James

Lesson notes on the Epistle of James

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How to Benefit from Trials & Tribulations

James 1:2-8

***<u>YOU CAN PASS THE TESTS THAT GOD ALLOWS IN YOUR LIFE!</u>**

How? By following 3 necessary requirements.

I. BY <u>FACING THE TEST</u> WITH A RIGHT <u>ATTITUDE</u> (v.2,3)
THINK RIGHT!

This attitude involves an awareness that:

A. TESTS ARE <u>UNAVOIDABLE</u>

1.Tests will come at different <u>times</u>
2.Tests will come in different <u>ways</u>
3. Tests may come in different <u>amounts</u>

B. TESTS ARE <u>BENEFICIAL</u>

1.Look at each test with <u>optimism</u>
"count it all joy"
2.Look at each test with <u>confidence</u>.
"knowing..." Note: Joy (a right attitude) is caused by right <u>thinking</u>.
a. His purpose is to <u>prove</u> the <u>genuineness</u> of your faith.
"trying" = to prove or show to be real or genuine by testing.
b. His purpose is to <u>produce</u> <u>perseverance</u> in your life.
"patience" = endurance; lit. an ability to remain under, to persevere.

II. BY <u>FINISHING THE TEST</u> WITH A RIGHT <u>ACTION</u> (v.4)
RESPOND RIGHT!

GOD DESIRES YOU TO BE:

A. <u>SPIRITUALLY GROWN UP</u> *"perfect" = mature, complete in growth.*

B. SPIRITUALLY <u>FIT</u> "entire" = *whole, complete in all it's parts.*

C. SPIRITUALLY <u>BALANCED</u> *"wanting nothing" = not lacking any parts.*

III. BY <u>LOOKING IN THE RIGHT PLACE</u> FOR <u>ANSWERS</u>!
ASK RIGHT!
SEEK GOD'S PROMISE OF <u>WISDOM</u> *(v.5-8)*
(seek the essential wisdom that God gives)

A. He will answer if you <u>depend</u> upon Him. (v.5-6a)
B. He will <u>not</u> answer you if you <u>doubt</u> Him (v.6b-8)

How to Benefit from Trials & Tribulations

James 1:1-8

Intro: ex. of tests in school; tests to check our mental & fitness etc.

YOU CAN PASS GOD'S SPIRITUAL FITNESS EXAMS!
Interrog: How? By following 2 necessary requirements.

"test" =Can be translated tempt or test depending on the context.
From Satan's viewpoint it is a temptation so that you fail.
from God's it is a test so that you will pass.
God wants to bring out the best in us; Satan - the worst.

The difference is the intent.

I. BY FACING THE TEST WITH A RIGHT ATTITUDE (v.2,3)
THINK RIGHT!

This attitude involves an awareness that:

A. TESTS ARE UNAVOIDABLE

James says "when" not "if". Tests are a certainty, inescapable
external tests are in view here; internal in verses 12-15.

1. Tests will come at different times
   "fall into" - You don't always get advance notice of their coming. Often catch you by surprise. (ex. the good Samaritan who helped a man who "fell in" with thieves.

2. Tests will come in different ways
   "divers" = various, lit. many colored. Trials come in assorted shapes & sizes; diff. stiles & colors. What is a test for you may not be for me. God will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able to bear.

   ill. Of teachers who give different kinds of tests which makes it difficult to prepare for them; "wisdom" is needed cp.v.5.

   different degrees of testing: We tend to complain about the little challenges, and yet we say we are willing to climb big mountains for God.

3. Tests may come in different amounts
"temptations" = plural

B. TESTS ARE BENEFICIAL

Our natural tendency is to wrongly think that when things are going bad it is God's judgment; and when good it is God's blessing. Do good = good things happen; do bad = bad things happen. This is not true! Not true in this present life at least. In the kingdom when things are straightened out, Satan bound etc. it will be.

1. Look at each test with optimism
"count it all joy"
*mental optimism - "count" = to reckon, or mentally consider. This is faith! (cp. this idea in Rom.6 - note however: diff. but synonymous word for reckon)

This is not emotions! But a stable mental attitude.
Note: James does not say trials are joy; but trials are to be reckoned as occasions for joy.

*undivided optimism - "all" joy. You are to have no "mixed emotions" about the trial.

*joyful optimism - "joy". A mental attitude of gladness that results from something beneficial (favorable) happening to you.

