

**STUDY # 1                    INTRODUCTION TO JAMES**  
**TO GOD BE THE GLORY / James 1:1    Acts 15:12 – 21**

I am sure that James would have listened with something like glee to the old black preacher who said, “ *My brethren there be two sides to the gospel, there is the Believing side and there is the Behaving side.*” The heart and soul of the book of James is found in the words of 1:22 “*But be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only.*” The Book of James deals with the latter for James is the most intensely practical book of the N.T. This is a practical book dealing with everyday life for the man in the street. Yet it is not devoid of doctrine, as we shall see when we being to dig into the text. As someone has put it “ *the distinctive value of James is his striking grasp of the integration of truth and life.*” Now it is precisely this integration of truth and life that makes James so relevant for today. You see, even as believers we seem to have an almost incurable tendency to be unbalanced. We either major on accumulating truth, to the neglect of enthusiastic action or we dash around in a mad whirl of activity, to the neglect of truth and faith. James provides just the balance we need.

This book is a plea for reality and is that not we need today ? These first century Christian were struggling with problems in their personal lives and in their church fellowship. They were going through difficult tests. They were also facing temptations to sin. Some of the believers were catering to the rich. Church members were competing for offices in the church. The tongue was another serious problem. Worldliness was another problem.

These Christians don't appear any different from Christians today. For are these not the problems we face ? Now when we come to the N.T. we discover that there were several men who bore this name James. There was:

1. *James, the son of Zebedee, and brother of John.*  
A fisherman by trade he was the first of the disciples to give his life for Christ, martyred by Herod in AD44. ( Acts 12:1-2 )
2. *James, the son of Alphaeus, he was another of the disciples.*  
( Matt 10:3 Acts 1:13 )
3. *James, the father of Judas ( not Iscariot ) the disciple.*
4. *James, our Lord's half brother, born and raised in the same family.*  
( Matt 13:55 Mk 6:3 Gal 1:19 ) Now it is generally accepted that it was “ *James, the Lord's brother,*” ( Gal 1:19 ) that wrote this letter and that it was written at some time between AD44 .... AD49. Now having given you that bit of background lets come to our opening study, which we could call,

**JAMES / A SERVANT OF THE SAVIOUR!**

**(1) THE POSITION THAT JAMES ADOPTS**

“ *James a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,*” ( 1:1 ) The word “

*servant,*” is *doulos* which mean slave. That of a bond servant. Now this word implies three things. It indicates:

**(a) ACTUAL HUMILITY:**

It's the word of a man who has literally denied himself; who has said No to himself that he may ever say Yes to God. This is just about the lowest thing that James could possibly say. You see, James could have introduced himself in many ways. He could have introduced himself as “ *James, the leader of the church in Jerusalem,*” ( Acts 21:8 ) he could have introduced himself as “ *James, the pillar of the church.*” ( Gal 2:9 ) He could have wrote, “ *James an apostle,*” ( Gal 1:19 ) or he could have introduced himself as “ *James, the Lord's brother.*”

“ *James, a bond servant,*”      THE HONORED SERVANT

**(b) TOTAL PROPERTY:**

You see, the slave was the absolute possession of his master. Do you remember Paul's words ? “ *Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price.*” ( 1 Cor 6:9 ) The master did the choosing, and paid the price, sent him to work and as he owned him he had the right to expect loyal obedience. The servant never thought of privileges but of duties, not of rights but of obligations. The Lord Jesus said, “ *Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you and ordained you that ye should go forth and bring forth fruit.*” ( Jn 15:16 )

James is not only An Honored Servant    BUT also AN HUMBLE SERVANT!

Consider                    {1} His Relationship With Jesus  
                                      {2} His Reverence for Jesus  
                                      {3} His Responsibility to Jesus

Therefore we also note.....

**(c) PERSONAL LOYALTY:**

For when James says he is a bond-slave he means he is utterly pledged to his Master. Do you recall the O.T. slave who loved his master so much that he would not go out free ? ( Exod 21: 6 ) His ear lobe was placed against the doorpost and then pierced. From that moment he bore the mark of a slave, a slave to the master he loved. Utterly pledged and loyal to his master.

**(2) THE PERSON THAT JAMES ACCLAIMS**

He said, “ *A servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.*” ( 1:1 ) Having lowered himself in the eyes of his readers and made quite certain as far as he was concerned all he could claim was to be a bond-slave, he then exalts the person of His Saviour. Look at:

**(a) THE DESCRIPTION OF GOD'S SON:**

**“ A servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,”** There was a time when he had not believed on Him at all, he would have been included in that statement in (Jn 7:5) **“ neither did his brethren believe in Him,”**

Later had come that glorious day when he had met with Christ after His Resurrection. ( 1 Cor 15:7 ) This convinced James that Jesus Christ truly was the Saviour, and now he describes him and the words of our text could be translated like this, **“ Jesus Christ, who is God and Lord.”** notice carefully that James describes Him as:

**1. The SOVEREIGN ONE:**

**“ Lord,”** he was more than a brother to James, he was His Lord. The One who has the right to reign and rule in the hearts of His people.

**2. The SAVING ONE:**

**“ Jesus,”** the word means **“ Saviour,”** and sums up His purpose in coming into this world. ( Matt 1:21 ) 1:2:

**3. THE SUFFICIENT ONE:**

**“ Christ,”** the Anointed One, the long awaited Messiah, the Christ.

**(b) THE DESIRE OF GOD'S SERVANT:**

For it was the desire of James's heart to uplift the Saviour. We need to do this in:

**1. Our WORSHIP:**

So often our work and witness for God is powerless because our worship is so poor. ***So much is done in the energy of our flesh rather than in the ecstasy of our faith.*** The tragedy is that we get so tied up with our programs that we lose sight of the wonder and the glory that surrounds the living person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We do have **“ boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,”** ( Heb 10:19 ) but lets make sure boldness does not become brashness. **Justification means that we are right with God, but it does not mean that we are equal with God.** Lift the Saviour high ! 1:2:

**2. Our WITNESS**

**3. Our WORK**

James deals with Our Work in a marvellous manner.....

### **(3) THE PEOPLE THAT JAMES ADDRESSES**

For he addresses his letter “ *to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad,*” ( 1:1 ) Who are these people ? Well, they were:

#### **(a) A SAVED PEOPLE:**

15 times he refers to them as “ *brethren,*” which was common among the first century Jews. You see, James is Jewish in its content. The recipients of this book were Jewish believers who had been dispersed and were facing problems personally and in their church fellowship. There was the problem of trials, the problem of temptation, the problem of being partial, the problem of worldliness, the problem of the tongue. These are our problems today.

#### **(b) A SCATTERED PEOPLE:**

Two expressions in ( 1:1 ) ? “ *The twelve tribes,*” can only mean the people of Israel, the Jewish nation. The word “ *scattered,*” here means “ *in the dispersion,*” and it was used to identify Jews living outside the land of Palestine. So James wrote his letter to Christian Jews scattered outside Palestine. He wrote to those who had been dispersed, to those who had to leave their homes, their jobs, their property.

#### **(c) A SUSTAINED PEOPLE:**

For while they were “ *scattered abroad,*” they were still “ *twelve tribes,*” ( 1:1 ) a common N.T. title for Jews. This speaks of ? *The preserving hand of God.* They may have been split apart by Satanic pressure but they were still held together by Divine power. .... As the Lord’s people we may be oppressed, may be in trouble, perhaps we find the going hard, we’re in a minority at work, we’re thought ill of. But .... We’re being sustained and held secure in His preserving hand.

Do you recall what the Saviour said concerning the security of His sheep ? “ *Neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand .... and no man is able to pluck out of My Father’s hand.*” ( Jn 10:28-29 )

I don’t know what the future holds, we may have to face trials, difficulties, perplexities but we can do so in the confidence that “ *neither death, nor life nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*” ( Rom 8:38-39 ) We have the preserving hand of God, the sustaining grace of God, the continuing presence of God in all of tomorrows problems. Trust Him! So we see the concept of.....

**TURNING TRIALS INTO TRIUMPHS / JAMES 1:2 – 4**

James's first words are about how to deal with stress, pressure, and trials. You see, James seeks to show to these readers and to us that trials should not be viewed as foe but as a friend. Now if we are going to turn trials into triumphs there is:

#### **(1) A REALITY WE OUGHT TO FACE / The Predicted Outbreak of Trials**

*“ My brethren count it all joy when,”* not if but when ! You see, the Christian who expects his Christian life to be easy is in for a shock. The Lord Jesus warned his disciples, *“ in the world ye shall tribulation.”* ( Jn 16:33 ) Paul told his converts that *“ we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.”* ( Acts 14:22 ) Because we are God's *“ scattered people,”* and not God's *“ sheltered people,”* we must experience trials. The fact is there are three kinds of people in the world, those going into a trial, those coming out of a trial, and those right in the middle of a trial. There's a popular teaching today that states, *“ Once you become a Christian, its all honey and no bees, all flowers and no trees.”* But being a Christian doesn't exempt us from troubles and trials.

Now it may be that the word translated *“ temptations,”* here would be better translated *“ trials.”* Of course there is a difference between the two. Temptations are sent by Satan to make the *Christian stumble*, trials are sent by God to make the *Christian stand*. In *Testing you, God is aiming at your maturity, in Tempting you Satan is aiming at your misery.* God always tests to bring out the best, Satan always tempts to bring out the worst. Now in ( 1:2 ) James is using the word *“ trial,”* to mean outward trial or test. James tells us that these stressful trials:

#### **(a) ARE DEFINITE: AND Can Come Suddenly.....**

*“ My brethren count it all joy when .....,”* ( 1:2 ) The point is that trials are predictable, inevitable, inescapable and unavoidable. Peter put it like this, *“ beloved think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you.”* ( 1 Pet 4:12 ).

Paul says to young Timothy *“ Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra, what persecutions I endured but out of them all the Lord delivered me.”* ( 2 Tim 3:11 ) The Lord delivered Paul *“ out of,”* trials, not *“ from,”* trials.

Our storms and trials can come suddenly, with no advance warning, therefore we must constantly be on guard.

#### **(b) ARE DEVASTATING: Trials bring Suffering**

James uses an interesting word in ( 1:2 ) when he talks about *“ falling into,”* it's the same word as that used by the traveller in the story of the Good Samaritan. We read that he *“ fell among thieves,”* ( Lk 10:30 ) Here was an attack that was

not only savage and serious but sudden. There was no warning, no time to run away, to avoid the issue. He rounded a corner and suddenly .... wham ! Now the word “*fell*,” in that story and “*fall*,” in ( 1:2 ) are the same word.

**(c) ARE DIFFERENT: *Trials come Separately***

“*divers temptations*,” simply means “*various trials*.” The Greek word translated “*divers*,” means “*various, varicoloured*.” Peter uses the same word when he says, “*Ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations*.” ( 1 Pet 1:6 ) You see, the trials of life are not alike. Some trials are job-related, some are financial, some are domestic. The point is that we are faced with trials of all sorts and stripes. Now some trials are Natural, they come from sickness, accident, disappointment. These trials are Natural because we live in fleshly bodies in a sinful world. But some trials are Supernatural, they come on us because we are believers ( 1 Pet 4:12 ) for when we line up with Christ, we line up against this present world’s system. We will be tested as believers, but there is hope ! For these trails are transitory. Peter uses the phrase “*for a season*.” ( 1 Pet 1:6 )

**(2) A MINISTRY WE OUGHT TO FIND / The Promised Outcome of Trials**

Even in the midst of our trials God is ministering to us. Through the trials of life the Lord is making us into the kind of Christians He wants us to be.

“*Knowing this that the trying of your faith worketh patience*.” ( 1:3 ) The word “*knowing*,” speaks of understanding. James is saying, “*I want you, to understand that when trials come they are not without rhyme or reason. God always has a purpose in the trials that come our way*.” Well, what is the purpose of trials in our life ? What is God doing?

James explains three thing’s that trials produce in our life. They produce:

**(a) SPIRITUAL PURITY:**

The word “*trying or testing*,” speaks of the purging effect of trials. Its found only in two places in the N.T. ( 1 Pet 1:7 ) The word conveys the picture of a precious metal being heated until it is liquid and its impurities rise to the top and are scraped off. Only pure metal is left. God puts us into the fire in order to purge our lives of all impurities. Trials are often God’s way of getting us to deal with things in our lives that are displeasing to the Lord. They have a purifying effect. Our trials are for a purpose. *God does not use these trials to make us Bitter, but to make us Better.*

**(b) SPIRITUAL STABILITY:**

Look at ( 1:3 ) James is simply saying that the testing of our faith develops perseverance. God want to produce patience, endurance and the ability to keep going when things are tough in our life. That’s what this word “*patience*,” means “*endurance, steadfastness or perseverance*.” Notice what is on trial here *Our*

***faith!*** James is talking about the testing of our faith. The Bible says, “ *Without faith .... please God.*” ( Heb 11:6 )

Perseverance is the ability to shake it off and step up when a load of trials are dumped on you ! Trials also produce

**(c) SPIRITUAL MATURITY:**

( 1:4 ) James uses the word “ *perfect,*” twice in the verse. It’s a word that means “ *complete, full grown.*” He is talking about spiritual maturity ! He does not want the believer to be lacking, but complete and living a full Christian life. The thought conveyed here is that of a mature, complete Christian, “ *conformed to the image of His Son.*” ( Rom 8:29 ) The Lord wants us more like His Son and to do that He uses many means. The Word, prayer, fellowship, service, trials, disappointments, and difficulties ! We don’t arrive at the goal of spiritual maturity by some great ecstatic experience but through the ordinary everyday trials of life.

**(3) A SPIRITUALITY WE OUGHT TO FOSTER / The Proper Outlook for Trials**

James not only tells us that trials can be expected, and that they always have a purpose, but he tells us how to view our trials. James says, we should have:

**(a) A PROSPECTIVE ATTITUDE: Joyful Anticipation**

He tells us to “ *count it all joy,*” when we are facing trials. Most of us would say that it’s a joy when we escape trials not a joy when we encounter trials. The word “ *count,*” is a word that means “ *to look ahead, or look forward.*” James is telling us that our joy comes from looking ahead. Looking ahead at the end result of our trials.. He is not saying that we are to enjoy being sick, or losing a loved one, or getting laid off at work. Its not being happy about the trouble. Its finding joy in what the trial produces ! The lesson that we learn.....

**(b) A COOPERATIVE ATTITUDE: Willfull Participation**

( 1:4 ) ? “ *Let patience have her perfect work.*” James is calling for our cooperation in what God is doing. No one likes trials. No one enjoys trials. Yet we must allow God to do what He wants in our lives. We must trust Him. We must yield to His plan. We must submit to His work in our life.

*we will face dark times in our lives, but we must never forget that if we want to experience the sweetest aroma, the dark times are necessary.*

**“ Count it all joy,”** Do we recognise that there is a purpose behind our trials and a blessing in them ? This is the Trail of Trials – BUT They can be turned to Triumph!

**STUDY # 2                    JAMES**  
**WISDOM, AND HOW TO GET IT / JAMES 1:5 – 8**

Abraham Lincoln said on one occasion, “ *I don’t think much of a man who is not wiser today than he was yesterday.*”

But while such knowledge is increasing, wisdom is often lacking. Many lives are in shambles. Suicide rates are higher than ever before. Morals are at a record low. Divorce is ever on the increase. In many way the world is on the brink of chaos. And yet to such a generation James says, “ *If any of you lack wisdom .... God,*”.” Wisdom is seeing life from God’s point of view. James has been talking about seeing our trials from God’s point of view.

James speaks here about:

**(1) THE NEED FOR WISDOM / Why Wisdom is required**

**“ *If any of you lack wisdom,*” ( 1:5 )**

**{1} The Lack of Wisdom**

The word “lack” speaks of something that is “absent or missing.” To the ancient Greek, wisdom was mental excellence. But then James was a Jew and he was writing to Christian Jews. To such people wisdom was more than knowledge or intelligence. I think that we can say that this has nothing to do with a person’s I.Q. When James talks about “ *wisdom,*” he does not mean intelligence, knowledge, cleverness or education. He is not speaking about mental progress but spiritual perception. Someone has said, “ *Never mistake knowledge for wisdom; one helps make you a living, the other helps you make a life.*” There is a vast difference between the two.

The Greek word for wisdom here, means “ *the practical use of knowledge.*” Someone has said that “ *Knowledge is the ability to take things apart, while wisdom is the ability to put them together.*” Wisdom is the right use of knowledge. Wisdom equips us for our trials.

**{2} The Longing for Wisdom**

The word “ask” is the common word for asking; yet it means more than merely asking for something. It carries the idea of desiring, craving, or even begging.

We need this spiritual perception to:

**(a) *DISCERN THE WAYS OF GOD:***

This is the immediate thought of the context. James has been dealing with stressful trials. Here were a company of people who were passing through times of testing. They were literally hanging by a thread not knowing which way to turn. Believers who had lost their jobs, homes, property. Christians who were facing persecution. Probably they are searching for answers as to why these trials have come. They need a wisdom more than human to answer those questions. Wisdom helps us to understand how to use these circumstances for our good and God’s glory.

We need wisdom in order to make proper use of the trials that come our way. Then also to

**(b) DISCOVER THE WILL OF GOD:**

Here is a crisis in your life, or at least a situation where two or more courses are open to you ! It may be something that affects you, your family, and others ! Carefully you weigh up the pros and cons from a rational point of view. The issue seems to lean in one direction. So far so good. But there is one vital overruling factor that must be brought into the situation before you can safely move. It is the “ *still small voice of God.*” Without this all human reasoning is deficient. .... *making mention of you in my prayers that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation.*” ( Eph 1:16-17 ) He says, “ *we do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.*” ( Col 1:9-10 )

We must listen for “ *the still small voice of God ?*” We need wisdom to

**(c) DO THE WORK OF GOD:**

James undoubtedly asked for wisdom time and again in the service of His Master. Yet he was an apostle ( Gal 1:19 ) the probable leader of the work in Jerusalem ( Acts 21:18 ) When the Jerusalem council was held to discuss the problem of circumcision it was James who stood to his feet and uttered words of wisdom. ( Acts 15:13-21 ) When God gave to King Solomon a blank cheque and said to him “ *ask what I shall give thee.*” ( 1 Kings 3:5 ) Solomon reminded the Lord of the circumstances and responsibilities of his life and said, “ *Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart .... for who is able to judge this Thy so great a people.*” ( 1 Kings 3:9 )

Jesus said, “ *be ye therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves.*” ( Matt 10:16 ) We need a wisdom greater than our own. ( AND James goes a step further, for he talks here about:

**(2) THE SOURCE OF WISDOM / Where wisdom is received...**

Wisdom does not come from Plato, Aristotle, Socrates or any other philosopher of renown. See the source of wisdom .... “ *If any of you lack wisdom let him ask of God.*” ( 1:5 ) Our God is not only All-loving, and All-powerful, but All-wise as well ! Now on the one hand we have got the need, but on the other hand we have got the source, God ! ( Prov 3:5-6 )

God gives this needed wisdom

**(a) SPONTANEOUSLY:**

“ *If any of you lack wisdom let him ask of God that giveth ....*” ( 1:5 ) The

Amplified Bible puts it like this, “ *if any of you is deficient in wisdom, let him ask of the Giving God.*” God is know as the Giving God. Its characteristic of God’s nature to give. He gives spontaneously and instinctively ! The psalmist says, “ *The Lord will give strength unto His people,*” ( 29:11 ) “ *The Lord shall give thee the desires of thine heart,*” ( 37:4 ) “ *The Lord will give grace and glory,*” ( 84:11 ) The Lord Jesus said, “ *I gave unto them ( my sheep ) eternal life,*” ( Jn 10:28 ) Paul says, “ *Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory.*” ( 1 Cor 15:57 ) Our God is a Giving God, one who gives wisdom spontaneously ! And then also

**(b) IMPARTIALLY:**

“ *That giveth to all men .....*” ( 1:5 ) You see, God is not exclusive but inclusive in relation to this gift of wisdom. It does not matter about our intellectual, physical, social, material, or financial standing ! The only condition we must meet is to admit our need and ask for God’s help !

**(c) LIBERALLY:**

The word “ *liberally,*” ( 1:5 ) denotes “ *generosity, open-handedness, without stint.*” ( Rom 12:8 ) It is characteristic of the unbeliever to see God with a clenched fist, but it is characteristic of the believer to see him with an open hand. You see, there is no limit to the wisdom that God can give.

**(d) GRACIOUSLY:**

“ *And upbraided not,*” ( 1:5 ) That is, God gives this wisdom ungrudgingly, without reproaching, or faultfinding. Some people give gifts with all sorts of strings attached, and sometimes use the giving of those gifts as opportunities to belittle, insult, or rebuke the recipients ! But not God !

Man can always find an excuse for not giving, but God never finds fault. Now on the one hand, you and I need wisdom, on the other hand, the Lord is willing to bestow wisdom. Here we have the Need, here we have the Source, but how do we get the Source to meet the Need.

**(3) THE CHANNEL TO WISDOM**

James says all we need to do is ask ! You see, prayer is the channel that brings wisdom from its source to where it is needed. Now James did not say if we lack wisdom we need to learn more theology. He didn’t say we have to search for a friend, or wait for a more mature believer to cross our pathway, or depend on an e-mail going and a reply returning. No ! He says we should turn to the ever-present God, approaching Him, through the ever-open door of intercession.

Since the Devil cannot keep God from answering our prayers, He seeks to keep us from asking, he lies to us saying, “ *You’re not worthy to ask God.*” He tells us to help ourselves and then go the Lord as the last resort. But look at what James says, “ *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God,*” for the channel to wisdom

is prayer. The two phrases that James uses are, “ask of God,” ( 1:5 ) and then, “ask in faith,” ( 1:6 ) in other words we must pray:

(a) **DEFINITELY:**

“Let him ask of God,” someone once said, “the real secret of prayer is secret prayer.” Now there is probably no other subject about *which we profess so vastly and practice so vaguely* ! Its so easy to talk about prayer, to say how much we believe in it, to say how important it is, but the really important thing is this, do we pray ? If only we could get on our knees to plead with God as readily as we stand on our feet to preach to others. When the Risen Lord sent Ananias to minister to the newly saved Saul of Tarsus, the one mark of recognition he gave him was this, “Behold, he prayeth.” ( Acts 9:11 ) Is that the distinguishing mark of our life ?

