it may seem. To share in prayer, a believer must have a sensitivity to someone's needs, engage in diligent supplication for those needs, and recognize the significance of those needs.

Perhaps the two greatest weaknesses in the average church today are the areas of prayer and praise. The reason for these weaknesses may be traced to insensitivity. There is much need for prayer and much cause to praise. Suffering should elicit prayer. Sufficiency should elicit praise. James used several questions to stress these points.

LESSON TEXT: James 5:13-20

LESSON AIM: Sharing not only involves material things but also our spiritual resources. Sharing our prayer life with our brothers is of utmost importance in continued faithfulness. Our aim in this lesson is to emphasize that fact.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will. . .

1. See the importance of brethren being connected to God, as reflected in prayer.
 2. Examine two possibilities for the meaning of the "sick" person and the way of obtaining wholeness for that person.
 3. Learn that the elders of the church are to be involved in the daily lives of the members of the church.
 4. Research the role of prayer and oil in the healing and restoration process of the physically or spiritually sick person.
-

SHARING OUR RESOURCES IN PRAYER (5:13-20)

A. Brothers must Be Connected to God (5:13-15)

1. Questions to stress this point. Is any among you:

- a. Suffering? – (to suffer/endure hardship, troubles; to be afflicted; NIV: “in trouble”).
 - 1) Often used of hardship of military service (cf. 2 Timothy 2:3, 9; 4:5).
 - 2) **Action to take:** He must pray; commit it to God; submit to Him, and endure (cf. James 1:2-8).
- b. Cheerful? – (to put in good spirits, to gladden the heart, to be joyful, of good courage; used only here and Acts 27:22, 25).
 - **Action to take:** Sing praises. Give Him thanks! He is worthy.
- c. Sick? – (to be weak, feeble, powerless, without strength).
 - 1) **Action to take:** Call for the elders. . . and let them pray.
 - 2) Seek help from God’s men, spiritual/mature followers of Christ and leaders of Christians.
 - 3) Elders are righteous men; cf. 5:16b; 1 Peter 5). The only other time “elders of the church” is found in New Testament is in Acts 20:17.

NOTE: We need to request God’s involvement in all areas of life, with prayers and songs of praise, directed to Him. The word “to pray” (vs. 13-14) has to do with devotion to God (or, for the Greeks, to the gods), not to men. It is the lowering of self as he/she approaches one greater than self.

- 2. God wants to be in our lives: “*Lo, I am with you always . . .*” (Matthew 28:20); “*the Spirit . . . dwells in us*” (James 4:5). He wants to help us (He wants us to seek Him).
 - a. God “*gives to all men generously*” (1:5).
 - b. “*Every good thing . . . is from above*” (1:17).
 - c. To the humble, “*he gives grace*” (4:6).
- 3. We need to respond to Him! (Hedge: “I don’t believe in prayer; I believe in God, therefore I pray”).
- 4. The elders are to approach God on the sick person’s behalf. Reasons:
 - a. They represent the whole church.
 - b. They are men of righteousness.
 - c. Their prayers are powerful (cf. v. 16).

B. Supplication for Needs (vs. 14-16)

- 1. The elders’ supplications are powerful.
 - a. Pray over him, with hands extended over him; could be because the sick one is laying down and elders are standing above or over him.
 - b. Anointing him with oil. Is this a miraculous anointing, something that only the elders could do? Was there power in the oil?
- 2. Possible explanations for anointing with oil.
 - a. **For medicinal purposes.**
 - b. Oil used **for the purpose of casting out demons.**

- c. Oil used **as a channel of blessing** for one with the charismatic gift of healing “in the name of the Lord” (Acts 3:6; 4:10; 1 Corinthians 12:9).
- d. Oil stood for **the special favor and blessing of God**. Prophets (Isaiah 61:1, priests (Exodus 29:7), and kings (1 Samuel 10:1) were all anointed with oil to show that God was with them.

C. Looking at this Sickness as a Physical Sickness

The powerful prayer offered in faith (cf. “without doubting,” 1:5f) will . . .

1. Restore **the one who is sick**. Three questions:
 - a. How will the “*prayer offered in faith*” restore the sick person?
 - b. Who is the sick (or, “weak,” Romans 14) person?
 - c. Is this a physical or spiritual sickness that needs restoration?
2. The Lord will raise him up (as He did the paralytic, in Mark?).
3. And **if** (this is the conditional “if,” not “since”) **he has committed sins** (that is, if, in addition to being sick, he has committed sins) they will be forgiven him.

NOTE: Promises: Restore . . . raise . . . forgive. There will be both physical and spiritual healing. God works, we work. But what about today (or, then); does (did) God heal all who are (were) sick? Some healings are not according to God’s will (cf. Philippians 2:27; 2 Timothy 4:20).