Jesus commanded this attitude (Mt.5:12)
Apostles practice this attitude (Acts 5:41)

2. Look at each test with confidence.
"knowing..." Note: Joy (a right attitude) is caused by right thinking.

There is purpose for trials

God has a purpose in allowing them in your life.

a. His purpose is to <u>prove</u> the <u>genuineness</u> of your faith. "trying" = to prove or show to be real or genuine by testing.

Testings <u>reveal</u> character, more than forming it.

God does not allow testing to flunk you! Nor is He checking to see <u>if</u> you have faith.

Satan tempts to make you fail, but God tests so that you will pass and He will receive the Glory. (ex. Job)

"all things work together for good..." Ro.8:28

Sometimes grown men & women throw fits & rebel like pre-schoolers at irritating testings.

Ex. the sand that goes into the oyster and rather than being expelled it is turned into a precious, valuable pearl. "The sand speck of irritation results in the pearl of patience"

God wants to teach you; God wants to make you an experienced Christian veteran.

b. His purpose is to <u>produce</u> <u>perseverance</u> in your life. "patience" = endurance; lit. an ability to remain under, to persevere.

II. BY <u>FINISHING THE TEST</u> WITH A RIGHT <u>ACTION</u> (v.4)

RESPOND RIGHT!

Don't react & run, but respond & win!

"perfect work" = completed job (Your level of patience must mature so that you can mature)

endurance is <u>not</u> endurance if you quit (or run away) during the trial.
It must run its complete course. You must make it to the <u>end</u> of the finish line.
patience must have a <u>complete work out</u>. (ex. weight lifting or football practice)
"no pain, no gain"

We can (by God's grace) control the length of our endurance (patience), but not the length of the test.

GOD DESIRES YOU TO BE:
<u>SPIRITUALLY GROWN UP</u> "perfect" = mature, complete in growth.
SPIRITUALLY <u>FIT</u> "entire" = whole, complete in all it parts.
SPIRITUALLY <u>BALANCED</u> "wanting nothing" = not lacking any parts. A well rounded maturity - this is why tests come in different shapes, sizes & colors.

If you keep going through the same trial over & over again maybe it is because you have not passed that test yet.

III. BY LOOKING IN THE RIGHT PLACE FOR ANSWERS! (V.5-8)

ASK RIGHT!

One of the most frustrating things in life is being in a difficult situation and not knowing what to do.

YOU NEED TO KNOW WHERE TO LOOK IN TROUBLED TIMES!

SEEK GOD'S PROMISE OF <u>WISDOM</u> (v.5-8)
(seek the essential wisdom that God gives)

When the storms of life hit your shore, you need to know what to do! Most people panic, worry, become discouraged etc.

Sometimes when in the midst of trials (testings) there is a tendency to not know how to respond. We tend to speak & act hastily. Wisdom is needed!

We need wisdom so we will <u>not waste</u> the opportunity God is giving us to mature.

In order to gain wisdom you must first <u>know you need it</u>.

A. He will answer if you <u>depend</u> upon Him. (v.5-6a)

You can depend on God because: He is the source of wisdom, He is impartial, generous, kind, and faithful.

1. God is the <u>source</u> of wisdom. "ask of God"

   Note: He did not say: "try to figure it out yourself" Nor his He say "if any of you lack wisdom go to <u>college</u>"

   Jews thought the rabbis were the source of true wisdom because they "passed it on since Moses by word of mouth" No! God is the only source.

   You can turn to the eternal fountain of wisdom in <u>all</u> the circumstances of life.

2. God is <u>impartial</u>. "all"

   His giving of wisdom is not limited to a favored few.

3. God is <u>generous</u>. "liberally" lit.= with singleness of heart. A

banking term meaning "without interest", God has no ulterior motives.

4. God is kind. "Upbraideth not" = without insulting, humiliating or rebuking the asker.

he film "The Wizard of Oz" - He, with frightening lighting, loud voice etc., rebuked the lion who asked for courage, scarecrow - brain, tin man - heart, and Dorothy - home to Kansas.

5. God is faithful. "It shall be given him" Knowing this about God gives positive assurance. It encourages prayer. Cp. Mt.7:7-11.

When troubled times come you can stand up under that test a lot easier when you know what God's purpose is & what to do about it. He is always willing to give you the needed wisdom if you will believe He can and will answer.