Indeed, James says in ( 4:2 ) “Ye have not, because ye ask not.” It’s no good wringing our hands when we ought to be bending our knees ! Then also

(b) **DECISIVELY:**

“But let him ask in faith nothing wavering,” ( 1:6 ) Have you ever noticed in the N.T. what a tremendous premium is placed on faith ? The writer to the Hebrews says, “Without faith it is impossible to please God ....,” ( Heb 11:6 )

Now faith is not something that is added to a man’s prayer, prayer is something that issues from a man’s faith, from the convictions of a man’s heart. ( Heb 11:6 ) *To pray in faith is to pray confidently in the knowledge of God’s nature, and in the growing knowledge of His will.* James says the man without faith is like the storm tossed wave. Also referred to as “double minded” or unstable.

To be swinging between faith and unbelief, between trust and distrust. Faith says Yes, and unbelief says No, and we become like a walking civil war in which trust and distrust of God wage a continual battle against each other. Our greatest need is wisdom, spiritual perception. Where do we get it ? We need to ask ! Who gives it ? God ! How ? In response to our believing prayers. How much will God give ? Liberally ! The psalmist put it like this, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” ( Ps 111:10 ) Almost anyone can gain knowledge, but only those who seek the Lord can gain true wisdom.

[4] **Refused Wisdom**

James tells us that wisdom is free for the asking. We wonder why more of God’s people seem to be lacking in wisdom from the way they live their lives. James speaks of

**AN UNBELIEVING PRAYER**

In verse 6 “but let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like

***a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.”***

The lack of faith will leave us hot one day and cold the next; up one day and down the next; in one day and out the next. Verse 8 speaks of those who do not believe when they pray. “double – minded” means two souls. These have a divided heart

#### **AN UNANSWERED PRAYER**

Verse 7 says ***“for let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord”***  
We will not receive unless we ask in faith; trusting God and believing...

### **REJOICE IN THE LORD ALWAYS / JAMES 1:9 – 12**

James’s very first word to these persecuted and oppressed believers to whom he originally wrote was ***“ Greeting.”*** The Amplified Bible says that its literal meaning is ***“ Rejoice.”*** In ( 1:2 ) he tells them that even when they find themselves surrounded by trials and temptations, pressures and problems they are to ***“ count it all joy.”*** The point he is daring to make is that joy is meant to be the normal experience of every believer in every circumstance, because of their unconditional confidence in the overruling power and goodness of God. Whatever the circumstances we can rejoice, and face the future with confidence, not in the arrogance of our faith, but in the assurance of God’s faithfulness. This whole section in ( 1:9-12 ) is permeated with joy and in getting its message across, James takes general issues and focuses them in personal terms. He tells us that whatever our circumstances we can ***“ Rejoice in the Lord.”*** Notice that he says we are to:

#### **(1) REJOICE IN THE MIDST OF POVERTY / The Humble Conditions of the Believer in Poverty [ Verse 9 ]**

The word ***“ brother,”*** tells us straight away that James is referring to a Christian, and the words ***“ of low degree,”*** literally mean ***“ one who does not rise far from the ground.”*** James is speaking of someone who lives in very humble conditions, someone who is very poor. Church history shows that many of the members of the Early Church were from the lowest levels of society. They would have been among the poorest of the poor. It is very possible that these humble conditions were brought about by persecution. If you were a Christian, people would not trade with you, and in many cases would not sell to you. If you were a believer you were ostracized by society. Yet James, says to this person with little or nothing ***“ rejoice.”*** Now in worldly terms this of course makes no sense. For most people the feeling is that happiness goes hand in hand with prosperity, while misery and poverty are almost inevitably linked in their minds. But James is not speaking in material terms but spiritual, and it is in this sense that he is able to say that the poor man who becomes a Christian is automatically, and as the result of becoming a Christian ***“ exalted,”*** regardless of whether there is then or later any change for the better in his material circumstances. We are of great

worth to the Lord and we should rejoice in the spiritual things we can never lose. The missionary martyr Jim Elliot said it best, *“ He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep, to gain what he cannot lose.”* We may be earth’s paupers, but we are heaven’s aristocrats. *“ Let .... of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted.”* ( 1:9 ) We can rejoice in the midst of humble circumstances Because we have:

**(a) A NEW WISDOM:**

It has often been true, though more in the past, than now that poverty and ignorance have gone together, or that limited means have meant limited opportunities for education. Certainly many of these 1<sup>st</sup> century believers would have lacked the knowledge of their richer contemporaries. But then knowledge and wisdom are not the same thing. Back in 1860 a philosopher called Jeremy Bentham said, *“ If we can get universal and compulsory education by the end of the century all our social, political, and moral problems will be solved.”* How wrong he was. For man needs something higher than knowledge, he needs the wisdom or spiritual perception of which James speaks here. ( 1:5-8 ) And that wisdom is not a matter of education, but revelation, its not something that man learns, its something that God gives. ( 1 Cor 1:30 ) This is not to despise education for a Christian has a duty to equip himself thoroughly for his life’s work. But even if we find ourselves at the lower end of the social scale, without the benefits of higher education, we can rejoice because God has given us the tremendous advantage of spiritual insight. You see, the natural man however, intelligent, cannot discern the *“ things of God,”* but the poorest believer can rejoice because he has a new wisdom.

**(b) A NEW WEALTH:**

It’s fascinating to read of poor people, or folk in ordinary circumstances who suddenly receive a letter from a solicitor telling them that some long-lost relative has died leaving them a fortune. One day they are among those of *“ low degree,”* the next day they are millionaires, not because of a lifetime of effort, not because of industrious ingenuity, but because they have entered into the benefit of someone else’s death and thus have become heirs to a fortune. It’s literally a case of rags to riches. That is our position! Jeremiah speaking of the unsaved says, *“ Surely these are poor, they are foolish, for they know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgement of their God.”* ( Jer 5:4 ) But Paul reminds all of us who are believers that *“ we are the children of God. And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.”* ( Rom 8:16-17 ) That is rags to riches! And all as the result, not of our own effort, but of the death of Christ and the grace of God. Grace means *Great riches at Christ’s expense.* Paul says *“ For ye know the grace .... rich.”* ( 2 Cor 8:9 ) Again Paul says *“ in everything we are enriched by Him.”* ( 1 Cor 1:5 ) We have a new wisdom and a new wealth AND also

**(c) A NEW WARDROBE:**

Now if you are unsaved this .... your wardrobe is pretty pathetic, I mean you're spiritual one. Isaiah goes so far as to say that "*all our righteousness are as filthy rags.*" ( Is 64:6 ) Even your best moral and religious efforts are no better in God's sight than dirty rags. But if you are a Christian then .... you have a new wardrobe. God has given you the robe of righteousness. ( Phil 3:9 ) But that's not all. God has given you a complete outfit for daily living. In other words, God has given you the potential for living a holy life something which you never had before your conversion. Paul lists some of our resources in ( Col 3:12-14 ) he says, "*Put on ....,*" We may be poor materially, but we have a new wardrobe, the potential for pleasing God in our daily life.

## **(2) REJOICE IN THE MIDST OF PLENTY / The Humbling Circumstances of the Believer with Plenty [ Verse 10 ]**

The word "low" literally means in humility. James says the rich are made low. Now the Early Church had folk who were poor and those who were rich. There were men like Joseph of Arimathaea, Nicodemus, and Barnabas the property owner. James has that kind of man in mind in ( 1:9-10 )

Here is a brother, in plenty and not in poverty, and he can also rejoice not at his material success, but at his new spiritual standing. Here is someone who has:

### **(a) A NEW POSITION IN LIFE:**

" *He is made low,*" ( 1:10 ) The Amplified puts it like this, "*And the rich person ought to glory in being humbled.*" That would be a new position for a wealthy man, who could buy favour and popularity very easily. To be rich was to be popular, but now converted the rich man finds himself in an entirely new position. His business colleagues would probably reject him, his friends would avoid him as a religious crank. For the very first time in his life he finds that his money has lost its voice. A new position. The Lord and His disciples met two people in Jericho, *One was in poverty, the other had plenty.* To Bartimaeus the poverty stricken blind beggar on the roadside, the disciples said, "*Rise.*" ( Mk 10:49 ) To Zacchaeus the wealthy tax collector who had climbed the tree Christ said, "*Come down.*" ( Lk 19:5 ) The man in poverty, who in the eyes of the world is not worth much, should find joy in his relationship with the Lord who elevates him to a high position. But the man in plenty should remember that his only lasting security is not in stocks, or bonds, or properties but in his relationship with the Lord. The rich man also has.....

### **(b) A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON LIFE:**

He begins to view things differently. You see, up until now the rich man has looked at everything in materialistic terms. His whole outlook in life has been geared to things he could weigh, see, feel, touch, count or take to the bank. Now he sees his wealth in its true colours. Now that is

### 1. How TEMPORAL Wealth is:

It's just like the flower of the grass that easily withers. Paul says the same sort of thing "*the fashion of this world passeth away.*" ( 1 Cor 7:31 ) When we trust in earthly values and material possessions we're trusting the temporary.

### (2) How CONDITIONAL Wealth is:

Like the grass it depends on the favour of circumstances. The people of the world's mind set are concerned about stocks and shares, deals and agreements, speculations and prospects. Their wealth is conditioned by so many factors. But the Christian is to have a different perspective. The Lord Jesus said, "*a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.*" ( Lk 12:15 )

Paul writing to Timothy says, "*Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.*" ( 1 Tim 6:17 ) (1) (2)

### (3) REJOICE IN THE MIDST OF PRESSURE

Notice ( 1:9 ) the poor believer can rejoice, in ( 1:10 ) the rich believer can rejoice, in ( 1:12 ) the tested believer can rejoice. The word "*temptation,*" is better translated "*trial.*" Temptations are sent by Satan to make the Christian stumble, trials are sent by God to make the Christian stand. James says, "*Blessed, happy is the person who perseveres under trial, who stands his ground.*" We can rejoice in the midst of pressure Because of:

#### (a) THE PURPOSE GOD HAS IN THE PRESENT:

Look at two words in ( 1:12 ) The word "*endureth,*" means "*staying power.*" Perseverance is the response of the person who bears up under stressful circumstances. The word "*tried,*" we have seen before ( 1:3 ) it conveys the picture of a precious metal being heated until it is liquid and its impurities rise to the top and are scraped off. Only pure metal is left. Our trials are for a purpose! Also we can rejoice in....

#### (b) THE PROSPECT GOD HAS IN THE FUTURE:

What a prospect, what a reward for the believer who perseveres under trial, "*the crown of life.*" In the ancient Grecian games a wreath was placed on the victors head as a sign of honour and victory. This "*crown,*" ( *stephanos* ) is what Paul had in mind when he wrote in one of his last letters to Timothy, "*I have fought a good fight .... His appearing.*" ( 2 Tim 4:7-8 ) Here James says that the Christian who perseveres under trial, will when Christ returns receive "*the crown of life.*" Paul says, "*Rejoice in the Lord always,*" James says rejoice in the midst of trials.



of many believers right they are these “ *temptation is not sin.*”

How many seeds of doubt and defeat have germinated in the soil of ignorance about this point. Yet this is one of the clearest truths in the whole Bible and one that can be seen by referring to only one verse of Scripture. Look at what the Book of Hebrews says about our Lord Jesus “ *For we have not an high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*” ( 4:15 ) The Saviour was battered by allurements and temptations of every kind yet He emerged from it all “ without sin.” Christ was tempted, but don’t dare to tell me that He sinned. He could not have sinned.... *Christ was not able to sin !* It was the late Guy King who said that “ *temptation is when you’re asked to do it, sin is when you do it.*”

**(b) THE WHO OF TEMPTATION: Temptation cannot be avoided by man {every man}**

James says, “ *Every man is tempted,*” ( 1:14 ) There are particular areas of specific temptation we have to personally deal with.

“ *Every man is tempted.*” ( 1:14 ) Becoming a Christian does nothing whatever to remove a person from the sphere of temptation. Just as Christ’s coming into the world did not banish temptation universally, so His coming into the human heart does not banish it personally. It’s the testimony of the ages that for the Christian believer temptation is not removed. We may have been “ *delivered .... from the kingdom of darkness,*” ( Col 1:13 ) but though we have been taken for ever out of Satan’s grip and possession, we have not yet been removed from his interest and attention.

**(c) THE WHEN OF TEMPTATION: Temptation can come at the most unexpected time in our life.....**

Two basic realities.

**1. Temptation is just as strong and subtle as it was years ago.**

**2. That we are just as weak as we ever were and just as prone to failure.**

The truth is, the further you go on in the Christian life, the more you are exposed to the subtlety and severity of temptation !

**(2) A PRINCIPLE WE MUST FIGHT / The Power over Temptation**

James gives us two reasons here why God cannot be responsible for our sin and these two reasons are based on the character of God. He talks here about:

**(a) THE HOLINESS OF GOD:**

“ *God cannot be tempted with evil.*” ( 1:13 ) The Greek word that James uses here is not used anywhere else in the N.T. ( *apeirastos* ) It means God is attemptable. God is unversed in evil. He has no experience of it and is entirely free from it. God’s perfect holiness makes Him non-temptable. God can never be

defiled. “ *God is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity.*” ( Hab 1:13 ) God is Holy, and His command is, “ *be ye holy for I am holy,*” ( 1 Pet 1:16 ) Our constant prayer should be “ *Lord make me as holy, as it possible for a saved sinner to be.*” God is not responsible for our sin because He is Holy. But James also talks here about:

**(b) THE GOODNESS OF GOD:**

“ *Neither tempted he any man,*” ( 1:13 ) Since God is not experienced in evil He cannot tempt us toward it. God is Holy, “ *God cannot be tempted,*” and God is Good, in that He “ *tempted no man.*” James says in ( 1:16 ) Don’t make the mistake of blaming God for your sin, failure, backsliding. “ *God may call you to endure difficulties, but He will never cause you to experience defeat.*” Well, what then is the source or cause of the temptations that come to us ? Well, note:

**(3) A PROCESS WE MUST FEAR / The Product of Temptation**

When we think of sin, we think of it as a single act, but God sees it as a process. Adam committed one act of sin, and yet that one act brought sin, death, and judgement on the whole of the human race. James describes this process of sin here in four stages. He says it begins with:

**(a) DESIRE: Enticement! – Luring the Believer Away**

That word “ *lust,*” means any kind of desire ( *epithumia* Lk 22:15 ) It’s the strong desire of the human soul to enjoy or acquire something to fulfil the flesh, and the flesh stands for that part of man’s nature wherein his natural desires have free rein. Now the normal desires of life were given to us by God and of themselves are not sinful. Without these desires, we could not function. Unless we felt hunger and thirst we would never eat and drink, and we would die. Without fatigue the body would never rest. *Its when these desires become our masters and not our servants that we get into trouble.* Now don’t forget what James is about here. He’s anxious that none of us defend ourselves by throwing the blame for our sin, failure, temptation on the Lord, Satan, or circumstances. *Temptation is personal.* Each of us is dragged away, this internal source draws us away and wants us to play outside the boundaries of God ! It begins with desire. But it leads to

**(b) DECEPTION:**

Those words ? “ *drawn away ..., enticed,*” they’re taken from the world of fishing ! Indeed the Greek word for “ *enticed,*” means “ *being baited or deceived.*” Now no-one put the worm in the fish’s mouth. He came out of the hole because of his own desire, and he took the bait. *Sin never starts with the bait, it always starts with a desire.* Think of King David, His sin with Bathsheba came about because of his internal desire to play outside the boundaries of God ! David was out of God’s

will, he was in the palace when as the Bible says, it was “ *the time when Kings go off to war.*” ( 2 Sam 11:1 ) Satan baited the hook with an external force. Her name was Bathsheba. And David took the bait. The bait not only attracts us, but it keeps us from seeing the consequences of sin. In David’s case the death of a baby, Bathsheba’s son, the murder of a brave soldier, Uriah, and the violation of a daughter, Tamar. It continues with:

**(c) DISOBEDIENCE:**

See the stages / We have moved from the Emotion ( desire ) and the Intellect ( deception ) to the Will. ( disobedience ) You see, it is this assent of the will to what the outward enticement has offered to the inward desire that fertilizes temptation and turns it into sin. Someone has said, “ *it takes two to make a successful temptation and you are one of the two.*”  
the process ends with:

**(d) DEATH:**

“ *And sin ....., death,*” ( 1:15 )

Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead because they lied to God. ( Acts 5:10 )  
Many in Corinth were dead because they abused the Lord’s Table ! ( 1 Cor 11:30 )  
Others have experienced the death of Hopes, Health, Home, and Happiness !  
How can we handle temptation ? The way Christ did. Three times He said,  
“ *It is written.*” ( Matt 4:4 ) Our Lord knew and used the Word of God. That’s why D.L. Moody wrote in the flyleaf of his Bible, “ *this book will keep me from sin or sin will keep me from this book.*” Then finally:

**(4) A PRACTICE WE MUST FOSTER / The Prevention of failure**

We spend far too much time looking *Inwards* to our failures, and *Outwards* to our Circumstances, and not nearly enough looking *Upwards* to our great God. We have a God that “ *cannot be tempted with evil.*” That means:

**(a) HIS PERSON CAN NEVER BE DEFILED:**

Sin defiles us ! ( Mk 7:23 ) But the Lord can never be defiled because He cannot be tempted with evil. It’s one thing to grow in our knowledge of God’s power, and in our sense of His wisdom, but are we growing in our appreciation of His perfect holiness ? How often do you adore Him for being “ *altogether lovely ?*”

**(b) HIS POWER CAN NEVER BE DIMINISHED:**

How sin robs a man of power. Lot chooses the plain and people of Sodom and in no time he is just a pathetic powerless has-been. ( Gen 13:10-13 19:14 ) Samson breaks his vow and the tiger becomes a toy. But the sin that saps the believer’s strength can never effect the power of God. God cannot be tempted with evil, the

ravages of sin cannot effect Him because they cannot touch Him. My .... God never weakens, God is never “ *off colour*,” God is never less than omnipotent. And that mighty power is available at every moment for every Christian.

**(c) HIS PERCEPTION CAN NEVER BE DULLED:**

Ours can. How often have you made the wrong decision, adopted a wrong attitude, missed a vital opportunity, because your perception has been dulled by sin, the sin of being out of touch with the Lord. But God can never be tempted and touched by sin there is never a moment of day or night, in shadow or in sunshine, when He does not know, understand and appreciate your precise circumstances and your exact need.

**[VI] THE GREATEST OF ALL GIVERS / JAMES 1:17 – 18**

Here in ( 1:17 ) James reminds us of the *Faithfulness of our God !*

**(1) THE NEED THAT GOD MEETS: A GIVING GOD**

God meets our needs through His gifts. “ *Every good .... and cometh down.*” That is to say, everything that is good comes from God and nothing but what is good comes from God. We have a Giving God.

**(a) VARIETY IN THESE GIFTS:**

Two different Greek words used in ( 1:17 ) have to do with the gift and the giving. When James says, “ *Every good gift,*” ( dosis ) he is referring to the *Act of Giving.* ( Phil 4:15 ) But when he says, “ *Every perfect gift,*” he is referring to *the Gift itself.* What God gives and how God gives are both good. Now there are scholars who take the first Greek word here to mean *Material Blessings* and the second to mean *Spiritual Blessings*, whether we do or not there is a variety in these gifts !

**(b) THE CONSTANCY OF THESE GIFTS:**

The words “ *cometh down,*” / They are in the continuous present tense meaning God continues to give. God is frequently, constantly, daily showering His gifts upon us ! There will never be a moment when He is not giving.

**(c) THE PROPRIETY ABOUT THESE GIFTS:**

The gifts that God give are always suitable... They fit the occasion and should motivate

**1. Our ADORATION of Him:**

Surely His giving ought to make us love Him more

The more He gives, the more we should love, and adore.

## **2. Our APPRECIATION of Him:**

Our testimony should be “ *I am overwhelmed with a sense of the goodness of God.*”

### **(3) Our CONSECRATION to Him:**

Should His gifts and His giving, not motivate us to follow him closer ? “ *If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, then no sacrifice can be to great for me to make for Him.*”

## **(2) THE NAME THAT GOD BEARS: A REVEALING GOD**

James speaks of Him as “ *the Father of lights.*” ( 1:17 ) I

### **(a) THE LIGHT OF CREATION:**

God’s first spoken word recorded in the Bible is, “ *Let there be light.*” ( Gen 1:3 ) Then God said, “ *Let there be lights.*” ( 1:14 ) The Bible says, “ *And God made two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night.*” ( 1:16 ) My .... it was God who created these great luminaries, these heavenly bodies. God is the creator of the sun, the moon and the stars. The psalmist says, “ *the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showed His handywork.*” ( Ps 19:1 ) So there is also

### **(b) THE LIGHT OF ILLUMINATION:**

It’s God Himself who reveals spiritual things !

When Philip drew up to the chariot, the eunuch was reading from the most famous of all Bible prophecies, but it seems he was not getting on very well, because when Philip asked him if he understand what he was reading he replied, “ *How can I, except some man should guide me ?*” ( Acts 8:31 ) You see, he needed the Spirit-filled Philip to explain God’s Word to him and without that help he found the Scriptures dark and meaningless. *It must be the work of God, breaking in with light into that persons mind and showing him the truth of God’s Word relative to himself and to Christ.*

And THEN there is:

### **(c) THE LIGHT OF SALVATION:**

Paul said “ *Ye were sometime darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord, walk as children of light.*” ( Eph 5:8 1 Pet 2:19 ) You see, the state of being born again, a child of God, a Christian is described in the Bible as being in light in contrast to

darkness, and of that light, the light of salvation, God is the Father and Source. So our God is Giving God, a revealing God.

### (3) THE NATURE THAT POSSESS'S: AN UNCHANGING GOD

James says, “ *with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*” Look at:

#### (a) *THE PRINCIPLE:*

Two words ? “ *is no,*” they literally mean “ *can be no.*” James is not merely saying that with God there has been no variableness so far, nor he is saying that God is not variable at the moment, *but that with God variableness is impossible, a changeable, variable God is a contradiction in terms.* He is not saying that God has not changed so far, but that God can never change.

That is the principle. Now what flows from that ?

#### 1. God's LOVE will be the Same:

God has loved us with an everlasting love ( Jer 31:13 ) loves you as much now as He did then. There may be times when like Peter we feel Self-Confident, times when like Elijah we will be Depressed, times when like Jonah, we will be Disobedient, and perhaps times when like Jeremiah we'll be Resigning.( Jer 20:9 ) Yet in spite of our failure, unbelief, and defeats the Lord will love us to the end.