4. Two personal responsibilities concerning sickness and sin.
 - a. **Confession of sins** – (acknowledge) **your sins** (this is not a “I have sinned” confession, but a mention of the sin committed).
 - 1) To one another (reciprocal relational; this promotes brotherhood and fellowship).
 - 2) This may put an end to the fighting and arrogance between brothers).
 - b. **Pray for one another**.
Reasons: So that you may be healed.

NOTE: Bring in brothers and sisters, bring in God, acknowledge sin, and find healing. How does the confession of sin, by one brother to another, help? It makes the other brother aware and should inspire him to help his brother resist the sin in the future. And, it will challenge the one confessing to resist sin in his life.

5. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much. On whom is there this affect/accomplishment? Upon all! The sick and those who pray. When we pray, we help others, and we help ourselves. “One another” is extremely important here.

D. Looking at this Sickness from a Spiritual Viewpoint.

1. The word for sick could be referring to those who had grown weary, who had become weak both morally and spiritually in the midst of suffering.
2. “Rubbing with oil” then would refer to the common practice of using oil as a means of bestowing honor, refreshment, and grooming.
 - a. The woman “poured” perfume on Jesus feet (Luke 7:38).
 - b. A host “put oil” on the head of his guest (Luke 7:46).
 - c. A person who is fasting should not be sad and ungroomed, but should “put oil” on his head, and wash his face (Matthew 6:17).
3. Thus James’ point would be that the “weak” and “weary” would be refreshed, encouraged, and uplifted by the elders who rubbed oil on the despondents’ heads and prayed for them.

NOTE: A mutual concern for one another is the way to combat discouragement and downfall. The cure is in personal confession and prayerful concern.

4. Elijah – a well-known example to James’ Jewish audience (vs. 17-18).
 - a. Elijah (see 1 Kings 17 & 18) was a man with a nature like ours.
 - b. Elijah isn’t just a biblical hero who never struggled with problems in his life; his life was like ours: he suffered pain, he struggled, and he sinned.
 - c. He prayed earnestly . . . “in prayer he prayed” that is “he prayed earnestly.” God does hear and respond to our prayers!

E. Deeds That Cover a Multitude of Sins (vs. 19-20)

1. The possibility: **My brethren** (for the 16th time) **if any among you strays** (*PLANAŌ* – planet) to go astray, wander, roam about; to be led into error; aor. subj. pass.) **from the truth**; we can be led into error and be deceived.
2. The action: and someone **turns him back**. . .
3. The result: **save his soul** (whose soul? the sinner’s soul!) **from death and cover a multitude of sins**. The work we do to rescue others in danger leads to their salvation.

SUMMARY:

Is this an abrupt ending? Or, is James summarizing the letter by showing that brothers need to have concern for one another, helping each other resist sin? Part of maturity includes our relationship with one another. One of our greatest concerns should be to help a brother overcome sin. See Hebrews 3:13; 10:24f; 12:15.

It may be that every problem discussed in this epistle can cause (if there is no correction) one to slowly drift, and to eventually “stray from the truth.” In response to each problem presented, there is the potential of straying from truth, or maturing as a Christian.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON TWELVE:

1. In James' questions concerning their condition spiritually or physically, what three things did he inquire about and what was the action to be taken?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____

2. Three reasons the elders are to approach God on behalf of the sick person are:
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____

3. What are four (4) possible explanations for anointing with oil?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____

4. What are three (3) promises given to the sick, suffering, weak person?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____

5. What are two personal responsibilities concerning sickness and sin in the Christian's life?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____

6. How does the confession of sin, by one brother to another, help?

7. Complete this sentence: A mutual concern for one another is the way to combat _____ and _____.

8. Who does James use as an example of powerful prayer? _____

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Study Guide

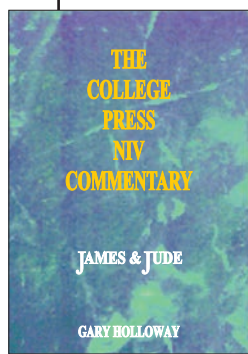
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FAITH is at the heart of the book of James, and the living out of that faith permeates all that the writer teaches. Beginning with the trials and temptations that all believers face, James connects believing and doing. This is illustrated best by two examples he gives. In the first, hearing God's Word is compared to looking into a mirror. If the hearer of the Word does not do what he hears, there is no blessing. The second example related dealt with seeing the need of others, and saying, "be warmed and filled," while doing nothing to actually relieve their distress. Again, that kind of faith is empty.

We welcome you to this study of this great book in a small package!



➡ The College Press NIV Commentary on *James & Jude* by Gary Holloway is the textbook for this course of study.

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