The assurance (promise) of answered prayer does not mean that God is some kind of a dispensing machine into which we put a prayer and out comes whatever we select. A proper attitude is required first. This attitude is stated positively & negatively.

Pos. = "faith"; Neg. = "nothing doubting"

Faith is the proper response to a God who is impartial, generous, kind and faithful.

Belief in asking is man's necessary attitude because:

B. He will not answer you if you doubt Him (v.6b-8)

Ill. of a woman who prayed every day for the salvation of her husband. When asked "do you believe God will save Him?" She replied: "not really. You see, no one in his family is saved, and he is so set in his ways."

To not believe God is to insult Him. You are actually denying God's faithfulness and calling Him a liar.

"Let him ask in faith" - There is no acceptable prayer without faith!

Heb.11:6 "impossible to please God";

Mt.21:22 "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." cp.Mk.11:24.

"nothing wavering" = in no way doubting

"wavering" refers to a man with a divided mind. One who is torn in two directions; mental indecision; inner conflict; a desire to say yes & no at the same time.

When a doubter prays he is merely going through the motions of prayer. His words go no higher than the roof of his mouth.

The raging sea = pictures unrest. For example when the wind blows from one direction, the billowing waves move with it. When it blows in the opposite direction again the waves move with it.

v.7 - It is "faith that unlocks the divine storehouse, but unbelief bars its doors"

v.8 - "double minded" = Lit. "two souled" - He acts as if 2 distinct souls or personalities were in his body. Living 2 lives at once. Trying to go in 2 directions at once.

"unstable" = unsteady, wobbling like a drunkard.

The Oyster and the irritable sand speck

Ron Hamilton

"WHERE TO LOOK IN TROUBLED TIMES"
James 1:5-12
8/16/200

Intro. One of the most frustrating things in life is being in a difficult situation and not knowing what to do.

*** YOU NEED TO KNOW WHERE TO LOOK IN TROUBLED TIMES!**

I. SEEK GOD'S PROMISE OF <u>WISDOM</u> (v.5-8)
(seek the essential wisdom that God gives)

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"unstable" = unsteady, wobbling like a drunkard.

In troubled times you need to seek God's promise of wisdom but also you must:

II. SEE YOUR POSITION OF WEALTH (v.9-12)
(see the true wealth that you have)

This is actually an act of wisdom.

When trouble strikes - rich people can suddenly become poor (ex. Job) and the poor can become poorer.

Keep in mind that riches were not something to glory in after all. Read Jer. 9:23-24.

A. FORGET YOUR EARTHLY POVERTY
AND GLORY IN YOUR HIGH POSITION IN CHRIST (v.9)

In the eyes of the world this man with humble external circumstances would be looked down upon and considered a nobody, but in God's eyes he has a high, exalted position of dignity & wealth.

(forget your problems and look at your position)

You are a son of the King & heir to a future kingdom!

Eph. 1:3 "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ"

Jesus said to his disciples don't rejoice that you have power to do miracles, but that your names are written in heaven!

True wealth is spiritual riches!

B. FORGET YOU EARTHLY RICHES
AND GLORY IN YOU HUMBLE POSITION IN CHRIST (v.10-11)

A loss of wealth is a gain of humility (which is true wealth) You can have materialism removed from obscuring your spiritual eyes and can see your need (dependance) upon God.

"Rich" = "one who does not need to work for a living"

Mt. 19:23 - "easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle..."

If you are a wealthy Christian who is stripped of your riches & possessions you can humbly be glad that you will never lose you spiritual riches.

If you are unsaved & lose your riches this may be God's blessing in disguise. You may be humbled to the point of being willing to stop trusting in yourself and trust Christ!

v.11 - The Sirocco winds off of the Arabian desert can scorch all vegetation and within hours turn what was formerly green into dried up brown.

When the hot winds of trials blow your way (and that which you took so much pleasure in suddenly disappears) will you be able to look at your true riches in Christ and be glad?

v.12 - Blessedness in not achieved by being free from trials, but by enduring them!

Such perseverance is a sign of genuine faith.

James does not say that you earn eternal life by enduring trials. You don't get saving faith

by enduring, rather you reveal your faith.

"crown" - victors crown - ex. Athletic contests. This is a lasting crown.

Read Rev.2:10,11 "crown of life" for overcoming trials & tribulations.