#### 2. God's POWER will be the Same:

“ *Is anything too hard for the Lord ?*” ( Gen 18:14 ) Any prayer too hard for him to answer, any need to great for Him to meet, any sinner too difficult for Him to save, any temptation too strong for Him to deliver ? No. For “ *with God all things are possible.*” ( Matt 19:26 )

#### 3. God's GRACE will be the Same:

Perhaps there will be moments when our pillows will be stained with tears. Days when like Mary we'll feel that our world is shattered ! But bless God, in the hour of trial, sorrow, difficulty, we'll hear Him say, “ *My grace is sufficient for thee.*” Then look at:

#### (b) *THE PICTURE:*

“ *neither shadow of turning,*” The picture that James has in mind here is that of the sky, the natural heavens. The sun gives light, but not always to the same degree, because it is not always at the same angle. There is dawn, high noon, twilight, and dusk. The sun's light varies and changes. Sometimes there is an eclipse of the sun, this is a shadow caused by turning. The Amplified puts it like this, “ *In the shining of Whom there can be no variation ( rising or setting ) or*

***shadow cast by His turning as in an eclipse.***” Underscore one word. “***His.***” Life may have its shadows, it almost certainly has, but they are never caused by His turning, by His changing. They may be caused by ours, because we have changed our position. But it’s not God that has moved away / It’s us!

Verse 18 tells us that we belong to God! Salvation has made us the purchased possession of God. We are His and He is ours. Of all God’s gifts, surely Salvation is the greatest.

## STUDY # 4

## JAMES

### THE MIRACLE OF THE NEW BIRTH / JAMES 1:16 – 18 & 1 PETER 1:13 - 25

The Lord Jesus said, “ *Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.*” ( Jn 3:3 ) You see, all need this new birth and the people to whom James penned this letter had experienced this new birth. See how he puts it in ( 1:18 ) In relation to the miracle of the new birth we can say, *all need it, they had it: God did it !* For having dealt with many gifts in ( 1:17 ) James now deals with one gift in ( 1:18 ) In ( 1:17 ) we see God as the Giver of Benefits, but in ( 1:18 ) we see God as the Giver of Birth. For the crowning proof of God’s perfect goodness is the new birth. James tells us three things about it here.

#### (1) THE INSTIGATOR OF THE NEW BIRTH

Now there are some who believe that James taught a theology that was opposite to Paul’s. They say that the Book of James is an epistle of straw that promotes salvation by works. But nothing could be further from the truth, for before James ever talked about works he made sure that we knew that salvation is in Christ alone. “ *Of His own will begat he us .....*,” The Amplified Bible puts it like this, “ *And it was of His own free will that He gave us birth as sons.*”

Now that “ *begat,*” is the same word as is used in ( 1:15 ) and translated “ *bring forth.*” Sin brings forth death, but God brings forth life. God is the instigator of the new birth. For this new birth is divine.

It’s the work of God. Just as we did not generate our own physical birth, so we cannot generate our own spiritual birth. When we put our faith in Christ it was God who performed the miracle. You see, this new birth was brought about:

##### (a) BY GOD’S PLEASURE:

James says, “ *of His own will begat He us.*” This was something God Himself decided upon. He did not act under pressure from us or others. He took no-one into His confidence, nor did He seek advice on the point. The new birth, was for His pleasure. It was by His will.

Not our merits, not our rights or efforts, but His Sovereign will. Oh, wondrous grace !

##### (b) BY GOD’S POWER:

Listen again, “ *And it was of His own free will that He gave us birth.*” This new life had its origin with God. God gave us birth.

John speaking of this new birth says, it is “ *not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*” ( Jn 1:13 ) That is to say it is not of human descent, it is not of human desire, it is not of human determination. Paul says the same thing, “ *And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.*” ( Eph 2:1 ) This is the act of God by which new life is imparted to a person who trusts Christ as his Saviour.

**(c) BY GOD'S PURPOSE:**

For in eternity, God purposed to *“ take out a people for His name,”* and make them like His Son. ( Acts 15:14 Rom 8:29 ) So in time God is only continuing what He commenced in eternity. Now when you and I think about our conversion our mind naturally centres around a moment of decision, of response, of faith and of commitment. But the whole truth goes far deeper than that. The whole truth that although the our New Birth happened in a moment of time it was actually set in motion by God before time began. Sure, there was a moment of faith, and of commitment, but that was the outworking of God's eternal purpose before time began.

As far as God the Father is concerned I was saved when He chose me in Christ before the foundation of the world. As far as God the Son is concerned I was saved when He died for me at Calvary. As far as God the Holy Spirit is concerned I was saved when at twelve years of age I heard the gospel and trusted Christ. At that moment the entire plan of salvation came together and I became His child. *“ Of His own will begat He us,”*

**(2) THE INSTRUMENT OF THE NEW BIRTH**

*“ Of His own will begat He us with the Word of truth,”*

Or, *“ He gave us His birth by His Word of Truth.”* Paul reminds the Ephesian believers that their faith in Christ came *“ after that ye heard the Word of Truth, the gospel of your salvation.”* ( Eph 1:13 Col 1:5 ) You see, the Word of God is the instrument that God uses to bring about the miracle of the new birth.

**(a) THE POWER OF THIS WORD:**

*“ For the Word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword.”* ( Heb 4:12 )

**(b) THE PLACE OF THIS WORD:**

*“ they gave themselves to prayer and to the ministry of the Word.”* ( Acts 6:4 )  
*“faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.”* ( Rom 10:17 )

**(c) THE PROPAGATION OF THIS WORD:**

For surely if the Word of God is the instrument that God uses to bring about the new birth, then we've got to get the Word out !

**(3) THE INTENTION OF THE NEW BIRTH**

*“ That we should be .... creatures,”* ( 1:18 ) Maybe he meant that they were to be an example of what all subsequent gleanings were to be. The word *“ first fruits,”* is the key word here, it unlocks the idea of

**(a) DIGNITY:**

Now James is writing to Jewish believers and the word “*first fruits*,” would be meaningful to them. In Israel the “*first fruits* of the harvest were presented to God. ( Lev 23:9-14 Deut 26:1 ) The worshipper was simply acknowledging that it all came from God, and therefore it all belonged to God. The “*first fruits*,” were the Lord’s portion.

**(b) DUTY:**

For just as no-one on earth could have a greater privilege than to be called and chosen to be a child of God so no people on earth have greater responsibilities than Christians. For as God’s special people, we ought to have:

**1. GRATEFUL HEARTS:**

**2. GODLY LIVES:**

**A GOD-PLEASING LIFE / JAMES 1:16 – 20**

In ( 1:18 ) we have *the fact of the new birth*, in ( 1:19 ) we have *the consequences of the new birth*. James is simply saying that the new birth is followed by the new life. That is, if we have been born again, then there must be an outward expression of an inward experience. The new life is the outworking of the new birth. Paul says, “*Therefore if any man be in Christ he is a new creature, old things are passed away, behold all things are become new.*” ( 2 Cor 5:17 )

In other words here are three traits that ought to characterise the truly born again person. He should:

**(1) HASTEN TO LISTEN**

“*Be swift to hear,*” or “*Let every man be quick to hear, a ready listener.*”

God’s Word is not only the means of our salvation, but the means of our sanctification as well. The Saviour prayed “*Sanctify them through Thy truth, Thy word is truth.*” ( Jn 17:17 )

Now we should be ready listeners in:

**(a) PUBLIC WORSHIP:**

**(b) IN PRIVATE WORSHIP:**

## **(2) HESITATE TO SPEAK**

Someone has said, “ *we have two ears and only one tongue, in order that we may hear more and speak less.*” “ *Let every man be slow to speak.*”

### **(a) HASTILY:**

Especially in relation to the “ *Word of Truth.*” You see, there may be a reference here to those in these early churches who were so eager to be teachers that they had no time to be students. ( 3:1 )

“ *Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words ? There is more hope of a fool than of him.*” ( Prov 29:20 )

### **(b) BOASTFULLY:**

One of the greatest tragedies in the spiritual realm is to see a growing Christian, and sometimes one who is gifted whose speech is dominated by the capital “ *I.*” Self-centredness ! We have nothing to boast about *what we are:* we’re only the children of the king because of His saving grace. ( 1:18 ) we have nothing to boast about *what we have:* what do we have in the way of gift, or ability, or influence, material possessions or spiritual resources ? Paul says, “ *what hast thou that thou didst not receive ?*” ( 1 Cor 4:7 )

### **(c) CRITICALLY:**

“ *Slow to speak,*” *Our tongues are a barometer of whether we are living a life that is pleasing to God or not !* I tell you, the tongue is a dangerous weapon. Some believers use their tongues for *Blasting.* They gossip. Some use it for *Blistering.* They tear down others. Some use it for *Boasting.* Few use it for *Blessing* It was J.B. Simpson who once said, “ *I would rather play with forked lightning than speak a reckless word against a servant of Christ.*” (1) (2)

## **(3) HOLD ON TO YOUR TEMPER**

“ *Slow to wrath,*” or “ *slow to take offence and get angry,*” now the Bible:

### **(a) ENCOURAGES RIGHTFUL ANGER:**

James does not say, “ *never be angry,*” for there is an anger which is not sin. Paul says, “ *be ye angry and sin not.*” ( Eph 4:26 ) The psalmist says, “ *Ye that love the Lord hate evil.*” ( Ps 97:10 ) And although the Lord Jesus was in all points without sin, He was not at all times without anger. ( Mk 3:15 Jn 2:13 ) Paul says, “ *Be ye angry,*” but he immediately adds “ *and sin not*” **ALSO IT**

### **(b) DISCOURAGES SINFUL ANGER:**

Paul includes “*wrath*,” as one of the works of the flesh and therefore must be put away. ( Gal 5:20 Eph 4:31 Matt 5:22

“*Slow to wrath*,” For such sinful anger is:

**1. UNSPIRITUAL:**

**(2) UNPRODUCTIVE:**

“*It worketh not*,” ( 1:20 ) The end product of anger is not the righteousness of God. It does not result in the righteousness God loves to see in our lives.

**THE CHRISTIAN AND HIS BIBLE / The Book of Benefits and Blessings**

Now in these verses that we have been looking at the Word of God has figured prominently. For example in ( 1:18 ) we discovered that the Word of God is the means of our salvation, and then in ( 1:19 ) the Word is the means of our sanctification. Now here again in ( 1:21 ) it's the Word that James focus's attention on. You see, James is teaching us simply and that as God's people we should Hear the Word: ( 1:19-20 ) Receive the Word ( 1:21 ) and Obey the Word. ( 1:22 ))

There are three things here to consider

**(1) OUR AFFECTION FOR THE WORD BRINGS US TO UNDERSTAND  
SOMETHING WE NEED TO REMOVE { v 19 – 21 }**

“*Wherefore .....*,” ( 1:21 ) Dr. Moffatt renders it like this, “*Clear away all the foul rank growth and make a soil of modesty*,” for the Word. In other words, if there is going to be a reception of the Word, there must be a preparation for the Word. Just as we would take off a dirty shirt or soiled garment so we are remove sin in order that we might receive the Word

We are to have Unlimited Hearing

We are to have Unhindered Hearing

This leads to the removal of.....

**(a) IMPURITIES MUST BE REMOVED:  
*Defiling Sins must be removed***

“*All filthiness*,” ( 1:21 ) this denotes all that is impure in God's sight. The same word is translated “*vile*,” in( 2:2 ) It speaks of anything which is dirty.

**(b) INCONSISTENCIES MUST BE REMOVED:  
*Deliberate Sins must be removed***

“*Superfluity of naughtiness*,” ( 1:21 ) “*superfluity*,” speaks of that which is in abundance, a surplus. It's the same basic word as was used to describe the

leftovers when the Lord Jesus broke the fish and bread and fed the 4000.

“ *leftovers*,” of our past life. These inconsistencies, like lust, and unjustified criticism and uncontrolled temper must be removed. “ *Superfluous*,” means anything there ought not to be. “ *naughtiness*” speaks of all that is bad and pertains to deliberate sinfulness.

**(c) IMPEDIMENTS MUST BE REMOVED:**

See that word “ *filthiness* ?” Its derived from a Greek word ( *rupos* ) which when used medically means “ *wax in the ear*.” You see, when James says “ *lay apart all filthiness*,” he means anything and everything that would stop us hearing, receiving and understanding the Word of God.

**(2) SOMETHING WE NEED TO RECEIVE / Our Acceptance of The Word!**

“ *And receive with meekness ....*,” the word “ *receive*,” has in it the notion of “ *welcoming, appropriating* ( 1 Thes 2:13 ) To “ *receive*,” the Word is to make room for it in your heart, to so open your inner self to the influences of God’s Word that its truth is transfused into your heart. Now:

**(a) WHAT ARE WE TO RECEIVE ?**

“ *Receive .... the Word*,”

**(b) HOW ARE WE TO RECEIVE IT ?**

“ *And receive with meekness ....*,” the Amplified Bible puts it like this, “ *and in a humble, gentle, modest spirit receive and welcome the Word*.” This word “ *meekness*,” indicates a humble and teachable spirit.

An openness, a willingness to hear whatever God has to say without any preconceived ideas of our own.

**(c) WHERE ARE WE TO RECEIVE IT ?**

You see, James speaks of “ *the engrafted Word*.” Or

“ *Receive and welcome the Word which implanted and rooted in your hearts contains the power to save your souls*. The psalmist said ? “ *Thy Word have I hid*,” where ? “ *in mine heart*.” ( 119:11 ) He simply meant that he placed the Word of God at the very centre of his life. This Book was the governing and predominant factor in his life. Now its good to have the Bible in *your Hand*, lovely to have the Bible in *your Home*, great to have the Bible in *your Head*, best to have the Bible in *your Heart*

**(2) SOMETHING WE NEED TO REMEMBER / Our Abiding in the Word**  
Abiding has to do with a proper Response and Reception to The Word!

***“ Receive with meekness the engrafted Word, which is able to save your souls.”***  
**( 1:21 )** The word salvation covers three tenses.

Past, present and future. There is:

**(a) *THE POSSESSION OF SALVATION:***

Paul says, ***“ By grace are ye saved.”*** ( Eph 2:8 ) That speaks of a once for all, unrepeatable, unalterable experience, the thing that happens the moment a person puts his trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. They are saved from the penalty of sin.

**(b) *THE PROGRESS OF SALVATION:***

Paul's wrote - ***“ The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but to us which are saved it is the power of God.”*** ( 1 Cor 1:18 ) Now the verb ***“ saved,”*** here is in the present tense. It means ***“ being saved.”*** In this sense, ***“ being saved,”*** is a gradual process, a developing experience, a maturing, refining work which begins at conversion and will continue unto a believers dying day. We are being saved from the power of sin.

**(c) *THE PROSPECT OF SALVATION:***

The book of Romans states, ***“ Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.”*** ( Rom 5:9 ) Here is the final, glorious prospect which awaits every believer. We shall be saved from the presence of sin. Now when James speaks of ***“ the engrafted Word, which is able to save your souls,”*** he is referring to saved in the second sense. He is not referring to the salvation of the soul from damnation but from damage. He's saying that God's Word is able to save us from the power of sin in our present life.

**THE BOOK OF BENEFITS AND BLESSINGS**

**SALVATION / Past – Present – and Future!**

**STUDY # 5****JAMES****RIGHTEOUS RELIGION James 1:18-25**

According to a news report on one occasion a number of booklets entitled, “ *The Control of the Termites,*” were stored in the mailing room of a Western University. Believe it or not the termites gobbled their way through those little booklets and no-one noticed until the damage was done. Those hungry little pests destroyed the information that could have prevented all that from happening. You see, all the facts contained in those booklets did not do a bit of good. Why ? Because knowledge was not applied. That story brings us to the thrust of James message in ( 1:22 ) when he says, “ *But be ye doers of the Word and not hearers only.*” There are four kinds of hearers. There are those who are like a Sponge. They soak up good and bad and let both run out immediately. There are those who are like a Sandglass, that let what enters in at one ear pass out the other, hearing without thinking. Then there are those who are like a Strainer. Letting go the good and retaining the bad. There are some who are like a Sieve, letting go the chaff and retaining the good. But even that is not enough, for blessing does not come by simply hearing great Biblical truths. Its not the hearing but the doing that produces the blessing.

**(1) AN EXHORTATION**

“ *But be ye doers of the Word and not hearers only,*” ( 1:22 ) Notice

**(a) HOW POWERFUL IT IS:**

“ *But be ye doers of the Word,*” the Greek conveys the idea, “ *make sure that you are.*” “ *Show yourselves to be doers of the Word.*” The tense of the word suggests “ *continuing action.*” “ *Keep on showing yourselves to be doers of the Word*

“ *Make sure that you are continually a doer of the Word of God.*” (a)

**(b) HOW PRACTICAL IT IS:**

“ *But obey the message, be doers of the Word and not merely listeners to it.*” It is not enough to hear the Word of God we must do it. *Too many believers mark their Bibles but their Bibles never mark them.* It’s not enough to hear the Word, receive the Word, retain the Word, memorise the Word, we must live out the Word of God.

**(c) HOW PENETRATING IT IS:**

“ *But be ye doers of the Word and not hearers only,*”( 1:22 ) Or as the Amplified puts it, “ *not merely listeners to it.*” Now that word “ *listen,*” ( akroatai ) literally means “ *audit.*” The word reminds us of a person auditing or pursuing a college course. He attends all the classes, hears all the lectures, but never has to take the tests. However, when graduation comes and the diplomas are handed out, there is no cap and gown or diploma for the student who has only attended courses.

## (2) AN ILLUSTRATION

An illustration of someone who is just a “*hearer only.*” notice ( 1:23 ) ? Now the word “*glass,*” simply means “*a mirror.*” But the phrase “*natural face,*” is interesting. It means “*the face he was born with.*”

See the other word in ( 1:24 ) “*he beholdeth himself,*” that indicates a casual, superficial look. What we might call “*a look and a promise.*”, In the previous verses James has compared the Word of God to Seed ( 1:18 ) but now he is comparing God’s Word to a Mirror.

### (a) MAN’S REASONING:

He deceives himself. ( 1:22 ) The word means “*to be deceived by false reasoning.*” In the context it suggests that because one thing has happened, something else automatically follows. Some Christian says, “*Well, I’ve read my Bible, said my prayers, had my time with the Lord, so everything is fine, I have gone through the process so I can assume the progress.*”

### (b) MAN’S READING:

He says, “*for he beholdeth himself,*” ( 1:24 ) That just means “*a casual glance* Just a casual glance. *Are you reading the Word only as a religious exercise but you are failing to profit from it personally ?*

### (c) MAN’S RESPONSE:

Look at ( 1:24 ) “*And goeth his way,*” or as a paraphrase has it, “*he goes on with what he was doing*

## (3) AN OBSERVATION

Look at the observation, the statement that James makes concerning the doer of the Word. ( 1:25 ) “*but,*” It’s introducing us to a person vastly different in his approach. The man typified in the first section is a hearer and not a doer, but this man is “*not a forget hearer but a doer of the work,*” ( 1:25 ) You see, here is a believer who:

### (a) LOOKS AT GOD’S WORD:

The word “*looketh,*” here means “*a careful earnest gaze.*” A similar word is used in ( Jn 20:5 ) and describes how Peter and John looked into the empty tomb. My .... that was no casual glance for John intended to miss nothing that tomb might reveal to him about Christ. We read “*And he stooping down and looking in.*”

### (b) LINGER’S IN GOD’S WORD:

“*And continueth therein,*” ( 1:25 ) The Amplified Bible puts it, “*is faithful to it and perseveres in looking into it.*” George Duncan once said, “*God does not reveal the deep things of the Spirit to the casual Christian who drops in for a chat.*”

**(c) LIVES OUT GOD'S WORD:**

***“ He being not a heedless listener who forgets, but an active doer who obeys, he shall be blessed in his doing, in his life of obedience.” ( Amplified )*** Now notice very carefully that it is ***“ in his deed,”*** or ***“ doing,”*** that this man is ***“ blessed.”*** He is not said to be blessed because of the amount of Biblical knowledge he accumulates, the blessing comes with his obedience to the revealed will of God.

James was a man of the Book. In this whole section he pleads with us to **Hear the Word** ( 1:19 ) **Receive the Word** ( 1:21 ) **Obey the Word** ( 1:22 )

**WHAT KIND OF RELIGION DO WE HAVE?**

The word ***“ religion,”*** means the outward practice, it speaks of the outward and external observance of our faith. It implies that something has happened internally that manifests itself externally. It speaks of the acts, deeds and service that flow from our faith.

When James speaks about religion he is not talking about denominations. He is talking about obeying God's Word , and sharing it with others through speech, service and separation from the world. Now we have seen in this opening chapter what a tremendous emphasis James places on the Word of God. He was a great Bible man, a man truly steeped in Holy Scripture.

He has been stressing the fact that as God's people we should **hear the Word** ( 1:19-20 ) **receive the Word** ( 1:21 ) and **obey the Word.** ( 1:22 )

In these closing verses he's saying that if our obedience to the Word of God is genuine it will show in our lives by certain distinguishing marks. Indeed he introduces us to the subject of false and true religion. In essence he asks the question, ***“ what kind of religion do you have ?”*** Practical as ever he says, ***“ I can tell by the marks, traits, qualities that are found in your life whether or not you've had a heart experience of salvation.”*** So these two verse tell us something about false religion and something about true religion. Notice:

**(1) SOMETHING ABOUT FALSE RELIGION / VAIN RELIGION 1:26-27**

In ( 1:22-25 ) James has been dealing with what we might call **the Foundation of the Christians life**, the need to come to the Word of God, to hear the Word ( 1:19-20 ) to receive the Word ( 1:21 ) and to obey the Word. ( 1:22 )

But now he turns **to the Fabric of the Christians life**, to the things that show on the surface, to the outward expressions that prove or disprove the claim of an inner experience. Here in these statement he tells us some things about false religion. He says that it is:

**(a) SUPERFICIAL:**

***Appearance Without Reality***

**Activity Without Results –**

Mark two words in ( 1:26 ) “ *seem and deceiveth.*”

“*deceiveth*” means to cheat      “*vain*” means without results

The picture here is that of something that on the surface seems to be fine but when you begin to examine it closely you discover that it is lacking in depth and reality. It has the right name, the right shape, the right general appearance, but once you begin to examine it closely, you discover that is all there is to it.

**(b) CARNAL:**

Do you see ( 1:26 ) ? “ *And bridleth not his tongue,*” in other words false religion is lacking in restraint. We have a saying, “ *the truth will out,*” which means that sooner or later the real facts will emerge. Not only is that generally true but is especially true in the use of the tongue, which is why the Lord Jesus said, “ *Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.*” ( Matt 12:34 )

**(c) INEFFECTUAL:**

“ *This man’s religion is vain,*” ( 1:26 ) Or as the Amplified Bible has it, “ *this religious persons religious service is worthless, futile, barren.*” Void of benefit and blessing. Lots of activity but no advance, a life, a programme, an orbit of organization that is always on the move but is never actually making any progress.

All of our outward religion and service that is superficial, anything that is marked by pride and self-interest or a critical spirit, all of this is nothing more in God’s sight than what Paul calls “ *wood, hay, stubble.*” ( 1 Cor 3:12 ) It is condemned by God now and will be consumed by fire then, when we stand at the judgement seat of Christ.

**(2) SOMETHING ABOUT TRUE RELIGION / VIRTUOUS RELIGION**

( 1:26 ) The phrase “ *before God and the Father,*” simply means “ *in God’s eyes.*” We are not dealing here with regeneration, but with religion, the practical outworking of regeneration. And James is telling us that this consists not in what we Believe, but in how we Behave. The person who is thoroughly “ *sound,*” and yet thoroughly “ *unpleasant.*” Now as we look here at the marks of true religion we must see and understand that there is:

**(a) NO CONFLICT IN GOD’S WORD:**

James begins with “ *Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this.*” Consider the following statements !

“ *Justification never results from good works,*” what James is saying here is that “ *Justification always results in good works,*” that is good works are the natural outcome of a spiritual income. And also there is:

### ***(b) NO CONFUSION ABOUT GOD'S WILL:***

Those two words in ( 1:27 ) “ *is this,*” are expanded by a paraphrase to read, “ *will show itself by such things as.*” Now James is not saying that what follows is the only action of which God approves. The only thing that can be classified as “ *pure religion and undefiled.*” What he is saying, is that this is a typical example of the way in which a living faith will show itself. This is the kind of thing you would expect to see in the life of a believer. If we have a living faith, then that faith will show itself. There will be certain marks in our lives. The marks of pure, genuine religion. The first is

#### **1. A CONTROLLED TONGUE:**

You see, if one of the marks of false religion is an uncontrolled tongue, then one of the marks of true religion is a controlled tongue. Obviously wagging tongues were wreaking havoc in the early church for James mentions time and again. ( 1:19 2:12 3:1-3 4:11 )

James says that the tongue is a spiritual thermometer. It indicates how you're doing spiritually.

#### **(2) A COMPASSIONATE HEART:**

The Amplified Bible says, “ *To visit and help and care for the orphans and widows in their affliction.*” The word “ *visit,*” here does not mean to pop in and pay a “*pastoral*” call. It suggests the idea “ *to care for, to look after.*” The same word is used in ( Lk 1:68 ) where it says, “ *God hath visited His people.*” Take a personal interest in, express loving concern for the orphans and widows.

This word “ *visit,*” means “ *to care, to exercise oversight, to help.*” The verb in our text comes from a noun that gives us the word “ *bishop,*” one that is an overseer, or elder. To care, to visit, to help ! Then note the word “ *affliction,*” it appears in the A.V. in many other forms “ *anguish, burdened, distress, persecution, tribulation, trouble.*” The main sense of the word seems to be “ *pressure.*” People under pressure !

#### **(3) A CONSECRATED LIFE:**

“ *And to keep oneself unspotted and uncontaminated from the world,*” The world refers to the invisible spiritual system of evil. And the world's system is opposed to God. Later on James says, “ *Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God,*” ( 4:4 )

Someone has said, “ *Worldliness is the enthronement of something other than God as the supreme object of man's interest's and affections.*” That is the acid test. Paul says, “ *the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.*” ( 2 Cor 4:18 )

**WE CAN NOTE IN THIS VIRTUOUS RELIGION that it is one of**

**{1} Practical Service**

**In V 26 the motive is self – centered. He thinks of himself. But in V 27 virtuous religion is pure. The motive is not self – centered, but others are the focus.**

**In V 26 we find one hurting others / while in V 27 we find one helping others.**

**{2} Personal Separation,**

**“undefiled” – “keeps himself unspotted from the world” meaning without blemish. In V 26 we see one’s life spoiled and stained by an unbridled tongue, But in V 27 we see one that is unspotted by the world.**

**Pure and True Religion !**

## STUDY # 6

## JAMES

### James 2:1-13 / THE DANGERS OF DISCRIMINATION

The church of Jesus Christ ought to be one place where discrimination is a dirty word. Here James is dealing with The Dangers of Discrimination. Notice

#### (1) THE EVIL THAT WAS TOLERATED / Discrimination is a Dishonour to or Faith

Look at ( 2:1 ) We could paraphrase it, “ *My brothers as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don’t show favouritism.*” What was happening was this. People were saying one thing and doing another. On the one hand there was a *profession of faith*, but on the other there was a *practice of flattery*.

##### (a) THE IDENTIFICATION OF IT:

? “ *Respect of persons.*” ( 3:1 ) Used in a certain sense “ *respect,*” is something the Bible commands and commends. The Lord Jesus made it clear that we are “ *to render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesars.*” ( Matt 22:21 ) In Civil life we are to have respect. The Bible also urges respect in Church Life. The Bible also stress’s respect in Family Life. ( Col 3:17 ) But what about this word that James uses here ? Literally it means, “ *to lay hold of a person’s face.*” It means to treat a person in a special way not because they deserve it, but because of something outside of their character.

To show favour to people on account of their external advantages such as their position, power, wealth, or influence.

##### (b) THE INCONSISTENCY OF IT:

This evil, partiality, favouritism was inconsistent with their profession of faith in Christ. The phrase, “ *the faith of our Lord Jesus,*” would be better translated “ *faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.*” This partiality which they showed was not in keeping with:

##### 1. THE INCARNATE WORD:

The Lord Jesus. Now its possible that the words, “ *the Lord,*” were not in the original which leaves us with this interesting title, “ *our Lord Jesus Christ of glory.*” Now Christ possessed glory in eternity.

##### 2. THE INSPIRED WORD:

For the Bible everywhere condemns discrimination. Listen to the words of the Old Testament: “ *Thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty, but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour.*” ( Lev 19:15 ) “ *To have respect of persons is not good.*” ( Prov 28:21 )

**(c) THE INDICATION OF IT:**

James says, “ *Do not attempt to hold and practice the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory together with snobbery.*”

*We can discriminate on the basis of appearance, ancestry, age, achievement, and affluence.*

**(2) THE EXAMPLE THAT WAS RELATED / Discrimination is a Disgrace to our Fellowship**

The real problem here is not finding a good seat for the rich man but in ignoring the poor man. He is not saying that it’s wrong to wear a gold ring or a gold watch. He is dealing with a issue far deeper than that.

Look at the situation here and notice:

**(a) THE APPEARANCE:**

The phrase “ *with a gold ring,*” would be better translated “ *gold fingered.*” He had a gem at every joint, a nugget at every knuckle.

He was clothed “ *in goodly apparel,*” in fine clothing. Here was a wealthy man. As for the other guy we are told that he was “ *a poor man in vile raiment.*” The word “ *vile,*” means “ *filthy, shabby.*” One in rings the other in rags.

**(b) THE APPROACH:**

To one of them there was an invitation, “ *Sit here,*” to the other there was instruction, “ *stand here.*” *They indulged the rich because he was rich and they were indifferent to the poor because he was poor, and it’s so easy to be guilty of that kind of thing ?*

**(3) THE ERROR THAT WAS DENUNCIATED / Discrimination is a Disservice to our Future**

( 2:4 ) James tells them that such behaviour meant that they were:

**(a) DISCRIMINATING:**

Look at ( 2:4 ) Or, “ *Are ye not discriminating among your own ?*”

There is seniority in the Christian church, but there is no superiority. We are “ *all one in Christ Jesus*” They were

**(b) JUDGING:**

“ *And .... judges,*” or as a paraphrase puts it, “ *setting yourselves up to assess a man’s quality.*” So often we don’t see beyond the superficial, the temporal, and

the material. And they were

**(c) SCHEMING:**

The last phrase can be translated like this, “ *judges with wrong motives,*” The word “ *thoughts,*” here is a Greek word ( dialogismos ) from which we get our word “ *dialogue.*” In other words, they tossed the issue to and fro in their minds, they weighed it all up and then they acted in the way likely to do them the most good.

**THE WHOLE STORY OF OUR SALVATION**

Here James is tackling the same problem. He’s been saying, “ *Your profession is that you are trusting and following the Lord Jesus Christ of Glory, but He treated all men alike regardless of their rank, resources and reputation. This is the One in whom you profess to have faith. But I’m afraid when I look at your lives I see an inconsistency.*” In ( 2:5 ) James says that such partiality is contrary to the purpose of God. If we think and act in a partial way within the church we not only fail to practice what we profess but we fail to *reflect the mind of God as revealed in our salvation.*

Here in ( 2:5 ) *he sets before us the whole story of our salvation, past, present and future.*

**(1) OUR PAST ..... ELECTED**

The Amplified Bible, “ *Listen, my beloved brethren. Has God not chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and in their position as believers.* God’s choice:

**(a) IS UNDENIABLE:**

“ *Hath not God chosen,*” James asks. There is no doubt about the answer to that question if you come to the Scripture with an open mind.

*Israel was a Chosen Nation.*

*Levi was a Chosen Tribe.*

*David was a Chosen King.*

God’s choice is undeniable. But it

**(b) IS UNUSUAL:**

“ *Hath not God chosen the poor of this world?*” Abraham Lincoln said, “ *God must love the common people because He made so many of them.*”

God chooses the weak and they become witnesses, God chooses the foolish and they become faithful, God chooses the base and they become believers. God chooses the world’s nobodies and they become the Lord’s nobilities.

God's choice also

**(c) IS UNCONDITIONAL:**

For while the Bible teaches that God does choose, it also teaches that “ *there is no respect of persons with God.*” ( Rom 2:11 ) You see, God chooses without respecting a persons gift, goodness or anything else. Paul tells us that we were “ *chosen in Him before the foundation of the world.*”

Moses speaking to the Children of Israel said, “ *The Lord did not set His love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people, for ye were the fewest of all people. But because the Lord loved you.*” ( Deut 7:7-8 )

**(2) OUR PRESENT ..... ENRICHED**

James speaks of those who are “ *rich in faith,*” ( 2:5 ) Or as the Amplified puts it, “ *Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith.*” These believers were not chosen because they were rich in faith, they were chosen to become rich through faith. For faith brings the Christians riches into conscious possession. In other words faith brings these riches into sight and focus. We can see what our riches are in Christ when we exercise faith.

Think about these riches and:

**(a) WHAT THEY COST:**

Paul says, “ *For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich.*” ( 2 Cor 8:9 ) Grace as been helpfully explained as meaning, “ Great Riches at Christ's Expense.”

**(b) WHAT THEY COVER:**

The Bible says, “ *In every thing ye are enriched by Him.*” ( 1 Cor 1:5 ) In every part of life we should look for the enrichment that is ours because we are in Christ. It's only when we exercise faith that we are able to see the riches that are ours in Christ, in the ordinary, moment by moment matters of ever day life.

In other words, the greater our faith, the more our riches come into focus

. For example,

**1. WE CAN HAVE A GRAIN OF FAITH:**

In the sermon on the mount the Lord Jesus spoke of his disciples like this, “ *O ye of little faith.*” ( Matt 6:30 )

**2. WE CAN HAVE GROWING FAITH:**

This is when we see Christ not only as our Saviour but as our Guide, and Helper,

and Friend.

We see not only what Christ did for us in His death and resurrection, but what He can do for us now in all of life's difficulties and problems. Someone has said, "*an incident is only a problem when I have no resources.*"

But growing faith sees growing resources. For we see Christ not only as the One who died for our sins, but who daily and dynamically lives within us, and is able to help us in all of the problems and pressures of life.

### **3. WE HAVE GREAT FAITH:**

Christ said to the lady in Matt 15:28 "*O woman great is thy faith.*" A believer with great faith sees much more. He sees that every circumstance of life is allowed and ordained by God for his own particular blessing. This is the whole thrust of the Book of Job. One of the key names for God in the Book of Job is "*The Almighty,*" it's used 31 times. No matter what matter happens in this world and in our lives, God is on the throne and has everything under control. But it takes great faith to see that when your back is against the wall, and when your world is crumbling, and when you are in the midst of pain, pressure, and problems ! But this is what great faith sees. It sees riches not only in prosperity but in poverty, not only in health but in sickness, not only in progress but in pressure.

This is the faith that sees that the Lord does not allow a single circumstance or event, or problem, or pressure to come into your life without His intention that you should be enriched, and blessed, and strengthened, and matured and refined and conformed unto the image of His Son. The Bible tells us "*I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*"  
( Rom 8:38 )

### **(3) OUR FUTURE ..... ENRAPTURED**

James says, God's people are "*heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him,*" If we belong to Christ then we are already "*kings and priests unto God.*" ( Rev 1:6 ) However the coronation has not yet been held. That will come later. After all we are "*joint heirs with Christ,*" and though we may be rejected in this world, we shall reign in the next. James speaks of

#### **(a) THE CERTAIN FACT OF IT:**

It is the kingdom, "*which he hath promised,*" ( 2:5 )  
We are the joint-heirs of a God promised kingdom.

#### **(b) THE CENTRAL FIGURE OF IT:**

" *To them that love Him* God has promised it to them that love Him.

John tells us, “ *We love Him because He first loved us,*” ( 1 Jn 4:19 )

## THE CHRISTIAN AND GOD’S LAW

James says that favouritism is

**(1) *Inconsistent with our Profession of our faith: ( 2:1-4 )***

**(2) *Its Contrary to the Purpose of God: ( 2:5 )***

**(3) *Its not in the Best Interests of the Christian: ( 2:6-7 )***

**and now he says that *partiality, snobbery, favouritism is***

**(4) *Inconsistent with Scripture: Which says, “ thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” ( 2:8-11 ) is all to do with the Christian and God’s Law !***

Notice here:

### (1) THE DESCRIPTION OF THIS LAW

***“ If ye fulfil the royal law according to the Scripture,  
.... as thyself,” ( 2:8 )? “ The royal law,”***

#### **(a) ITS SOURCE IS ROYAL:**

It has God as its author. Nearly 4,000 times in the Old Testament alone, 700 times in the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible and the most disputed part of the Scriptures, 40 times in one chapter the writers claim to be speaking God’s Word. “ *God spoke,*” “ *The Word of God came,*” “ *God commanded,*” “ *Thus saith the Lord,*”

The New Testament contains approximately 600 quotations from the O.T. all of them taken as authoritative. Paul says, “ *the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.*” ( 1 Cor 14:37 ) John says, “ *this then is the message which we have heard of Him.*” ( 1 Jn 1:5 ) **SOMEONE HAS WRITTEN.....**

***“ The Bible is the Word of God, In exhaustive in its adequacy. It is harmonious in infinite complexity. Supernatural in origin, Divine in Authorship, Human in Penmanship, Infallible in Authority, Infinite in Scope, Universal in Interest, Eternal in Duration, Personal in Application, Regenerative in Power. Immortal in its hopes and Immeasurable in its Influence. Inspired in Totality. The Miracle book of Diversity in Unity. There is not a sin it does not condemn, not a virtue it fails to mention. It is an oasis in a desert of despair. This wonderful Book of Harmony in Infinite Complexity, travels more highways, walks more bypaths, knocks at more doors, speaks to more people in their mother tongue than any book ever printed.”***

#### **(b) ITS SUBJECTS ARE ROYAL:**

James says, “ *If ye fulfil the royal law .... ye do well.*”

Perhaps James refers to this as a royal law because it’s the law of Christ’s

kingdom. In ( 2:5 ) he reminds that we are “ *heirs of the kingdom,*” and therefore are under the laws of the kingdom. We’re part of a “ *royal priesthood,*” (1 Pet 2:9 ) and therefore must be guided by His Law

“ *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.*” ( 2 Tim 3:16 ) “ *that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*”

**(c) ITS STANDARDS ARE ROYAL:**

“ *If ye fulfil the royal law .... as thyself,*” ( 2:8 )

In answer to the question, “ *which is the first commandment of all ?*” ( Mk 12:28 ) the Lord Jesus said, “ *And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength this is the first commandment. And the second is like namely this, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*” ( Mk 12:30-31 )

“ *On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.*” ( Matt 22:40 )

**(2) THE DEMANDS OF THIS LAW**

And this can be summed in one word. Love !

“ *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,*” now notice:

**(a) THE MENTION OF THIS LOVE:**

James reached back into the Old Testament for one of God’s laws. God gave it in ( Lev 19:18 ) “ *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,*” the Father gave it, and then the Son reaffirmed it to his disciples. This was the Saviour’s last charge to His disciples before He went to the cross.

He commanded them. “ *Don’t hate one another, don’t be ungracious, unkind, discourteous.*” “ *Love one another as I have loved you.*” ( Jn 13:34 ) the Father gave this command in the Law, the Son gave this command to His disciples and the Holy Spirit fills our hearts with God’s love and expects us to share it with others. ( Rom 5:5 )

**(b) THE MEANING OF THIS LOVE:**

Christian love means this. *We treat each other the way God treats us.* God forgives us, so we forgive one another. God is kind to us, so we’re kind one to another. God receives us so we receive one another. We may not have the same personalities, interests, we may disagree on a lot of things but we willingly treat each other the way God treats us !

**(c) THE MAGNITUDE OF THIS LOVE:**

“ *Thou shalt love thy neighbour,*” “ *And who is my neighbour ?*” ( Lk 10:29 ) In response to that very question that the Lord Jesus told the parable of the Good

Samaritan A Samaritan. The Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans.  
Its not a question of geography but opportunity ! The important question is not “  
*Who is my neighbour ?*” But “ *To whom can I be a neighbour*  
James also speaks of:

**(d) THE MANNER OF THIS LOVE:**

*“ Thou shalt .... as thyself.”*

Paul says, “ *No man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it.*” ( Eph 5:29 ), “ *look not every man on his own things but every man on the things of others.*” ( Phil 2:4 ) You see we’re either living self-centred lives or the good of each other is our deep concern.

James is talking here about

*“ The Christian and God’s Law.”*

**(3) THE DESECRATORS OF THIS LAW**

And he points out something very interesting, that the law of God is an entity and to offend in one point, to make a very small slip up, makes one a law breaker. He speaks here of those who are guilty of:

**(a) ADULTERY: That’s on the MORAL LEVEL:**

*“ Do not commit adultery,”* ( 2:11 ) The Lord Jesus said “ *An evil and adulterous generation.*” ( Matt 12:39 )

**(b) MURDER: That’s on the EMOTIONAL LEVEL:**

*“ Do not kill,”* ( 2:11 ) How many thousands of babies are killed every year by abortion. We say, “ *I’ve never killed anyone directly or indirectly.*” The Saviour said - If you are angry with your brother without a cause you’re guilty of murder. John said “ *Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer.*” ( 1 Jn 3:5 ]

**(c) PARTIALITY: That’s on the SOCIAL LEVEL:**

( 2:9 ) says “ *Transgressors,*” refers to a man who has a prescribed course to walk, but steps over the line and walks beside the intended path instead of on it. In other words he deviates from God’s intended course.

James says, “ *For whosoever,*” ( 2:10 ) “ *offend.*” It means a very small slip up. James says that to commit even one little sin is to be “ *guilty of all.*” That is he is guilty of not keeping every part. D.L. Moody compared God’s Law to a ten-link chain onto which a man was holding while suspended over a great cliff. Moody said that if all ten links were to break, the man would fall to his death. But if only one link were to break the man would fall just as far and just as fast.

## STUDY # 7

## JAMES

### James 2:13 / SOME LESSONS FOR LIFE !

It's impossible to judge another person's motives on the basis of outward appearance. No one can determine the heart of another in a first time encounter. That's why James says in the opening verses of ( Ch 2 ) that prejudice, partiality and spiritual snobbery are wrong. He's been talking about the *Dangers of Discrimination within the church fellowship*. James says that such favouritism is **(1) Inconsistent with our Profession of faith: ( 2:1-4 )**

**(2) its contrary to the Purpose of God. ( 2:5 ) and**

**(3) its not in the Best Interests of the Christian. ( 2:6**

There are Some lessons for Life that we need to grasp here.

#### (1) AN ACCUSATION WE MUST ACCEPT

*" But ye have despised the poor," ( 2:6 )*

##### (a) **THE CONTRAST HERE:**

The word for "*despise,*" means "*to treat without honour, to dishonour.*" Their behaviour was in total contrast to God's.

They indulged the rich because he was rich and they were indifferent to the poor because he was poor.

##### (b) **THE CHALLENGE HERE:**

The Amplified puts it like this, "*But you in contrast have insulted .... humiliated, dishonoured and shown your contempt for the poor.*" ( 2:6 ) We can despise:

#### **1. THE POOR IN NUMBER:**

*Sometimes God reaps his best and richest harvests in His smallest fields*

#### **2. THE POOR IN NATURE:**

This takes us a little nearer to the situation James has in mind. We're to share the gospel with every person regardless of race, resources or respectability !

#### **3. THE POOR IN NEED:**

This passage is all about poverty. It's about the "*have nots,*" of this world being cold-shouldered by the "*haves.*" James has already underscored our responsibility to people under pressure. In ( 1:27 ) he talks about those "*in their affliction.*"

#### (2) AN ALIENATION WE MUST EXPECT

( 2:6 ) ? “ *is it not the rich who domineer over you ? Is it not they who drag you into the law courts ?* The very people to whom they were showing great respect were the ones who were treating them so violently. These rich men were the ones who hauled the Christians into courts. There was an alienation, a hatred, a persecution that these believers were experiencing.

**(a) THE CHARACTER OF IT:**

James says “ *they oppress you.*” ( 2:6 ) Its significant that the only other use of this particular word in the Bible is in ( Acts 10:38 ) where we read that the Lord Jesus “ *went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil.*” You see, this alienation was Satanic in its origin and ruthless in its outworking.

**(b) THE CAUSE OF IT:**

**1. THE GOSPEL HIT AT THEIR POSITIONS:**

Time and again in the Early Church we read that the Jews stirred up trouble against the disciples because their positions were in danger.  
( Acts 5:17 14:2 14:19 )

**2. THE GOSPEL HIT AT THEIR POCKETS:**

When Paul exorcised that evil spirit from that demon-possessed girl. We read that “ *when her owners saw that their hope of gain was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the market place before the rulers.*” ( Acts 16:29 19:23 ) The gospel hit at their pockets and because of that, the gospel and those who preached it must go.

**3. THE GOSPEL HIT AT THEIR PRIDE:**

For it brought both rich and poor unto the same common platform. Paul speaks of “ *the offence of the cross.*” The Lord Jesus made it clear, “ *In the world ye shall have tribulation .... if they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.*” ( Jn 16:33 15:20 ) It’s impossible at one and the same time to walk closely with the Lord and to become comfortable in the world in which we live today.