Concl. Do you know where to look when the troubled times come your way? 1) Seek God's promise of wisdom; 2) See you position of wealth.

"WHERE TO LOOK IN TROUBLED TIMES"

James 1:5-12
8/16/200

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B. FORGET YOU EARTHLY RICHES
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"WHERE TO LOOK IN TROUBLED TIMES"

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AND GLORY IN YOUR _____ IN CHRIST (v.9)

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(v.5-8)
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TITLE: **DON'T SHIFT THE BLAME**
DON'T STEAL THE CREDIT

TEXT: JAMES 1:13-18

INTRO:

Christians like everyone else face difficulties from outer circumstances. We are susceptible to disease or injury; Our houses catch fire, our possessions are stolen, our jobs are lost, our families are threatened. We live in a hostile, mixed up world. But we face a different kind of trouble that is more subtle and is often more difficult to handle - internal difficulties problems with evil thoughts, sinful feelings, tendencies to sin etc.

Discuss context of trials (1:2-18) Sometimes trials are testings on the outside (1:2-12), and sometimes they are temptations on the inside (v.13-18). We may ask, "why did James connect the two? -external and internal? The answer is simply this: If we are not careful, the testings on the outside may become temptations on the inside. God tests, He never tempts.

Ill. O.T. Israel: 1) wandering in the wilderness was a test.
2) their desire for water & meat was a temptation.

James realized that some individuals when subjected to temptations, were prone to think unfairly about God. They would blame God for their failure, or excuse their yielding to it.

From the beginning of time it has been man's first instinct to blame others for his own sin. (ex. Gen.3:12,13)
Ex. the shifting of blame by Adam & Eve. "The woman **you** gave me..."

Not only is it a tendency in fallen man to blame others for what he actually did (ex. sin), man has a tendency to take the credit for what he actually did not do (ex. salvation).

Man is capable of being deceived in both os these areas.
(**see v.16**)

Of all areas in life where it is essential that you don't be deceived the two most important areas deal with your spiritual well being:
PROPOSITION: **DON'T BE DECEIVED ABOUT SIN & SALVATION!**

I. DON'T SHIFT THE BLAME (FOR YOUR SIN) (v.13-15)

Some excuse their conduct by blaming their fellow man, circumstances (ex.weather), or Satan etc. Some excuse their sin by saying "we are all sinners", Some say "I'm only human". Many say: "The Devil made me do it" Others such as self-deceived homosexuals say: "I can't help it, God make me this way" Blaming God is the most despicable.

A.THE SOURCE OF TEMPTATION IS YOU (IT'S FROM WITHIN) (v.13,14)

Man has always blamed God. Prov.19:3 - "a man's own folly ruins his life, yet his heart rages against the Lord." (NIV)

1. Temptation is not from God (v.13)

James by using the word "of" (from) [ ] rather than
[ ](directly from) is saying that God is not even remotely connected with tempting anyone.

People today may not be so bold as to blame God directly, but they do so indirectly. God may test but he never tempts (solicits to evil).

a.It is contrary to the **nature** of God.
"cannot be tempted"
Pagan god were viewed as being liable to temptations to moral evil and as being tempters themselves. Their character reflects man's wicked heart which invented them.

How could Jesus be tempted if He was God?
Jesus could only be tempted (note: passive - by someone outside of Himself) in His human nature not his divine, because his human nature had appetites (desires for food, drink, sleep etc), but His Divine nature was impeccable; it had no needs; no unsatisfied desires. "He was in all points tempted like as we are" (human nature).

b.It is contrary to the **character** of God.
"neither tempteth he any man"
Temptation is against God's Holy, pure, righteous character. It is impossible for Him to be the source of temptation. Because to tempt is to sin, and God would be a sinner if He tempted just one person.

Contrary to God being the tempter, He is actually the provider of a way to escape temptation (I Cor.10:13) God is not against us, but is for us in our conflict with evil.

2.Temptation comes from man's inner lust (v.14)

"each one" = indicates that temptation is a universal experience. (we all face it).

"own lust" = indicates that all claims to blameshift are futile efforts to escape personal responsibility for your actions. It is your own lust that tempts you.

Satan & the world system can externally **tease** your appetite but only **you** - yourself are responsible for yielding to it.

Our main problem is not our environment.
Ex. A monk can live alone yet he has his worst enemy right there with him. (His sin nature).