**(3) AN ASSOCIATION WE MUST REFLECT**

As believers we’re associated with the Lord. We bear “ *that worthy name.*” ( 2:7 ) And we ought to reflect that in our daily lives. These rich folk not only dragged the Lord’s people into court, but they dragged the Lord’s name into contempt.

**(a) THE NAME WE BEAR:**

The Amplified puts it like this, “ *that precious name by which you are distinguished and called, the name of Christ invoked in baptism*”

**(b) THE DANGER WE FACE:**

“ *Do not they blaspheme,*” Surely no Christian would ever do that – What about...

**1. OUR UNGUARDED LIPS:**

One Bible Dictionary defines blasphemy as an “ *any action in which the honour of God is insulted by man.*”

The Psalmist says “ *God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about Him.*” ( Ps 89:7 )

**(2) OUR UNGODLY LIVES:**

The Lord Jesus said, “ *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*” ( Matt 5:16 )

James 2:14-26		James speaks about	
{1}	A faith That is Professed Without Works		V 14
	A. The truth of ones profession		
	B. The type of ones profession		V 19
{2}	A faith That is Proven by Works		V 18
	A. Works is the evidence of our faith		
	B. Works is the exhibition of our faith		
{3}	A faith That is Perfected Through Works		V 22 and following

Someone once said “ *if I pour boiling water into a cup, it makes the outside hot as well as the inside, so when the gospel gets into a man’s heart, the life will soon show that it is there.*”

Genuine faith produces genuine results. You see, James is saying that there is faith unto salvation, and a faith which is not unto salvation, a faith which is genuine and a faith which is false, a faith that issues in works of love, and a faith which is no better than the faith of demons. ( 2:19 )

**(1) THE PEOPLE WITH SAVING FAITH**

No fruit in the life is a sign of no root in the heart. James speaks first of all about:

**(a) A FAITHFUL PATRIARCH:**

Abraham. Look at ( 2:24 )

**1. The MOMENT of Abraham’s Justification:**

When was Abraham justified? Well, look at ( 2:23 ) Now that is a direct quote from ( Gen 15:6 ) You see, Abraham's salvation experience is recorded in ( Gen Ch 15 ) thirty years *before* this incident on Mount Moriah. 30 years *before* he offered up Isaac. God came to Abraham and told him he would have a son, that his seed would be as the stars in the heaven. Abraham's response " *And he believed in the Lord and He counted it to Him for righteousness.*" ( Gen 15:6 ) ( Rom 4:3 ) " *Abraham believed God and it was counted unto Him for righteousness*

## **2. The MARK of Abraham's Justification:**

James was not referring here to ( Gen Ch 15 ), the moment Abraham exercised faith in God, but rather to ( Gen Ch 22 ) the moment Abraham offered up Isaac. You see, the offering up of Isaac was not the moment of Abraham's justification, nor was it the means of Abraham's justification, but it was the mark of Abraham's justification. The Amplified Bible put it like this, " *Was not Abraham our father shown to be justified .... by his works.*" In the words of Matthew Poole, " *Abraham's justification was not the absolution of a sinner, but the approbation of a believer.*" You see, the offering up of Isaac was the proof, the evidence, the sign that the faith he had exercised in ( Gen Ch 15 ) was real, saving faith.

**By faith he was justified before God and his righteousness declared, by works he was justified before men and his righteousness demonstrated.**

## **3. The MEANING of Abraham's Justification:**

" *And he was called the Friend of God,*" ( 2:23 ) Jehoshaphat speaks to God of " *Abraham Thy friend,*" ( 2 Chron 20:7 ) and the Lord also refers to " *Abraham My friend.*" ( Is 41:8 ) Faith introduces the sinner to the Saviour and gives him the privilege of being God's friend.

**(b) A FORMER PROSTITUTE: Rahab.**

### **1. Her CONDITION:**

She is described here and in ( Heb Ch 11 ) as a harlot.

The word means " *a prostitute.*" Probably Rahab was a temple prostitute, involved in the vile Canaanite religion which raised immorality to an act of worship.

### **2. Her CONFESSION:**

Rahab had become a believer. We are not told how or when but her personal testimony is found in ( Joshua Ch 2 ) She said this, " *I know .... that the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and in earth beneath.*" Incidentally, her confession was very similar to the confession that James quotes in ( 2:19 )

### **3. Her CONFIRMATION:**

That proved the reality of her faith. Rahab not only said she believed, she showed it. ( 2:25 ) ? The Amplified puts it like this, “ *Was she not shown to be justified by good deeds when she took in the scouts and got them away by a different route.*” The confirmation of her faith was so simple, she put her own life in jeopardy in order to save the lives of two-fellow believers. A woman who had ruined her life by lust at its lowest, now revealed her faith by love at its highest. There were works in her life that proved the reality of her faith !

#### **(2) THE PROOFS OF SAVING FAITH**

For in these two people that James brings before us here, he gives us two marks of saving faith. He talks about:

**(a) OBEDIENCE: As seen in the Life of Abraham:**

##### **1. Abraham Obeyed IMMEDIATELY:**

“ *Abraham rose up early in the morning,*” ( Gen 22:3 ) His obedience was immediate.

##### **2. Abraham Obeyed BELIEVINGLY:**

That’s an amazing statement in ( 22:5 ) Think of it. With the mountain of sacrifice looming in the distance, Abraham was able to focus on worshipping the Lord and trusting in His ability to raise the dead, if it came to that. ( Heb 11:19 ) Someone has said that “ *faith sees the invisible, believes the incredible, and receives the impossible.*”

##### **3. Abraham Obeyed COMPLETELY:**

He “ *clave the wood, built an altar, bound Isaac his son, took the knife to slay his son.*” His obedience did not shrink from one single detail. And God rewarded him, “ *Abraham ... now I know that thou fearest God.*” ( 22:12 ] Now James 2:21 “ *Was not Abraham our father justified by works ?*” In other words did he not prove the reality of his faith “ when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar.”

**(b) COURAGE: As seen in the Life of Rahab:**

Look at ( 2:25 ) Here was a woman who proved the reality of her faith by an act of courage. Rahab not only said she believed in God she showed it.

#### **(3) THE PRINCIPLE ABOUT SAVING FAITH**

And the principle is this, that saving faith always manifests itself in good works.  
( 2:26 ) The concluding principle is simple. When there is separation, there is death. That is true:

**(a) PHYSICALLY:**

Separation, when the soul separates from the body

**(b) SPIRITUALLY:**

When faith is separated from works. You see, without works faith is nothing but a corpse, void of vitality, and useless to everyone except the undertaker.

**YOU CAN'T HAVE ONE WITHOUT THE OTHER**

God wants some proof that our love and faith is real.

Paul stresses the Root of Salvation, which is faith in Christ plus nothing, but James underscores the Fruit after Salvation.

Paul sees the fire in the fireplace, but James eyes the smoke coming out of the chimney. James's whole thrust is, "*You can't have one without the other.*"  
Genuine faith produces genuine results.

**(1) THE CLAIM THAT IS MADE**

Even in the Early Church there were those who claimed they had saving faith, yet did not possess salvation. Jesus said

*" Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."* ( Matt 7:21 )

James says, "*What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds ? Can such faith save him ?*" Notice

**(a) WHAT THIS MAN SAYS:**

For the key word in this section is the word " say." "*Though a man say.*" Now the tense here indicates that this person keeps on making this claim apparently for years. Now this is a claim, not necessarily a fact. And James' reaction is, "*Well I would like to see evidence of your faith before I can accept your claim.*"

**(b) WHAT THIS MAN LACKS:**

What good does it do, says James to say you have faith if you have no works to justify that claim. Now here is the challenge that he makes ! What use is that kind of faith that can be summed up in words only ? James found a number of things lacking in this person with this kind of faith. For one thing, there was:

### **1. NO COMMUNION WITH GOD:**

Look at ( 2:19 ) One version says “ So you believe that there is one God ? That’s fine. So do all the devils in hell, and shudder in terror.” It may surprise some of us to discover that demons have faith .... that they believe there is one God.

### **2. NO COMPASSION FOR OTHERS:**

John says ? “ *But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him ?*” ( 1 Jn 3:17 )

James is saying that this person who claims to be a Christian, actually has no proof in his life.

### **3. NO CONVERSION OF SELF:**

“ *Can faith save him ?*” ( 2:14 ) The Amplified Bible puts it like this, “ *Can such faith save his soul ?*”

## **(2) THE CONCEPT THAT IS HEARD**

( 2:18 ) James brings before us an imaginary person who raises an objection. It seems that there is some kind of dialogue going on here.

### **(a) HERE IS THE ARGUMENT:**

“ *Yea a man may say .... and I have works.*” Here’s a conversation between two people both claiming to be Christians. And one says to the other. “ *Well, you see I am a practical Christian.*” *I believe in trying to live up to the Ten Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount. On the other hand you have so much more faith, you’re more concerned with theology and doctrine than I am. But there is no need for us to have an argument. Surely we are both right. “ You have faith and I have works.”*

We’re just different kinds of Christians, that’s all.

### **(b) HERE IS THE ANSWER:**

“ *Show me thy faith without thy works, ( if you can after all faith is invisible ) As for me, I will demonstrate the reality of my faith by my works.*” The Lord Jesus said, “ *By their fruits ye shall know them.*” ( Matt 7:20 ) And James says, “ *I will show you my faith by my works.*” He says, “ *If my faith is called into question by men or the devil then praise God I can point to a changed life, and my life bears out the validity of my claim.*”

## **3. THE CONCLUSION THAT IS DRAWN**

( 2:17 ) Now its vitally important to notice that James does not say, “ *Faith is dead without works,*” that is until works are added. Its not the addition of works that brings faith into life. What James says is that if people claim to have faith and yet have no good works then *THAT* faith is not saving faith.

**(a) NO CONFLICT HERE:**

Paul said, “ *a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.*” ( Rom 3:28 ) But Paul also spoke of those “ *who profess that they know God, but in works they deny Him.*” ( Titus 1:6 ) James’s great theme is that nobody can prove their salvation except by the works of love.

**(b) NO CONFUSION HERE:**

You can’t have one without the other. He says, “ *Even so faith, if it hath not works is dead being alone.*” ( 2:17 ) That word “ *alone,*” simply means “ *by itself.*”

“ *it is faith alone that justifies, but faith that justifies can never be alone.*”

Someone said that salvation is like the measles. If you have it, it will pop out on you. Faith just like calories cannot be seen, but you can always see the results. Lawyers and judges are quick to tell us that in a trial they cannot deal with hearsay. They look for evidence, hard cold facts.

James says faith and works go hand in hand. You can’t have one with the other. He says, if you say you are saved why doesn’t your life show it ?

That’s a penetrating question.

## STUDY # 8

## JAMES

### James 3:1-12 / THE TEACHER AND HIS TONGUE

The *Tongue* ! What study in contrasts ! Medically, they say its only a two or three inch slab of muscle, mucous, and membrane, and nerves that enable us to chew, taste and swallow. How helpful ! Its also the major organ of communication that enable us to articulate distinct sounds so that we can understand each other. How essential ! Without the tongue no mother could sing her baby to sleep at night. No ambassador could adequately represent his nation. No teacher could stretch the minds of his students. No pastor could comfort troubled souls. No officer could lead his fighting men in battle. Without the tongue our world would be reduced to unintelligible grunts and sounds. Seldom do we ever pause and realise just how Valuable this strange muscle in our mouths really is ! But then the Tongue is as Volatile as it is Vital.. It was Washington Irving who said, " *A sharp tongue is the only edge tool that grows keener with constant use.*" But it was James who said, " *the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity.*" ( 3:6 ) The tongue has killed more friendships, ruined more reputations, wrecked more homes, split more churches, and driven more men out of the ministry and caused more division among brethren than other one thing known. Concealed as a sniper, quick as a bullet, and deadly as a gun, is this three inch animal that lives in a pool of saliva behind an ivory cage of teeth.

There are few sins that more frequently and glaringly blacken our faith than the " *sins of the tongue.*" In this opening verse James is dealing with the Teacher and his Tongue. James begins by issuing:

#### (1) A REBUKE

Apparently everyone in the church wanted to teach and be a spiritual leader, for James had to warn them. He says, " *my brethren, be not many masters,*" ( 3:1 ) Or as the Amplified Bible puts it, " *Not many of you should become teachers, self-constituted censors and reprovers of others.*" The original word used here for " *masters,*" comes from the verb " *to teach.*" This particular word " *masters,*" is used many times in the Bible.

The word " *doctors,*" and " *masters,*" are the same word.

The apostles and prophets belonged to the *Foundational Ministry of the Church,* The evangelists and pastor/teachers belonged *to the Fundamental Ministry of the Church.*

" *And He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists and some pastors and teachers.*" ( Eph 4:11 ) Or if you like " *And some pastor/teachers.*" ( 1 Cor 12:28 ) And their responsibility was to instruct and edify. James is issuing a warning against:

#### (a) CARNAL AMBITION:

Paul speaks to Timothy about those " *desiring to be teachers of the law,*

*understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.” ( 1 Tim 1:7 )*

In spite of their ignorance and spiritual immaturity they wanted to be teachers.

Carnal Ambition ! Andrew McNabb says, “ There are two things we must avoid in relation to all of this. The first is:

### **1. SLOTHFULNESS:**

James does not say, “ *Be not any teachers.*” ( 3:1 ) There is a tremendous need in the church today for sound teachers of the Word of God. For those who will “ *give themselves to prayer and to the ministry of the Word.*” ( Acts 6:4 )

Paul said, “ *Neglect not the gift that is in thee .... Stir up the gift which is in thee.*” ( 1 Tim 4:14 2 Tim 1:6 )

We must avoid slothfulness, and we must avoid:

### **2. POLITICS:**

To be chairman of this, president of that, leader of the other.

If there is one thing worse than social climbing in the world, it is ecclesiastical climbing in the church.

Those who “ *love to have the pre-eminence ?*” ( 3 John 9 )

“ *Not many of you should become teachers,*”

### **(b) A CRITICAL ATTITUDE:**

For we can take the word “ *master,*” here to mean “ *reprover.*” Here is a word to those who are in a position of leadership. Sometimes those in leadership regard themselves as superior and become critical, arrogant and proud. Self-assumed authority soon leads to a critical attitude of others. Now there are two Biblical antidotes to this sort of thing. The first is this:

### **1. Remember the MASTER:**

The Saviour Himself said, “ *the servant is not greater than his Lord.*” ( Jn 15:20 )

He came “ *not to be ministered unto but to minister.*” ( Mk 10:45 )

Remember the Master and also:

### **2. Remember the MINISTRY:**

Preaching, teaching, serving as chairman of this and president of that, are all ministries. The root meaning of ministry is “ *To serve.*” To be a servant of others and not the promoter of self. That’s why Peter writes to the elders and says, “ *Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint but willingly, not for filthy lucre but of a ready mind. Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being examples to the flock.*” ( 1 Pet 5:2-3 )

### **(2) A REASON**

Look at ( 3:1 ) “ *For you know that we teachers will be judged by a higher standard and with greater severity than other people.*” Now James is not condemning the teaching ministry. But he is warning against clamouring for the position without carefully weighing the cost. Those who teach the Word of God will be judged more strictly than most. Because they are responsible for teaching truth, God’s truth .... not our own opinions. What they say exerts influence over others. Those who minister the Word are expected to model the truth that they teach. Consider.....

**(a) THE PRINCIPLE THAT IS HERE:**

It’s a very simple one. Great privileges bring great responsibilities. What a privilege to minister the Word from the pulpit, in the Sunday School, among the youth, but those of us who do it will be judged with special strictness. Christ said, “ *For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required.*” ( Lk 12:48 )

One thing is sure, that while all Christians will stand at the Judgement Bema Seat to have their service reviewed, those who have taken the position of ministering will be judged by a more severe standard for special privileges bring special responsibilities. God said to Ezekiel the prophet “ *Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel, therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from Me. When I say unto the wicked, thou shalt surely die and thou gavest him not warning .... His blood will I require at thine hand.*” ( Ezek 3:17-18 ) Then also consider....

**(b) THE PERILS THAT ARE HERE:**

For when you venture into the work of teaching the Word you’re entering into an area where temptations are many and sins are easy. Look at teachers who failed in their responsibility and task throughout the N.T.

There were teachers who tried to add a damnable plus to the Gospel and thus pervert it. ( Acts 15:24 )

There were teachers who taught others but who failed to live out the truth themselves. ( Rom 2:17 )

There were teachers who tried to teach before they themselves knew anything. ( 1 Tim 1:6-7 )

Then there were false teachers who would pander to the desires of the crowd. ( 2 Tim 4:3 )

There’s the danger of vanity, of self-conceit, of intellectual and spiritual pride, there’s the great danger of compromising the doctrines of the faith ! No wonder James says, “ *Not many of should become teachers.*”

**(3) A REALITY**

***“ For in many things we offend all,” ( 3:2 ) or “ For we all often stumble and fall and offend in many things.”*** Now James is not only thinking of teachers here but of all believers. You see, we all stumble in many ways. This is a reason why:

***(a) The Teacher should be marked by HUMILITY:***

You see, there is no room for pride in anyone who ministers the Word, for not one of us have avoided the slips of the tongue. The tongue is the tool of the teacher but so the tongue slips its leash even in the pulpit. Moses was one of God’s great servants but he missed a trip to the Holy Land because he spake *“ unadvisedly with his lips.”* ( Ps 106:33 ) Isaiah got a glimpse of the Holiness of God and he cried, *“ Woe is me .... because I am a man of unclean lips.”* ( Is 6:5 ) *“ sins of the tongue ?”* and then also....

***(b) The Believer should be marked by CHARITY:***

For teachers are not the only ones who are tempted and sin, for every Christian must admit that *“ we all often stumble and fall and offend in many things.”* The sins of the tongue may be near the top of the list! The word that James here means *“ to slip up.”* Supposing you slip up once a day .... there is one thing, one moment, one word, one attitude each day in your life that grieves the Spirit of God. In a week that means 7, in a year 364, in 10 years 3640.

Lets suppose its once an hour.

In a day 24, in a week 168, in a year 8736, in 10 years 87,360.

*“ it is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning, great is Thy faithfulness.”* ( Lam 3:22-23 )

## **BRIDLING THE BEAST IN YOUR BODY**

The Bible says that the tongue frames deceit, ( Ps 50:19 ) it devises destruction, ( Ps 52:2 ) it devours, ( Ps 52:4 ) it is a sharp sword, ( Ps 57:4 ) it breaks bones, ( Pro 25:15 ) it flatters, ( Pro 28:23 ) and it poisons. ( Rom 3:13 )

Bridling the beast in our body is not easy, that’s why we need to heed the words of the psalmist, *“ I said, I will take to heed to my ways that I sin not with my tongue.”* ( Ps 39:1 )

Now if you look at ( 3:2-5 ) you’ll notice that there is:

**(1) AN INFERENCE HERE / The Revelation of a Controlled Tongue**

*“ If any man .... body,” ( 2:2 ) “ if any man offend not in word the same is a perfect man.”*

There are three words that will help us to unlock the truth here. The first word is:

***(a) MYSTERY:***

There seems to be a contradiction and the mystery is this. The Bible commands

us to be perfect and yet there is not a single person in the world who is perfect. Now the Word of God does command us to be perfect. Moses says, “ *Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God.*” ( Deut 18:13 ) \

Jesus said “ *Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.*” ( Matt 5:48 ) You see, every virtue in the Bible is commanded and every vice is condemned. Yet the Bible makes it clear that not a single person in the world is perfect. You see, perfection is the goal that none of us will reach this side of glory. Paul said “ *Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect.*” ( Phil 3:12 ) Now Paul is aiming for the goal, sinless perfection, but he knows he will never reach it this side of heaven. Some well meaning Christians think they are sinless and therefore perfect but Paul did not think so, rather he had a correct lowly estimate of himself.

The closer one gets to the Lord the more conscious he is of the fact that he is falling short of God’s glory.

“ *if any man offend not in word the same is a perfect man.*” And that brings us the second word:

#### **(b) MATURITY:**

The Amplified Bible puts it like this, “ *If any one does not offend in speech .... never says the wrongs things .... he is a fully developed character and a perfect man.*”

The Christians tongue is a spiritual thermometer. The word “ *perfect,*” here could be translated “ *mature.*” James is saying that the tongue is the evidence of and a means to spiritual maturity. The real mark of maturity is not how you control your talent, it is not how you control your time, it is not how you control your treasure but how you control your tongue.

*James is not promoting silence, but he is proposing control.*

#### **(c) MASTERY:**

For James says, “ *if any man .... and able also to bridle the whole body.*” ( 3:2 ) Mastery ! Control of our faculties. Now James is not saying that such a perfect man exists. He is simply saying that if a man really is able to control his tongue, then he is able to control every other part of his body, because the tongue is the most difficult part of all to control.

Peter says of the Lord Jesus, “ *who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth.*” ( 1 Pet 2:22 )

Someone has said that our bodies can be a wonderful servant but a terrible master. Many are controlled by what the flesh desires. But a mature Christian is involved in controlling self and selfish desires.

#### **(2) AN ILLUSTRATION HERE**

James is a master illustrator and in order to drive home his point he brings before us here two pictures. That of.....

**(a) A HORSE CONTROLLED BY REINS:**

Look at ( 3:3 ) With a length of rope or a few strips of leather, and a small piece of metal in a horse's mouth, the rider controls the horse's whole body. James's point is that something small can have a big influence. The bit is used for the benefit of the rider and not for the horse.

**(b) A SHIP CONTROLLED BY A RUDDER:**

Look at ( 3:4 ) From the horse and the bit think of a people needing enlightenment. Then think of A people needing encouragement. So many people are battling across life's ocean often "driven of fierce winds," wave after wave of misfortune breaking over them, sometimes not knowing where to find a haven of peace. Believers who need a word of comfort, a word of cheer, of counsel ! And just as these remind us of those in need of enlightenment and encouragement; may this also remind us that we are God's spokespeople of today. And just as the bit is used to benefit the rider, so the rudder is used in a way to benefit the pilot of the ship. Likewise the tongue is a small member but should be used in a manner that is beneficial and not harmful.

**(3) AN INFLUENCE HERE**

For James says, " *Even so the tongue is a little member and boasteth great things,*" ( 3:5 ) That is to say, like the bit for the horse, like the rudder for the ship, the tongue is little in relation to the body but in spite of its smallness the tongue achieves great results. Its power and influence are enormous. You see,

**(a) The Influence of the Tongue can be BAD:**

James says in verse 5 "*behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth*"

A controlled tongue can bring much help but a corrupt tongue can bring much hurt. { Verse # 6 }

The Bible makes that crystal clear. "*Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs like a sharp razor working deceitfully.*" ( Ps 52:2 )

" *Violence covereth the mouth of the wicked,*" ( Pro 10:11 )

" *Grievous words stir up anger,*" ( Pro 15:1 )

The tongue can pollute.

The tongue can poison.

The tongue is a slitter of throats, a divider of families, a breaker of friendships, a creator of violence. The tongue can grieve the Holy Spirit, destroy reputations, spread distrust and hate, bring nations to the brink of war and split fellowships of God's people in two !

**(b) The Influence of the Tongue can be GOOD:**

Proverbs says “ *The mouth of the righteous is a well of life,*” ( 10:11 ) How true that is.

Who can measure the goodness and blessing that has poured from the lips of God’s people over the years ? How much blessing the tongue has been the instrument of bringing, love, comfort, encouragement and inspiration.

The tongues of God’s people have been used to Rebuke Error:

The tongues of God’s people have been used to Reach Souls:

Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost and 3,000 souls came to faith in Christ. On the 21<sup>st</sup> April 1855 Edward Kimball went into a Boston shoe store and led D. L. Moody to Christ. One of history’s greatest evangelists, a man whose ministry still continues to this very day.

*(c) The Influence of the Tongue can be ABIDING:*

This is why we find in James not only the Revelation of a Controlled Tongue  
And The Results of a Corrupt Tongue

But also James speaks about The Rebuke of a Contradictory Tongue V 9 – 10

This should make us aware of the need to control our tongue because

The Influence of the Tongue can be Abiding.....

Think about

{1} The Inconsistent use of the tongue V 9 – 10

A story is told about Winston Churchill and a lady named Lady Astor. They both dislike each other. On one occasion they were seated by each other at a social event. Lady Astor said “Sir, if you were my husband, I would put poison in your coffee” Churchill replied “Lady if you were my wife, I would gladly drink it”

There is probably a little of both these people in some of us at certain times.

{2} An Improper use of the tongue V 10

James comes back to the beginning of where he started

A mature person will work to control his tongue...

They will not bless God one moment and curse others the next.

We should not be one way one minute and another way the next.

O’ How we need to seek God’s help in control of our tongue!

## STUDY # 9

James 3:5-12

### A SUBJECT THAT IS IN EVERYBODY'S MOUTH

Indeed we all have to confess that this beast in our body has often slipped its leash and “*grieved the Spirit of God.*” ( Eph 4:30 ) Now one way how to judge how important a Biblical subject is, is to discover how frequently it is mentioned in the Scriptures. James mentions the tongue in every chapter of this epistle. But it's right in the middle of this letter that he deals with this subject most comprehensively.

In ( 3:1-2 ) he deals with the *Teacher and his Tongue,*

in ( 3:2-5 ) he deals with the *Potential of the Tongue for Good,* and now in

( 3:5-8 ) he deals with *the Potential of the Tongue for Evil.*

Notice that James tells us here three things about the tongue.

#### (1) THE TONGUE IS UNDERESTIMATED

That is, we underestimate the power of the tongue for evil. We underestimate what Matthew Henry calls, “*the sins of the tongue.*”

Now believers may underestimate the power of the tongue for evil, but God doesn't, for here is something that God wants us to be concerned about.

( Ps 15:2,3 34:13 ) Now notice that James illustrates the power of the tongue for evil by telling us that the tongue has:

##### (a) *THE POWER TO DESTROY:*

The Amplified Bible puts it like this, “*See how much wood or how great a forest a tiny spark can set ablaze.*”

And James adds, “*And the tongue is a fire.*” Think about the great Chicago fire of 1871. The fire reportedly began when a cow kicked over a lantern in Mrs. O'Leary's barn. The fire that started in O'Leary's barn turned into one of the most terrible disasters in the history of the United States. The blaze started on a warm, dry Sunday evening and at first the O'Leary's and their neighbours tried to put it out by themselves. But after about ten minutes had gone by, one of the neighbours ran for the nearest alarm box, and called the fire department. It took several more minutes for the horse drawn fire equipment to arrive, and by then a swift wind had begun to blow, causing the fire to spread. The damage was unbelievable. More than 300 people lost their lives, and 18,000 buildings worth about \$200 million were destroyed. One whole section of the city, four miles long and a mile wide was completely flattened.

Proverbs says, “*Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out, so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth. As coals are to burning coals and wood to fire, so is a contentious man to kindle strife. The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.*” ( 26:20-22 )

In some churches there are some folk who can never control their tongues.

The result is Destruction !

Let them change their address, or be replaced in office and a beautiful spirit of peace and love takes over. A word dropped at one end of the country or town can end up bringing grief, damage, heartache at the other. You can drop a malicious word, repeat a slanderous, untrue story about someone that you don't know, about someone who lives thousands of miles away, which will cause untold damage and harm. You see, the very range of the tongue is one of its perils. ( Ps 52:2 Pro 18:18 ) That little word, Mean, envious, harsh, untrue is a fire that has disrupted more churches, destroyed more friendships and dug more graves than anything else. Who can begin to measure the hurt caused by one spark from a tongue burning with anger ?

**(b) THE POWER TO DECEIVE:**

Look at ( 3:8 ) or “ *full of death-bringing poison.*” Here James echoes the psalmist who speaks of people “ *with adders poison under their lips.*” (Ps 140:3 Pro 18:21 ) You know certain kinds of poison work slowly and secretly until they kill. The tongue is just like that. When a few poisonous words are injected into a conversation, they slowly and secretly create havoc and destruction. Like a serpents poison, the venom of an untamed tongue can kill reputations that have been years in the making. You see, you don't have to make a long speech, just drop a word and mischief is set afoot. A peace has been ruined, a reputation has been blackened, a fellowship has been embittered and a life has been blasted.

**(2) THE TONGUE IS UNRIGHTEOUS**

“ *A world of iniquity,*” ( 3:6 ) Or “ *a world of wickedness set among our members.*” The word “ *world,*” here is the Greek word “ *cosmos,*” which nearly always in the N.T. means the whole world order of things in opposition to God. ( 1 Jn 5:17 ) James is saying that all the evil that the Bible associates with the world estranged from God is focused in and finds expression through the tongue. Boastful pride, destructive anger, cutting bitterness, flattering lust .... the tongue communicates them all.

Indeed James tells us that an evil tongue:

**(A) STAINS:**

( 3:6 ) ? The word “ *defile,*” comes from a word meaning “ *to make a stain.*” The Saviour said “ *But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies .... these are the things which defile a man.*” ( Matt 15:18-20 ) Did you notice how many of those things involve the tongue ? You see, just as no man can isolate himself from society, neither can he isolate one part of his body from the rest. You can't say, “ *Well, I know that I have an unsanctified tongue but the rest of me is fine.*” No ! There is a spread, a stain, a seeping pollution that comes out from the tongue into every part of our body. Just as a rotten apple in a basket of good

ones contaminates the rest, so you find that a contaminated tongue has an effect on the parts of our body and personality. This is why the Bible commands us, “*do not allow your mouth to cause your body to sin.*” ( Eccl 5:6 ) An evil tongue stains !

**(b) STAYS:**

For “*it setteth on fire the course of nature.*” ( 3:6 ) The word “*course*” means “*wheel.*” The wheel was the ancient symbol of the cycle of life, something that rolled on and on and James may be saying here that the tongue sets on fire the whole cycle of life from beginning to end.

James is talking about evil tongue and he says it stains, it stays and it is:

**(c) SATANIC:**

“*And it is set on fire of hell,*” ( 3:6 ) Or as the Amplified puts it, “*being itself ignited by hell ( Gehenna )*” The Lord Jesus is the only other person than James to use this particular word for hell. Gehenna refers to the valley of Hinnom just outside the city of Jerusalem where the refuse of the city was burned. At one time this valley was the home office of the idol god Molech. His arms were heated white hot and little children were thrown into them as part of a heathen sacrifice.

( 2 Kings 23:10 ) Eventually this valley became a garbage dump where the refuse of Jerusalem was burned. It was known as *the Gehenna of Fire* and as approached that valley you would always see those ever-burning flames

The fire that:

**1. Comes Down from Heaven Mobilises the Tongue for God:**

On the Day of Pentecost as the disciples waited for the promise of the Father, cloven tongues like as of fire appeared unto them and sat on each of them, “*and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost,*” ( Acts 2:3-4 ) The result was that they spoke as they had never spoken before. A tongue set on fire from above speaks of a rule from above. Such a tongue can be a mighty tool for the winning of the lost and the establishing of the church.

**2. Comes Up from Hell Mobilises the Tongue for Satan:**

There is a fire that rises from the very pit of hell to kindle within us all that Satan desires. There was an occasion when Peter used his tongue for Satan. The Saviour was speaking about going to the Cross and Peter sought to dissuade him. But Christ said unto Peter, “*Get thee behind me Satan.*” ( Matt 16:23 ) When you and I engage in character assassination, scandal, untruths, at that moment our tongue is being “*set on fire of hell,*” and it’s got the very smell of hell upon it. Now remember James is underlining the potential of the tongue for evil here.

**(3) THE TONGUE IS UNRULY**

Look at ( 3:8 ) The word “ *unruly*,” could be translated “ *unsettled, unstable, disorderly*,” or as J. B. Philips renders it “ *always liable to break out*.”

**(a) IN ( 3:7 ) WE HAVE A FACT:**  
“ *For every kind of beasts .....*,” ( 3:7 )

**(b) IN ( 3:8 ) WE HAVE A FAILURE:**

“ *But the tongue can no man tame.*” Man can tame a tiger but not the tongue. We can train falcons to land on our wrists, pigeons to carry our messages, dogs to fetch the paper.

Sir Winston Churchill once said, “ *the power of man has grown in every sphere except over himself.*” We can send a man to the moon and bring him back again and forecast the landing point within yards and seconds. But you cannot tell where the tongue will travel, where its words are going to land and where its influence is going to stop. It’s always “ *liable to break out.*” Not one of us can say, “ *I am now in perfect control of my tongue, it will never let me down again, never would anyone, never slander again, never grieve the Holy Spirit again.*” It’s always liable to break out.

“ *I have often regretted my speech, never my silence.*”  
James says, “ *the tongue can no man tame.*” But I know someone who can. The Lord. ( Mk 7:35 ) For “ *the things that are impossible with man are possible with God.*” You see, there is:

**1. A CONTROL WE MUST SEEK:**

We must be daily filled and controlled by the Holy Spirit and He will assume control of our tongue.

**2. AN EXAMPLE WE MUST FOLLOW:**

They “ *wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth.*” ( Lk 4:22 Jn 7:46 ) We need the desire for a controlled tongue.

**3. A PRAYER WE MUST PRAY:**

A request that should become one of our regular morning petitions, “ *Set a watch O Lord, before my mouth, keep the door of my lips.*” ( Ps 141:3 19:14 )

**A FORKED TONGUE**

The Indians used the term a *Forked Tongue* to describe conflicting, deceptive speech. Here in ( 3:9-12 ) James is dealing with the same issue. He is speaking about a Forked Tongue. They were having problems with their tongues.

In ( 3:1-2 ) James deals with the Teacher and his Tongue,  
in ( 3:2-5 ) he deals with the Potential of the Tongue for Good,  
in ( 3:5-8 ) he deals with the Potential of the Tongue for Evil,

and now he concludes his teaching on the tongue by speaking about a Forked Tongue.

Jesus says the real problem is not even the tongue “ *But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart and they defile the man.*”  
( Matt 15:18 )

You see, the tongue is neither friend or foe. It’s merely a messenger that delivers the dictates of a sick heart. ( Acts 8:21 )

“ *It is vain to attempt to tame the tongue until the heart has been subdued.*”  
Christ said, “ *Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.*”

( Matt 12:34 ) What is dearest to the heart, will be nearest to the lips. What you are in the well of your heart, will come up in the bucket of your speech. Our tongues are good barometers of what is really in our hearts. Now in order to grasp what James is really getting at here notice:

### **(1) THE ACTIVITY THAT JAMES DESCRIBES**

Look at ( 3:9 ) or as the Amplified puts it, “ *With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse men who were made in God’s likeness.*” Our tongues are active. James tells us here that we use them in two different ways. He speaks about:

#### **(a) THE RIGHT USE OF THE TONGUE:**

“ *Therewith bless we God, even the Father,*” ( 3:9 ) Now there may be an allusion here to the custom that existed among the Jews, for whenever the name of God was mentioned, a Jew would respond, “ *Blessed be He.*” Jewish daily prayers always began with the words, “ *Blessed be Thou O God.*”

Martin Luther said, “ *The only thing that we can give God that He does not already possess is praise.*”

#### **(b) THE WRONG USE OF THE TONGUE:**

“ *With it we curse men who were made in God’s likeness,*” Now the word “ *curse,*” here does not mean that we literally call down a curse on men. But rather that we are angry, bitter, callous, critical, we use unkind words about our fellow “ *men who were made in God’s likeness.*” You see, man is not merely superior to animals. He is in a unique relationship to God. The human race is the only part of God’s creation which bears His image and is capable of rebirth and restoration into His likeness. ( Gen 1:26-27, 9:6 ) Paul says the believer is someone who has “ *put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him.*” ( Col 3:10 Eph 4:24 ) You see, God is protective of His new creatures and that is why we need to be careful about what we say about fellow-Christians, for they are created after God’s image, choice pieces whom God hath

restored out of the common ruins.

On the one hand we bless the Lord, on the other we speak evil of our fellow Christian who bears God's likeness.

## **(2) THE INCONSISTENCY THAT JAMES DENOUNCES**

Look at ( 3:10 ) The tongue is so helpful yet so inconsistent. This inconsistency was:

### **(a) CERTAINLY PRACTICED:**

*“ Out of the same mouth,”* ( 3:10 ) James is not talking about something that could happen, but rather about something that was happening. Even out of the mouths of the disciples came forth *“ blessing and cursing.”* ( 3:10

We have all done it and this the very thing that James is condemning. *“ My brethren, these things ought not so to be.”* ( 3:10 ) Also this inconsistency was

### **(b) VIVIDLY PORTRAYED:**

( 3:11 ) ? *“ Does a fountain send forth simultaneously from the same opening fresh water and bitter ?”* Now in the Middle East natural springs were very common. Some were salt springs and some were fresh springs, but none of them were both. Inconsistency is impossible in the natural world yet we practise it in the spiritual world.

We not only do things that are contrary to the laws of grace we do things that are contrary to the laws of nature. *“ If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.”* ( Matt 5:23-24 )

It was also

### **(c) GRACIOUSLY PROHIBITED:**

*“ My brethren .... to be,”* ( 3:10 ) And over every *“ ought not,”* of Scripture you may write, *“ need not,”* and over that again you may put *“ shall not.”* There is never any need to do what we ought not to do because we have the enabling Holy Spirit. The word *“ ought,”* denotes *“ fitness,”* and the thought is that it is abnormal and unnatural for us to bless and praise God and yet speak evil of the members of God's family.

## **(3) THE REMEDY THAT JAMES DISCLOSES**

You see, as James winds up his teaching on the tongue he hints at a cure for the tongue. Look at ( 3:12 ) Notice that there is:

### **(a) A PRINCIPLE HERE:**

***“ Can the fig tree my brethren bear olive berries ?” ( 3:12 )*** Of course the answer is no. The principle is simply this. Like produces like. It’s a law of nature that as the root so will be the fruit. The fig tree will not yield olives, the grape vines will not produce figs, for like always produces like. You see, James is returning here to a point that he has made at the beginning of ( Ch 3 ) namely that there is a close connection between the tongue and the heart. Do you remember what the Lord Jesus said ? ***“ Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.”*** ( Matt 12:34 ) James is saying that evil speech can only emanate from an evil heart. Also there is

***(b) A SOLUTION HERE:***

There is a remedy for a forked tongue.

Someone once said that one of the most challenging sermons he had ever heard was called “ Ten Minutes after the Benediction.” It spoke of those who moved from Creed to Criticism, from Praising God to Wounding Men.

***“ Surely thou also art one of them, for thy speech betrayeth thee.” ( Matt 26:73 )*** Peter was recognised as one of the Saviour’s disciples by the test of the tongue. May the prayer of the psalmist be often on our hearts, ***“ Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer.” ( Ps 19:14 )***

**STUDY # 10            JAMES**  
**James 3:13-18 / Second Reference to WISDOM**

Today knowledge is exploding. The computer age continues to advance at such a pace that technology is outdated with each passing month. But in the midst of this explosion of knowledge, wisdom is practically nonexistent. Many peoples lives are in shambles. Position, power, and prosperity have not brought peace and purpose. Suicides and divorce rates are astronomical. In our modern world, where so many homes are disintegrating, so many hopes are smashed, and so many dreams are dashed, we need wisdom above all else. Now there is a difference between knowledge and wisdom.

**(1) A CONTRAST IN SOURCES.....**

True wisdom comes from above, but false wisdom comes from below.  
James says:

**(a) FALSE WISDOM COMES FROM BELOW:**

The Christian has three enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil. ( Eph 2:1-3 )  
These enemies are suggested by the terms, “ *earthly, sensual and devilish.*”  
( 3:15 ) You see, the wisdom of the world does not come from God rather:

**1. It Originates in the SECULAR:**

James says, it is “ *earthly.*” ( 3:15 )

**2. It Originates in the SENSUAL:**

The Amplified Bible translates the word as “ *unspiritual.*”

**3. It Originates in the SATANIC:**

For it is “ *devilish,*” or “ *demonic.*”

**(b) TRUE WISDOM COMES FROM ABOVE:**

The word “ *but,*” in ( 3:17 ) ? Its not there by accident. James wants us to contrast the wisdom of the world with the wisdom of the Lord.

**(2) A CONTRAST IN SYMPTOMS**

James is still contrasting true wisdom and false wisdom.

**(a) What are the MARKS of FALSE WISDOM ?**

**ENVY:** do you see ( 3:14 ) ? It means “ *selfish ambition and zeal*  
**STRIFE:** ( 3:14 ) The Amplified Bible uses, “ *contention rivalry, selfish ambition.*”  
**BOASTING:** ( 3:14 ) Pride loves to boast  
**DECEIT:** “ *lie not against the truth.*” ( 3:14 )

(b) *What are the MARKS of TRUE WISDOM ?*

1. **MEEKNESS:** ( 3:13 ) The Greek word was used for a horse that had been broken so that his power was under control. Meekness is the right use of power.
2. **PURITY:** ( 3:17 ) The idea behind this word is “ *chaste, free from defilement.*”
3. **PEACE:** or “ *Peace-loving.*” Some believers seem to be determined to prove that they belong to the church militant by constantly fighting each other.
4. **GENTLENESS:** ( 3:17 ) “ *willing to make allowances.*” To be gentle means to see the best in the worst of people.
5. **COMPLIANT:** “ *Easy to be entreated,*” or as the Amplified puts it “ *willing to yield to reason.*”
6. **COMPASSIONATE:** “ *full of mercy,*” ( 3:17 ) or “ *full of compassion.*”  
“ *it is the great fault of some that when they begin to be religious they cease to be human.*”
7. **FRUITFULNESS:** “ *and good fruits,*” or “ *kind actions.*”
8. **IMPARTIALITY:** “ *without partiality,*”
9. **SINCERITY:** “ *without hypocrisy,*” ( 3:17 ). It literally means “ *one who wears a mask, an actor.*”

### (3) A CONTRAST IN SEQUELS

Origin determines outcome. Worldly wisdom will produce worldly results, spiritual wisdom will give spiritual results.

(a) *Wisdom from HELL produces TROUBLE:*

Envy, strife, confusion and evil works. The word “ *confusion,*” could be “ *discord among brethren.*” God is “ *not the author of confusion, but of peace.*” ( 1 Cor 14:33 ) The word “ *evil,*” here means “ *worthless, of no account,*”

(b) *Wisdom from HEAVEN produces BLESSING:*

“ *And the fruit of righteousness .... peace,*” ( 3:18 ) Or  
Almost anyone can gain knowledge but only those who seek God can gain true wisdom. “ *Wisdom is the principal thing therefore get wisdom.*” ( Pro 4:7 )

### HOW TO CONQUER CONFLICT IN THE CHURCH / JAMES 4:.....

“ *From whence come wars and fighting’s among you ?*” ( 4:1 ) That word “ *wars,*” comes from a Greek word meaning “ *an encamped army.*” James is saying “ *Don’t you know there is war on ? Just look around you ! There is a continuous*

*state of war.”*

Jerusalem means, “ *The City of Peace.*” But that was only its name and not its experience.

( Ch 4 ) James is contrasting the ideal ( peace ) with the actual ( war )

“ How to Conquer Conflict in the Church.”

(1) A CONDITION THAT IS SERIOUS / Division caused by Lusts

“ *What leads to strife and how do conflicts originate among you ?*” Among Christians ! “ *Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.*”

The members of the Corinthian church were suing each other ( 1 Cor 6:1 )

The Galatians were “ *biting and devouring one another.*” ( Gal 5:15 ).

James mentions several different kinds of disagreements among the Christians.

There is The Course of Church Conflict and There is The Source of this Conflict

(a) *THERE WAS SOCIAL RIVALRY:*

That age long rivalry between the rich and the poor. ( Ch 2 )

(b) *THERE WAS ECCLESIASTICAL JEALOUSY:*

Apparently many of these believers to whom James wrote were at war with each other over positions in the church, many of them wanting to be teachers and leaders. That’s why James writes, “ *My brethren be not many teachers.* ( 3:1, 13-18 )

(c) *THERE WAS PERSONAL ENMITY:*

Look at ( 4:11 ) It seems the saints were speaking evil of one another and judging one another. They were engaged in a personal war of words. Their tongues were not under the control of the Spirit of God.

We belong to the same family, we trust the same Saviour, we are indwelt by the same Holy Spirit and yet we fight one another. Why !

(2) A CAUSE THAT IS OBVIOUS / Deprived because of Lusts

There is Unoffered Prayer and also Unanswered Prayer

Look at ( 4:1 ) or “ *Do they not arise from your sensual desires that are ever warring in your bodily members ?*” The war in the heart is helping to cause the wars in the church. We are at war with each other, because we are at war with ourselves. James has already touched upon this when he told us that the two marks of false wisdom are envy ( selfish ambition ) and strife ( a party spirit )

The root of our trouble lies in that phrase “ *your lusts,*” or “ *your desires.*”

It conveys the idea of “ *selfish satisfaction.*”

**(a) THESE DESIRES ARE SELFISH:**

The word “*lusts,*” or “*desires,*” It conveys the idea of immediate, selfish satisfaction. It is this “*I’ll do it my way.*” Or “*I intend to have my way*”  
Selfishness !!

**(b) THESE DESIRES ARE PERSISTENT:**

James says, “*your lusts or desires that war.*”  
“*The desires which are always at war within you.*”

**(c) THESE DESIRES ARE INTERNAL:**

“*Your lusts that war in your members,*” James is not talking about the members of the church, but about the members. Or what the Amplified Bible calls “*your bodily members.*” Paul put it like this, “*For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other.*” ( Gal 5:17 ) Now he is not speaking here about a contest between the physical and the spiritual. He is speaking of the conflict between the Christian’s old nature and the Holy Spirit who now dwells within him.

**(3) A CURE THAT IS PRECIOUS / But there is also Displeasure caused by lusts**

How can we conquer the conflicts that so often mar church life ? Well, James says “*Ye have not.*” After all their fighting and bickering, what had they got ? He says, “*Ye have not.*” Why ? Because they neglected the better way. “*Ye ask not.*”  
James says

**(a) WE MUST PRAY:**

“*Ye have not because ye ask not.*” ( 4:2 ) One reason they did not obtain certain things was that they did not pray for them. Of course they may not have prayed for those things because the things they wanted were wrong.

**(b) WE MUST PRAY IN THE RIGHT WAY:**

Look at ( 4:3 ) or “*you ask wrongly.*” OR “*you ask out of place.*”  
“*We miss when we ask amiss.*” It’s not so much a matter of asking for the wrong things, as of asking in the wrong way. There are clear conditions for answered prayer and the overruling one is this, “*And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will He heareth us.*” ( 1 Jn 5:14 ) “*prayer is never for the purpose of getting our will done in heaven, but for the purpose of getting God’s will done on earth.*”

We need more than bent knees and closed eyes. We need an open, broken, humble, dependent, thirsting, believing heart. And we need the desire that in our

prayers God's will shall come first.

**(c) WE MUST PRAY IN THE RIGHT WAY FOR THE RIGHT REASON:**

You see, the point shifts here from how they prayed, to why they prayed. The Amplified Bible says, “ *You ask with wrong purpose and evil, selfish motives. Your intention is, when you get what you desire to spend it in sensual pleasure.*”

May we all pray “ *Not my will but thine be done.*” ( Lk 22:42

**James 4:1 – 5    WORLDLINESS**

It has been well said that the first call from God to a person is this question “ Heaven or Hell ?”

But once a person he wants to go to Heaven, a second question surfaces.

“ Heaven or Earth ?” As Christians we have to decide which world we are going to live for. It's tragically possible for a person to have a saved soul and a lost life, to see one's whole life as a Christian go up in smoke as “ *wood, hay, and stubble,*” at the Judgement Seat of Christ. ( 1 Cor 3:15 ) To be saved, but “ *so as by fire.*” So which world are we going to live for ? “ *Heaven or Earth ?*”

The Greek word translated “ *world,*” is “ *cosmos,*” which means “ *a human society apart from God.*” It refers to the invisible spiritual system of evil. The whole system of things in this society of ours is Anti-Christ and Anti-God. So its very easy for us as believers to become like the Christians to whom James was writing. People who in their thinking, their speaking, their attitudes, their standards, their scheming, their selfish ambition revealed their affection for the world and their likeness to the world. When James uses this phrase he just means “ *society without God.*”

There is The Friendship That God does not approve and  
The Fellowship That God does not allow –

**(1) THE DANGER OF WORLDLINESS**

Someone has said “ *I have learned to call nothing lovely in this lost and sinful world.*” But that is not James's point of view. This material world, is the creation of God and we can rejoice in the beauty of it. James is thinking of society apart from God, people who live for this world and think little of the next world. Now the world system is committed to at least four major objectives.

**1. Fortune**

Money, the world system is driven by money, it thrives on materialism.

**2. Fame**

Another word for popularity. Fame is the longing to be known; to be somebody in someone else's eyes.

**3. Power**

That is having influence, maintaining control over individuals, groups, companies, whatever.

#### **4. Pleasure**

There is “*the friendship of the world,*” ( 4:4 ) this results in being “*spotted,*” by the world, so that areas in our lives meet with the approval of the world. ( 1:27 ) Friendship leads to “*loving the world,*” ( 1 Jn 2:15 ) and this makes it easy “*to conform to the world.*” ( Rom 12:2 )

The sad result of it all is being “*condemned with the world,*” ( 1 Cor 11:32 ) our souls saved “*yet so as by fire.*” ( 1 Cor 3:11-15 )

#### **(a) IN THE LIGHT OF SCRIPTURE:**

Paul said, “*Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.*” ( Rom 12:2 )

John says ? “*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*” ( 1 Jn 2:15 )

Christ as He prays to His Father in ( Jn 17:16 ) said “*They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*”

#### **(b) IN THE LIVES OF SAINTS:**

##### **1. Think of Lot in the Old Testament:**

“*he pitched his tent toward Sodom.*” ( Gen 13:12 ) “*Dwelt in Sodom,*” and “*sat in the gate of Sodom.*” ( Gen 14:12, 19:1 ) He so identified himself with the ways of Sodom that whenever he eventually tried to speak about the things of the Lord to his family, he seemed as one who mocked. Now Lot became an Alderman, he was a V.I.P. in Sodom.

He may have said, “*If old Abraham wants to live in tents, let him do it, I’ve got it made here in Sodom.*” \

##### **2. Think of Demas in the New Testament:**

Paul says of him “*Demas hath forsaken me having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica.*” ( 2 Tim 4:10 ) He had no intention in ceasing to be a Christian, all he wanted was that he should no longer be an out and out Christian. What was it that enticed Demas back into the world ?

#### **(2) THE DESCRIPTION OF WORLDLINESS**

James gives us a three fold description of what worldliness is all about. He says

##### **(a) IT IS ADULTERY:**

Look at ( 4:4 ) The Amplified Bible says, “*You are like unfaithful wives having illicit love affairs with the world and breaking your marriage vows to God.*”

**AND “ For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy, for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.” ( 2 Cor 11:2 )  
It is loving someone or something else more than the Lord Himself. ( Rom 7:4 )  
Having become friends with the world have we jumped into bed with other gods ?  
The god of materialism ? The god of popularity ? The god of pleasure !**

**(b) IT IS ANTAGONISM:**

**“ Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God ?” ( 4:4 )**

**Paul says, “ the carnal mind is enmity against God .... they are in the flesh cannot please God.” ( Rom 8:7-8 ) You can please yourself, you can please the church, you can please the world, but you cannot please God, because your mind is hostile to God. And we were once like that. ( Col 1:21 )**

**Christ said, “ No man can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.” ( Matt 6:24 ) We are either a conformer or a transformer ?**

**A conformer is controlled by the pressures from without, a transformer is controlled by the power from within.**

**(c) IT IS AUDACITY:**

**( 4:5 ) ! Now it may well be that this phrase refers to what comes before rather than to what comes after.**

**“ Do you think that the Scriptures speak in an empty way, when they speak about spiritual adultery and enmity against God.” ( Eph 5:14 ) There may be a link between two phrases here. “ Know ye not,” ( 4:4 ) and “ do ye think.” They knew what the Scriptures said but they were taking a chance on God’s grace and goodness, or may be they were letting the Word of God go no further than their heads.**

**(3) THE DEFEAT OF WORLDLINESS**

**John says, “ this is the victory .... our faith.” ( 1 Jn 5:4 ) James says, “ the spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy.” Now this is one of the most difficult phrases in the whole of this letter. “ the Spirit whom He caused to dwell in us yearns over us .... with a jealous love.” How can we defeat worldliness in our lives ?**

**(a) REMEMBER GOD DOES INDWELL US:**

**“ the Spirit Whom He has caused to dwell in us.”**

**(b) REMEMBER GOD DOES IMPLORE US:**

**“ The Spirit whom He has caused to dwell in us, jealously yearns for the entire devotion of the heart.”**



**“ God resisteth the proud.”** How does God resist the proud ? Well,

**(a) GOD GIVES THEM UP:**

When Christ was questioned by Herod / We read this, **“ Then he questioned Him in many words, But He answered Him nothing.”** ( Lk 23:8-9 ) Paul said

**“ God also gave them up,”** ( Rom 1:24 ) **“ God gave them up,”** ( 1:26 ) **“ God gave them over.”** ( 1:28 )

**(b) GOD BRINGS THEM DOWN**

King Uzziah ( 2 Chron 26:5 ) A story of success, prosperity, until he allowed pride to overcome him. We read, **“ But when he was strong his heart was lifted up to his destruction, for he transgressed against the Lord His God and went into the temple of the Lord to burn incense upon the altar of incense.”**

**(c) GOD TAKES THEM AWAY:**

Belshazzar was another king, magnificence in his splendour and obscene in his arrogance. Daniel reminded him that although his father Nebuchadnezzar had been a mighty man, **“ when his heart was lifted up and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne and they took his glory from him.”** ( Dan 5:20 ) But even this was not a deterrent to Belshazzar. He went on his pride but for him literally the writing was on the wall, and in the midst of his revelling he was violently put to death.

**“ For though the Lord be high, yet hath He respect unto the lowly, but the proud He knoweth afar off.”** ( Ps 138:6 )

**(3) THE HUMBLE GOD ALWAYS REWARDS / The Cleansing God Demands**

James says **“ God resisteth .... grace unto the humble.”** It's not enough for James to tell us about the abundance of grace ( 4:6 ) he tells how to obtain it, it's God's gift to the humble.

**(a) DECISIVENESS:**

Two things are brought together in ( 4:7 ) The word **“ submit,”** means **“ to take rank under.”** It was a military term speaking of someone getting into his proper rank.

That word **“ resist,”** means **“ to take a stand against.”** In many cases we have submitted to the Devil and resisted God.

**(b) NEARNESS:**

Look at the Command, **“ draw nigh to God,”** look at the Promise, **“ And He will draw nigh to you.”**

**(c) CLEANLINESS:**

There is to be a cleansing of our hands and a purifying of our hearts. The word “*cleanse*,” means “*to wash*,” it’s the word that was used to describe the ceremonial cleansing of the priests.

This is not the work of *the Holy Spirit* but *the work of the energised believer*. “*Cleanse your hands .... purify your hearts*,” “*double minded*,” means “a divided heart.” Its you trying to hold on to the world with one hand and the things of God with the other.

**(d) BROKENNESS:**

The word “*afflicted*,” speaks of an inward feeling of misery when we sin. ( Rom 7:24 ) “*mourn*,” speaks of the sadness our sin should cause and “*weep*,” speaks of tears that reveals our sadness. One word sums it up ! *Brokenness* ! A deep sense of sorrow at our own personal sin.

**THE ACTION WE MUST TAKE AND THE ATTITUDE WE MUST HAVE**

**PLAYING GOD**

James was writing to people who were having problems with their tongues. James mentions the subject in every chapter

In 1:19 “*Wherefore my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to wrath.*”

In 2:12 he warns them, “*So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.*”

In Chapter 3: he deals exclusively with the use of the tongue

( 4:11-12 ) he warns his readers yet again of the great dangers involved in sins of speech.

As we look at this subject of “*Playing God*,” there are two things to notice.....

**(1) A SIN THAT IS PREVALENT / Gossip – A behavior in that we are disparaging**

Someone has said “*Censuring is a pleasing sin, extremely complaint with nature.*” Censuring, fault finding, bitterness, slander come so quickly to mind and to mouth. James says, “*Speak not evil .... brethren.*” Consider

**(a) THE MEANING OF IT:**

Christians need to have discernment. ( Phil 1:9-10 ) The words “*speak not evil*,” come from a word that means to slander. It describes someone speaking of another person in a disparaging way with the intention of putting them down.

**(b) THE MENTION OF IT:**

For it is this sin that is repeatedly condemned throughout Scripture. The psalmist hears God saying, “ *Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off.*” ( Ps 101:5 )

Paul writes, “ *Let all bitterness, and wrath and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you with all malice.*” ( Eph 4:31 )

Peter says, “ *Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word.*” ( 1 Pet 2:1-2 )

**(c) THE MISERY OF IT:**

In ( 2:7 ) James stated “ *Resist the devil .... you.*” The word “ *devil,*” means “ *slanderer, false accuser.*” In the book of Revelation he is called the “ *accuser of the brethren.*”

When we slander, speak of another believer in a disparaging way, we’re doing the work of the devil.

**(2) A SOLUTION THAT IS RELEVANT / from a Behaviour that is Defiant**

James gives us four reasons or considerations why we should obey this particular commandment to “ *speak not evil one of another,*” and in so doing he brings before us a solution for this problem.

**(a) THE LINK BETWEEN US:**

He uses the word “ *brethren,*” or “ *brother,*” three times and the word “ *another,*” or “ *neighbour,*” in ( 4:12 ) You see, James is thinking about behaviour within the church fellowship, and he appeals to their relationship as brethren as a reason for not engaging in malicious tale-bearing.

**(b) THE LAW BEFORE US:**

Look at ( 4:11 ) What does James mean here by “ *the law,*” ? It would seem that he is referring back to ( 2:8 )! He is saying, “ *You know the royal law of love is there, you know what it says, but you are deliberately setting it to one side and carrying out the Things you want to do. This is Christian permissiveness.*”

**(c) THE LORD ABOVE US:**

For James says, “ *but if .... to destroy.*” ( 4:12 ) Now many translations insert the words “ *and judge,*” after the word “ *lawgiver.*” The real sense comes out well when we read it, “ *there is one lawgiver and judge, He who is able to save and destroy.*” There is no doubt that he is talking about God.

He underscores here two qualifications that belong to God and to God alone.

The first is:

**1. AUTHORITY:**

*“ There is one lawgiver and judge,”* yet under this Divine authority there are many others. There are kings and rulers, presidents and prime ministers, all exercising authority over others. So do employers, and parents, and many others and our attitude to those is to be of submission and obedience.

**2. ABILITY:**

For James says that God is *“ able to save and to destroy.”* And that is not only true physically but spiritually.

*(d) THE LACK WITHIN US: We are Disqualified to judge and or gossip!!*

*“ Who art thou that judgest another.” ( 4:12 )* In a nutshell James is asking, *“ Who made you God ?”* What right do we have to slander others ?

**1. Our Lack of PERFECT INFORMATION:**

We don't know all the facts, therefore we are not qualified to judge..

**2. Our Lack of PERSONAL INTEGRITY:**

We ourselves are guilty people. The Saviour said concerning the woman taken in adultery *“ he that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.”* ( Jn 8:7 ) The response was *“ And they which heard it being convicted by their own conscience went out one by one.”* ( Jn 8:9 )

Someone once said, *“ the critic who starts with himself will have no time to take on outside contracts.”*

James 4:13-17      LIFE WITH GOD LEFT OUT

The first thing we need to note is:

**(1) AN ARROGANCE WE NEED TO ERADICATE**

The Amplified Bible puts ( 4:13 ) like this *“ Come now you who say .... and get gain.”* Now the Jewish liking for business is known the world over, and James has business men in mind here but not all business men. He is not condemning industry and commerce out of hand. The Bible never condemns out of hand honest initiative, hard work or the accumulation of wealth. James has only certain business men in mind and he isolates them with the phrase *“ ye that say.”* These words were outward signs of their whole attitude to life and their attitude was one of total arrogance. They are involved with

**When:** “ today or tomorrow,” **Where:** “ a city,” **How:** “ continue there a year,”  
**What:** “ to do business,” **Why:** “ to make money.” You see, in their arrogance they spoke about:

**(a) THE WHEN, THE DURATION:**

“ Today or to morrow,” In arrogance people can make the foolish presumption that time will not run out.

But God says, “ *Boast not thyself of tomorrow for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.*” ( Prov 27:1 ) Notice they also spoke about:

**(b) THE WHERE, THE LOCATION:**

“ We will go into such a city,” ( 4:13 ) Possibly they took maps and facts of demographics to determine a city’s potential for trade and business ventures; probably considered the population and records such as income etc  
Here were folk who were talking about

**(c) THE WHAT, THE VOCATION:**

In effect they were saying, “ we will have the money to buy, the goods to sell, and the customers to charge. They were saying, “ *Everything is going to be fine, just leave it all to us.*”

“ We will go, we will continue, we will buy and sell.”

“ He must increase, but I must decrease.” ( Jn 3:30 )

They spoke about *the When, the Duration, the Where, the Location, the What, the Vocation* and then they spoke about:

**(d) THE WHY, THE MOTIVATION:**

“ *And get gain, or and make money.*” ( 4:13 )

Now these business folk may have been moral, hardworking, honest, but they were self-conceited, self-centred, and self-concerned.

God says, “ *Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God .... and thou say in thine heart, my power and the mine of my hand hath gotten me this wealth.*” ( Deut 8:11-17 )

**(2) AN ANALYSIS WE NEED TO REITERATE**

You see, over against their arrogance, James brings a Biblical analysis of life. They said, “ we will,” God said, “ ye know not.” They planned for a year. God said they were not even certain of to-morrow. They thought they were independent, God said they were ignorant. “ *Ye know not.*”

James talks about:

**[a] THE UNCERTAINTY OF LIFE:**

***“ Ye know not what shall be on the morrow ?” ( 4:14 )***

***“ Boast not thyself of tomorrow ....,” ( Prov 27:1 )***

**God said, “ *Thou fool this night thy soul shall be required of thee.*” ( Lk 12:50 )**

**James also talks about:**

**(b) THE BREVITY OF LIFE:**

***“ For what is your life ? It is even a vapour .... away.”***

**The Greek word for “ vapour,” or “ mist,” appears only two times in the New Testament. It is translated “ smoke,” in ( Acts 2:19 ) Vapour is here one moment and gone the next. Its like the steam coming out of the kettle. Job says, “ *My days are swifter than a weavers shuttle,*” “ *Our days upon earth are a shadow.*”**

**( Job 7:6 8:9 )**

**Corrie Ten Boom said, “ *It is not the duration of life that is important but the donation of life.*”**

**There is (1) *An Arrogance we need to Eradicate:* (2) *An Analysis we need to Reiterate,* and there is:**

**(3) AN ATTITUDE WE NEED TO CULTIVATE**

**The attitude we need to cultivate must take into account:**

**(a) GOD’S WILL:**

**Look at ( 4:15 ) James was not condemning their business but their boasting, not their industry, but their interdependence, not their acumen but their arrogance.**

**(b) GOD’S WAY:**

***“ Therefore to him .... to him it is sin.”***

***“ Therefore he, the business man knowing to do good and doeth it not to him it is sin.”* In other words, here were business men, professing Christians who were getting so caught up in their work, that they were leaving God right out on the circumference of their lives. They knew that they ought to bring God into the centre of their planning but it seems they didn’t.**

**They hoarded up their wealth for themselves. That was their sin and why they were condemned. The Bible exhorts us, “ *As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.*” ( Gal 6:10 Heb 13:16 )**

**STUDY # 12                      JAMES**  
**FROM 4:13 – 17 Introduction to Chapter 5**

James speaks about how we approach life, how we assess life and how we analyze life.... Note.....

**[1] A LIFE THAT FORGETS GOD!**

James uses as an illustration the attitudes, aspirations, and actions of certain merchants of his time. Two questions arise.....

What are the goals of ones life?            Verse 13  
They choose their time / select their place / limit their stay /  
Plan their doings / reckon their profits...

But this raises another important question  
Where is God in all of this?

**[2] A LIFE THAT FACES GOD!**

We think about today and tomorrow.... James thinks farther ahead; he thinks about life to come..

This life is not Predictable                      Verse 14  
This life is not Permanent                      Verse 14

**[3] A LIFE THAT FOLLOWS GOD!                      Verse 15**

A life that is according to God's will  
A life that is acceptable of God's will

James says in verse 16 *"But now ye rejoice in your boastings; all such rejoicing is evil."* Then in verse 17 *"Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."*

Failure to endeavor to live our life according to God's purpose and plan for our life is an act of sinfulness. Yet so many people focus on that which is material....

**James 5:1-6                      MONEY TALKS !**

Someone has said *" at the present day it is only money that talks."* "  
Another said *"If money talks," " all that it ever says to me is goodbye."*

These men were rich and their riches were sinful. They were using their wealth for selfish purposes and persecuting the poor in the process

*" Go to now ye rich men,"* says James.

The real issue here is not whether we have money, but whether money has us.

*It is not wrong to own things, the problem comes when things own us*

The Bible does not say that money is the root of all evil, but that *" the love of money is the root of all evil."* ( 1 Tim 6:10 ) The Bible never condemns a man for being wealthy.

Now James tells us 3 things about wealth that I want to notice.

## **(1) THE ACQUISITION OF WEALTH**

How we get it ! Now the Bible does not discourage the acquiring of wealth. There is not a word here against business, against making profit, against a good commercial instinct, against industry, effort, ingenuity or skill. In fact the Word of God says, “ *Go to the ant, thou sluggard consider her ways, and be wise.*” ( Prov 6:6 ) Paul reminds us, “ *not slothful in business.*” ( Rom 12:11 ) What the Bible condemns is acquiring wealth by illegal means or for illegal purposes. It’s in this spirit that James wrote and he gives us two illustrations of how the rich acquired their wealth. Look at them,

### **(a) *THEY CHEATED THEIR WORKERS:***

Here’s how the Amplified puts it, “ *But look here are the wages that you have withheld by fraud from the labourers who have reaped your fields, crying for vengeance, and the cries of the harvesters have come to the ears of the Lord of Hosts.*”

In ( Lev 19:13 ) we read, “ *the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning.*”

For the Christian honesty is not the best policy .... *it is the only one.*

### **(b) *THEY CONTROLLED THEIR LAWYERS:***

Look at ( 5:6 ) The word “ *condemned,*” is a judicial term suggesting the way in which the rich perverted the legal system to accumulate their wealth. Apparently, the courts in James’ day were easy to control if you had enough money. These poor workers could not afford expensive law claims, so they were beaten down every time. The workers had the just cause, but they were not given justice, instead they were abused and ruined.

## **(2) THE ACCUMULATION OF WEALTH**

The people James had in mind “ *heaped treasure together,*” or “ *hoarded it.* Now there is nothing wrong with saving. But it is wrong to hoard wealth that is owed to others. James tells us that hoarding such wealth is:

### **(a) *DECEITFUL:***

Hoarded wealth promises joy but only brings misery. When we begin to love money, it ceases to bless us and begins to curse us. We think that just a little more money will make us happy, but that is a deception.

*thee, then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided ? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.”*

### **(b) *DECADENT:***

It decays. If we don't use it we lose it. It is temporal. We cannot take it with us ! Wealth in the first century was measured in Grain, Garments, and Gold. When James says, " *Your riches are corrupted,*" he was referring to grain. Their garments were ruined by lack of use. Moths eat our clothes when they hang in our wardrobes for long periods of time. Their gold was rusted by lack of use ! The things in which they had trusted for status, security, and satisfaction were absolutely worthless for riches will vanish.

**(c) DECEPTIVE:**

For wealth brings a false sense of security ! James's contemporaries knew all about this for within a few years of writing this letter, Jerusalem was destroyed and the accumulated wealth of the Jews was taken.

**(3) THE ADMINISTRATION OF WEALTH**

How we get it ! How we guard it ! And now how we give it ! Some people simply give their money to themselves in self-indulgence, while others gave it to the Lord to advance His kingdom.

**(a) WE CAN LIVE EXTRAVAGANTLY:**

Look at ( 5:5 ) " *here on earth you have abandoned yourself to soft prodigal living and to the pleasures of self-indulgence and self-gratification. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter.*" The Greek word pictures cattle being fattened for the slaughter.

Will Rodgers said, that " *Too many people spend money they haven't earned to buy things they don't want, to impress people they don't like.*"

**(b) WE CAN INVEST ETERNALLY:**

The Lord Jesus said, " *Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.*" ( Matt 6:20 ) There are some spiritual laws that should govern our giving.

**1. There is the Law of CLARIFICATION:**

This states that God owns all the wealth in this world and the next. David could say, " *The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof.*" ( Ps 24:1 1 Chron 29:11 )

**2. There is the Law of CIRCULATION:**

This states that God wants His wealth in circulation.

**3. There is the Law of CULTIVATION:**

This states that the way to appropriate God's wealth is to give. The Lord Jesus said, "*Give, and it shall be given unto you, good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.*" ( Lk 6:38 )

. Christ said "*Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.*" ( Matt 6:20 )

Someone said that "*when we die we leave behind all that we have, but we take with us all that we are and all that we gave*"

The way to get our treasure to heaven is to invest in the only thing that is going to heaven, *and the only thing that is going to heaven is the souls of men*

James 5:7-12

### PATIENTLY WAITING FOR CHRIST'S RETURN

There have always been those who try to forecast the Lord's return. Every major world event brings a new wave of preachers crying, "*the Lord is coming now.*"

Christ may come today, tomorrow, next month, next year. However He Himself said, "*But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.*" ( Mk 13:32 ) The outlook was very dark, so James invites them to try the uplook. He encourages them with the thought that "*the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.*"

First of all we are,

#### (1) TO LOOK UPWARD / The up-look that stirs the heart

Now some of these first generation Christians to whom James wrote had become so anxious and eager for Christ's return that they were growing impatient. Some were beginning to crack under persecution. So when James uses the word "*patient,*" he was calling on these believers "*to face even the most adverse circumstances with courage and calm.*" James was saying, "*Don't let momentary stumbles beset you, look up and be calm.*"

"*Be patient .... unto the coming of the Lord.*" Now in verses ( 5:7, 8, 9 ) we have a reference to the Lord's Coming and each of these three verses tell us some thing about the Lord's return !

#### (a) *IT IS CERTAIN: This is the Truth of The Lord's Coming*

"*Be patient therefore brethren, unto the coming of the Lord,*" ( 5:7 ) Now this is James's first reference to the Coming again of the Lord Jesus, and its interesting to notice how simple, concise, and straightforward it is. He simply speaks "*of the coming of the Lord.*" There are three Greek words used in the N.T. to describe the coming again of Jesus Christ. But the word that is most frequently used is "*parousia,*" and that is the word that is used here. It describes the arrival of an emperor or a king.

***(b) IT IS COMFORTING: Reference can be concerning The Time of His Coming***

Look at ( 5:8 ) James is writing to believers who knew what it was to suffer. He is writing to Christian Jews scattered outside Palestine. He is relating to those who had to leave their homes, their jobs, their property. ( Acts 8:1 11:19 12:1 ) They must have wondered if there would ever be an end to persecution and opposition. James's answer was to say that the return of Christ was getting closer all the time and in the light of that he says " *stablish, or fortify your hearts.*" This will bring about a focus on

**1. UNBROKEN FRIENDSHIPS:**

Separation is the order of this day but reunion is the order of that day.

**2. UNRAVELLED MYSTERIES:**

All of our tangled and torturing problems solved and straightened out.

**3. UNCLOUDED VISION:**

A real sight of the Saviour, which the restrictions of our human nature make impossible down here. No wonder Paul speaking about " *the coming of the Lord,*" says " *wherefore comfort one another with these words.*"

***(c) IT IS CHALLENGING:***

James says in ( 5:9 ) " *the judge standeth before the door.*" Notice that he uses the word " *brethren,*" time and again in this passage. ( 5:7, 9, 10, 12 ) Alongside the certainty and comfort of the Lords Return James now brings the element of challenge. There is coming a moment in the future when every believer will face the Lord. Paul says that " *we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ.*" ( 2 Cor 5:10 ) It's not about retribution but about review. It's not about condemnation but about examination. What a moment that will be when our motives will be reviewed.( 1 Cor 4:5 ) When our service will be reviewed.

( 1 Cor 3:12-15 ) In one sweeping moment of time our entire life of service for Christ will be reviewed, revealed and rewarded.

Martin Luther once said, " *I preach as though Christ died yesterday, rose from the dead today and is coming back tomorrow.*"

Dr. Campbell Morgan said, " *I never lay my head on my pillow without thinking that, maybe before the morning breaks, the final morning may have dawned. I never begin my work without thinking that perhaps He may interrupt my work and begin His own.*"

**(2) LOOK INWARD / The In - look that searches our heart**

It is easy when we are in a waiting period to become irritated and frustrated

We are “ *waiting for His Son from heaven,*” ( 1 Thes 1:10 ) and while we are waiting there is the potential within us to become bitter and resentful toward others. That’s why James says we are to look in and,

**(a) BE PLACID:**

“ *Grudge not one against another brethren,*” ( 5:9 )

The word could be translated “ *grumble or murmur*” Those who are always grouching and grumbling, complaining and muttering They began to complain and murmur one against another.

**(b) BE PRECISE:**

Notice ( 5:12 ) James was not talking about profanity here but about oaths. Now in the world of the first century people rarely signed contracts. They swore oaths instead. ( Heb 6:13-17 ) But these oaths were used so frequently that they lost their significance. There were binding oaths and non-binding oaths and loopholes abounded. People in that day used oaths just as a child today may say, “ *I cross my heart and hope to die,*” while his fingers are crossed behind his back. Now this is the context in which James brings this word of warning.

The real lesson is this, that in our everyday dealings we should be so precise, so honest, so straightforward that no oath should ever be necessary.

The Amplified Bible put is like this, “ *Let your yes be a simple yes and your no be a simple no.*”

**(c) BE PATIENT:**

“ *patient,*” and “ *patience,*” are used five times in this passage. They translate two Greek words, one of which is used four times and the other once. ( 5:11 ) Taken together the meanings embrace patience with people and patience with circumstances, and the latter is sometimes easier than the former. The Bible says we are to be patient with both. That is, *we are to face the most adverse circumstances with courage and calm, and to restrain our anger and resentment.*

What are we to do until the Lord comes

**(3) LOOK BACKWARD / The back – look that supports us**

We are to look back to those who have gone before us.

Their example should be a challenge. Fully aware that often in waiting periods we are tempted to give up, James says we are to look back at:

**(a) THE PROPHETS:**

Look at ( 5:10 ) They too were looking for the Lord. What suffering they endured as they waited His first coming. Hebrews Chapter 11 illustrates support

***Have you got family that seek to pull you down ? Then look back to Abel. ( 11:4 )  
Are you facing a crisis of faith ? Then look back to Abraham. ( 11:8-10 )  
Have you been used and abused ? Then look back to Joseph. ( 11:22 )  
Are you facing an enormous task ? Then look back to Moses. ( 11:24-29 )  
Are you facing obstacles and walls that cannot be scaled or tunnelled under.  
Then look back to Joshua. ( 11:30 )***

***(b) THE PATRIARCH:***

**We still speak to day of the patience of Job. In one day he lost his family, his flocks, his farm, his finance, but through it all his faith in God remained steadfast. His health and wealth were gone, his friends turned on him. His own wife said, “*why you don’t just curse God and die.*” Yet from the ashes of affliction he cried, “*the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away blessed be the name of the Lord.*” ( 1:21 ) Later, when the pressures were ever greater his trust in God was so profound that he could say, “*though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.*” “*But He knoweth the way that I take, when He hath tried me I shall come forth as gold.*” ( Job 13:15 23:10 )**

**(4) LOOK OUTWARD / The out – look that strengthens us**

**Life can be difficult and discouraging at times. Conditions and circumstances can become over whelming.**

**Patience as should be seen in our actions**

**Again we refer to the “patience” concept for our manner of life. When our life is filled with problems and persecutions we become frustrated and over whelmed. When we are the subjects of abuse and misuse of others; our tendency is to want to get even, but our text admonishes us to be patient, longsuffering, and to refrain from retaliating. The Lord is coming but until then we may find ourselves the target of others attacks and abuse. “Vengeance is mine says the Lord”**

**Patience as should be seen in our attitudes**

**James illustrates this with three emphasis on patience.**

**We have noted the patience of the prophets and the patriarch**

***James also used The Patience Of The Farmer***

**The word “husbandman” which means one who tills the soil. James speaks of one who plows and plants his crops and then can only wait for the growth and harvest. Meanwhile he must trust God to provide the essentials that will accomplish this.**

**PATIENCE IN ACTIONS, ATTITUDES, ASPIRATIONS, AND EVEN IN OUR AFFLICTIONS.....**

## STUDY # 13

### A COMMAND FOR COMPLAINERS From James 5:9 – 10

Review of “patience” before we move into the last verses of James.

#### [1] THE BEHAVIOUR THAT IS CONSIDERED Verse 9

*“grudge not one against another”* speaks of grumbling and complaining  
It would appear that some of these people were complaining concerning their circumstances etc. notice

##### How Their Complaining was Directed

They were venting their feelings against each other; toward their fellow Christians.

##### How Their Complaining was Denounced

Someone has written / To walk in love with saints above

Will be a wondrous glory;

To walk below with saints we know

Well that’s another story!

#### [2] THE BEHAVIOUR THAT IS CONDEMNED

The word “condemned” meant to sentence or judge

A Judgment That is Awaiting

The Judgment That is Approaching

Rom 14:12 *“So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.”*

We should refrain from complaining because one day we will be judged for complaining and that day can come at any time.

#### [3] A BEHAVIOUR THAT IS COMMENDED

The prophets are examples for us.....

They Are A Model Of What To Expect

They Are a Model Of How To Endure

Like the prophets before us, may we be known for our patience..

James 5:13-20 We have.... A GOD FOR EVERY CIRCUMSTANCE

The believer has *“ A God for every Circumstance.”* This is the very theme that James develops in ( 5:13-15 ) Here he mentions three types of situations in which we the people of God may find ourselves in. Firstly he talks about,

#### (1) TIMES OF PRESSURE

*“ Is any one among you afflicted .... ill treated, suffering evil. He should pray.”*

##### (a) THE CONDITION:

The word *“ afflicted,”* means, *“ to suffer the evil blows from the outside world.”*

The same root words are used in ( 5:10 ) when James speaks of the prophets “ *suffering affliction* )

As Christians in today’s world we face *Natural Afflictions*, ( Rom 8:22 )

*Physical Afflictions, Mental Afflictions*.

What about the *Spiritual Afflictions* we face ?

Then again the believer faces *Special Afflictions*, for Paul talks about “ *the afflictions of the gospel.*” ( 2 Tim 1:8 )

Now what should we do when we find ourselves in such trying circumstances ?  
Well, look at,

#### **(b) THE COUNSEL:**

“ *Let him pray,*” ( 5:13 )

There is a sense in which our afflictions can never grow any bigger. They can certainly never grow any bigger than God allows. ( 1 Cor 10:13 ) But we can grow bigger by the grace of God. We can grow bigger by the power of prayer, for “ *they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.*” ( Is 40:31 )

The Lord is looking, listening, longing to deliver us from all our afflictions, longing to bless us, encourage us, help us, comfort us, guide us. “ *For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers.*” ( 1 Pet 3:12 )

#### **(2) TIMES OF PLEASURE**

Notice the second question “ *Is any merry, let him sing psalms ?*” ( 5:13 ),

#### **(a) THE STATE:**

The word “ *merry,*” denotes an inner feeling of joy and well being. Now the root of the word used here is used only four times in the whole of the N.T. ( Acts 24:10 ) Three of those times occur in the story of the shipwreck in ( Acts Ch 27 ) where the great storm Euroclydon swept down the Mediterranean as Paul and others were on their way to Rome. When panic began to set in Paul cried, “ *Be of good cheer,*” ( Acts 27:22 ) Some time later he added, “ *Be of good cheer for I believe God.*” ( 27:25 ) Then much later in the story, when his confidence seems to have permeated the other passengers we read, “ *then were they all of good cheer.*” ( Acts 27:36 ) Now here was Paul under pressure. His very life was in danger, yet he had a deep inner joy rooted in an unshakeable faith in God.

#### **(b) THE SUGGESTION:**

“ *let him sing psalms* The Lord says, “ *whoso offereth praise glorifieth me.*” My .... praise glorifies God. Is it any wonder therefore that David cries out, “ *O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together.*” ( Ps 34:3 )

#### **(3) TIMES OF PAIN**

The third question ? “ *Is any sick among you ?* ” ( 5:14 ) Now there are few verses in the Bible which are as misunderstood, misapplied and misinterpreted as is ( 5:14-15 )

(a) **NEGATIVELY: What is not Taught Here:**

I think we can safely say that this statement does not teach,

**1. That All Sickness is the Result of Sin: “**

Now some sickness is the result of sin, but not all. ( 1 Cor 11:30 )

**2. Extreme Unction:**

This is one of the seven sacraments held as valid by the Roman Catholic Church. The priests anoints with oil a person who is dying and prays for the remission of his sins, but that unscriptural practice has no connection with these verses.

**3. A Ministry of Healing confined to Apostolic Times:**

Many take the view that this practice was only for the apostolic age and therefore is no longer relevant. However many believe in this type prayer for the sick.

**4. That the Use of Means is Wrong:**

It is not teaching that it is wrong to make use of available assistance for sickness.

(b) **POSITIVELY: What is Taught Here:**

This difficult passage is describing a local church ministry at a member's bedside. Most modern so called “ *faith healers,* ” rent large halls and invite people to come to them, but those who are most in need can't get there. Listen to James's directive, “ *Is any sick among you ?* ” ( 5:14-14 ) Now there are several things that I want you to notice here, Notice here:

**1. THE PROBLEM:**

“ *Is any sick among you ?* ” ( 5:14 ) Now the Greek word translated “ *sick,* ” in ( 5:14 ) has a variety of meanings including “ *without strength,* ” “ *not functioning properly.* ” It can mean being weak either emotionally, spiritually, or physically

**2. THE PROPOSAL:**

“ *Let him call .... church.* ” ( 5:14 ) The Greek word for “ *call,* ” means “ *to call alongside, to summon.* ” Now will you please notice that the elders or pastors don't have any mysterious powers for knowing that any member of the flock is ill, when no-one not even the sick one tells them. Who is the sick one to call for ?

Elders ! Now the thing that James is stressing here is that the initiative comes from the patient.

### **(3) THE PROCEDURE:**

*" Pray over him anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord ....., "* ( 5:14 ) Now the Greek word translated *" anointing,"* can be used in a medicinal or symbolic sense. ( Lk 10:34 Mk 6:13 Is 1:6 ) But look at that phrase, *" the name of the Lord."*

### **4. THE PRAYER:**

Not just any prayer, but *" the prayer of faith."* So whose prayer and whose faith is it ? It is the elders prayer and faith. The faith of the sick person actually has little, if anything to do with the restoration.

### **5. THE PANACEA:**

*" And the Lord shall raise him up ....., "* ( 5:15 ) If sin is the cause of the sickness, then God will raise him up.

*" A God for Every Circumstance,"* A God who will be with us in times of Pressure, in times of Pleasure, in times of Pain. God is our Sufficiency, and the Lord *" will perfect that which concerneth you."* ( Ps 138:8 )

## **THE POWER OF PRAYER # 19**

*" The Power of Prayer,"* Now let me give you three things from this .... That I trust will open up this passage.

### **(1) A PRINCIPLE WE NEED TO RECOGNISE / The Person of Prayer**

*" The effectual .... availeth much,"* The Amplified, puts it like this, *" the earnest, heartfelt, continued prayer of a righteous man make tremendous power available dynamic in its working."*

*" a humble begging or plea or petition."* It's the most humble word for prayer in the Greek content

#### **(a) APPROACHED WITH INTEGRITY:**

*" The prayer of a righteous man ....., "* Now that word *" righteous,"* is used in the Bible in two senses. It's used in a *Spiritual* sense. *" there is none righteous, no not one."* ( Rom 3:10

That does not mean that all our prayers are effective because we are righteous James is not using this word *" righteous,"* in a spiritual sense but in a *Moral* sense. Its not enough for you to say,

*" If I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me."* ( Ps 66:18 )

John says, “ *And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.*” ( 1 Jn 3:22 ) No Christian is greater than his prayer life and his prayer life can be no greater than his personal life.

**(b) ASKED WITH INTENSITY:**

“ *the effectual fervent prayer,*” Now those two words “ *effectual, fervent,*” translate a Greek word, It’s from the root of this word that we get our English word “ *energy,*” and that helps us unlock the meaning of this phrase. Now in order for our prayers to be effective they don’t have to be phrased in a certain language.

Our praying does not need to be a certain loudness for them to be effective. What is important according to James is fervency in prayer.

**(c) ANSWERED WITH IMMENSITY:**

For it “ *availeth much,*” ( 5:16 ) The words literally mean “ *is strong, is able to do much.*” This kind of praying is powerful praying.

**(2) A PICTURE WE NEED TO VISUALISE / The Practice of Prayer**

At the Transfiguration it was Moses and Elijah who appeared with Christ on the mountain-top. ( Matt 17:4 ) Now James tells us two things about Elijah. He speaks about,

**(a) HIS NATURAL WEAKNESSS:**

James says, he “ *was a man subject to like passions as we are.*”

He is not using some kind of superman, an extraordinary man to make his point. Elijah was a man just like us. He *was a prophet but he was not perfect.*

Also note

**(b) HIS SUPERNATURAL POWER:**

History shows how mankind has progressed from manpower to horsepower, and then to dynamite and T.N.T. and now to atomic power. But greater than atomic power is prayer power. The power of prayer.

**1. Elijah prayed EARNESTLY:**

Look at ( 5:17 ) Literally it means, “ *he prayed in his prayer.*”

**2. Elijah prayed PERSISTENTLY:**

**“ He prayed .... and he prayed again.” ( 5:17-18 )** Prayer was answered. That day on Mount Carmel Elijah persisted in prayer. ( 1 Kings 18:44 )  
Elijah did not give up for he said, **“ Go again seven times,”** or **“ He said seven times go again.”** He was not answered immediately but he persevered. After five times the servant came back, **“ Nothing.”** **“ Go again.”** The sixth time, **“ Master there is nothing.”** **“ Go again.”** The seventh time **“ behold there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man’s hand.”** ( 18:44 )

### **(3) A PRACTICE WE NEED TO UTILISE / The Power of Prayer**

James says in ( 5:16 ) Now this is the only directive in this section. The middle part is a principle. The third part is an illustration of the truth but here we have the instruction. **“ Confess .... healed,”** Now James is speaking here about,

#### **(a) SOMETHING HORIZONTAL:**

**“ Confess your faults one to another.”**

#### **(b) SOMETHING VERTICAL:**

**“ And pray for one another,”** ( 5:16 )

#### **(c) SOMETHING SPIRITUAL:**

**“ that ye may be healed,”** ( 5:16 )

There is **Power in Prayer !**

### **James 5:19-20      SPIRITUAL DRIFTING**

**“ Spiritual Drifting,”**

#### **(1) A REALITY WE NEED TO FACE / A Ministry to Accept**

The reality is this. It’s possible to drift, to fall, to fail. Sometimes a Christian is **“ overtaken in a fault,”** ( Gal 6:1 ) but usually the sin is the result of slow, gradual, spiritual decline. James asks us to face this reality by calling our attention to,

#### **(a) THE PERSON:**

**“ Brethren if any of you,”** ( 5:20 )

There is a great difference between relationship and fellowship, between union and communion. James is saying that the fellowship within the family of God can be damaged but the good news is that it can be restored.

#### **(b) THE PATH:**

**“ Brethren if any of you do err,” ( 5:20 ) The Amplified Bible puts it, “ If any among you strays.” The verb “ err,” means “ to wander.” It suggest a gradual moving away from the will of God.**

**(c) THE PLACE:**

James says, strayed from “ *the truth.*” ( 5:19 ) The “ *truth,*” means of course the Word of God.

**2. A RESPONSIBILTY WE NEED TO SHARE / A Ministry to Appreciate**

Look at ( 5:19 ) Or “ *And another person brings him back to God.*”  
*we sometimes forget we are also to win the saved.* We have a responsibility to bring them back, to save them from death, and to cover a multitude of sins. Now look at this responsibility and notice that it is,

**(a) PERSONAL / Because of its Reason and its Results**

The word translated, “ *And one or someone convert him,*” is completely indefinite. In the matter of the healing of someone who was sick, James points out a responsibility belonging to the elders of the church. ( 5:14 ) But here is different.

This responsibility is personal. It is for all believers.

**(b) IS CONDITIONAL:**

You see there are qualifications for this ministry of restoration. Paul says, “ *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself lest thou also be tempted.*” ( Gal 6:1 ) James is saying that if a man is wandering away from the truth, the man to bring him back is the man who is himself involved in the truth.

**(c) IS PARADOXICAL:**

Its perplexing. Look at that word “ *convert.*” When we think of conversion we normally think of the moment when a person becomes a Christian. ( Acts 3:19 ) But the word “ *convert,*” has another sense. It comes from two Greek words that would literally be translated “ *to turn back.*”

**(3) A RECOVERY WE NEED TO KNOW / A Ministry that is Accomplished**

We need to know that a straying believer can,

**(a) BE RESCUED:**

If we engage in this ministry of restoration we will save a soul from death. Now the Greek word translated “*death*,” ( thanatos ) could be translated “*punishment*,” but eternal death is not the issue here. I think James is referring to physical death. John speaks about the same thing in his epistle when he says, “*there is a sin unto death.*” ( 1Jn 5:16 )

**(b) BE RESTORED:**

“*Let him .... of sins.*” ( 5:20 ) If we are going to help that erring believer we must have an attitude of love, for “*love shall cover the multitude of sins.*” ( 1 Pet 4:8 ) So we come to the end of this epistle. And the end of our studies in James!  
**TO GOD BE THE GLORY!**