Jesus said that what defiles a man comes "from within, out of the heart of men..." (Mk.7:21-23)

"lust" = appetite, desire. Word is used in a good sense (Lk.22:15, Phil.1:23; I Th.2:17); but generally in an evil sense. (context decides) Evil desires are those desires that are self-centered and contrary to God's will.
"lust" does not necessarily refer to sexual passion. But to the normal desires in life that were given by God. But they were given to be satisfied God's way.
A desire to eat is normal - but it is sin if you steal or if you are a glutton.
" drink " - " drunkard.
" sleep " - " lazy.
" sex " - " fornication or adultery (Heb.13:4).
" good feelings - " drugs.

Every appetite can be satisfied in a Biblical way. They way an appetite is satisfied will determine whether or not you sinned. All other ways of satisfying your desires are **perversions** of God's way of satisfying them. And they are **obsessions** - they become our master, our idol, our god!
Appetites are to be your servants not your master.

"drawn away" & "enticed" = two phases of the same process. 1) re-divert your attention, then 2) wet your appetite.

"drawn away" = to drag out. To intensely pull toward the enticement. Ex. Potiphar's wife "caught him by his garment..." Gen.39:12.

"entice" = to catch with bait. Ill. of fishing: depicts the juicy worm dangling before the fish to stimulate an inner craving and prompt some anticipated pleasure.

note: When your are tempted, you will see only the attractiveness of the desired object. You won't see the deadly hook underneath! **read Prov.7:6-23** - the wiles of the harlot.

The baits keeps us from seeing the consequences.
* Lot would not have moved to Sodom (with its attractive well watered plains) if he knew the outcome (the death of his sons in law & his wife)
* David would not have committed adultery if he would have known the outcome (the death of his child, murder of a man, incest with his daughter - Tamar, the sword never departing from his house)

Jesus could detect the bait, He knew the consequences and He knew the victory over temptation = knowing the Bible. "It is written" was his defence. "we walk by faith, not by sight".

B.THE COURSE OF SIN IS DEATH (v.15)

We are free to choose not to yield to temptation. But once you yield you are not free to choose the consequences of your choice. This is an unchanging law of God.

In verse 15 James uses the imagery of a life-cycle (conception, birth, growth, and death) to portray what happens in the cycle of sin.

"conceived" = to take together. Just as when the female egg and the male seed (sperm) are joined together life is conceived, when lust and **your will** meet sin is conceived.

You see, Temptation is not sinful per se, (Jesus was tempted Mt.4:1; Heb.2:18) **yielding to it is!**

So you must stop the conception. If you don't starve a wrong desire you will increase your appetite by feeding it and in so doing you have joined lust to your **will** and have sinned.

"lust...bringeth forth sin" - lust is the mother of sin.

"sin" = to miss the mark; fall short of the target. (failing & missing the true end and goal of you life - which is God)

"finished" = to be full grown; matured. Sin having been born has its own life & development. Unless its life & growth are terminated by repentance, sin will eventually become full grown and then will kill you. Sin that is allowed to grow is harder to be stopped.

Ill. it is harder to restrain an infant than a grown man.
Ex. of how much harder older people are to the gospel, than little children. Why? Because sin has become full grown in their lives.

A fixed habit determines the character of the man.

Don't let sin go on in your life! If you let it alone it will kill you!

Ill. Of malignant cancer starts off small but grows & grows and ends in the death of its victim. Don't let sin sink its teeth into your life. Its venom will kill you!

"death" = separation (physically, spiritually, and eternally)
The tragic outcome of sin is death. God says: "Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die?" - No! God loves you! When facing temptation, get your eyes off of the bait and look ahead to see the consequences - Death!

(note: the consequences of yielding to temptation - death- demonstrates that the enticement to do evil cannot be from
God (v.13).

> Sow a thought reap an act. Sow an act reap a habit. Sow a habit reap a destiny.
>
> The second you have a sinful thought you must expel it!
> Once you choose to dwell on it you have exercised your will and sin was conceived.
>
> Ill. "you can't keep the birds from flying overhead, but you can keep them from building a nest in your hair."

verse 16 - is an affectionate warning ("beloved") Deceived = to be led astray, be misled, be caused to wander away from the truth. Verse 16 is like a bridge between verse 15 & verse 17. James is saying don's be deceived about the source of sin (v.13-15), nor about the source of grace (v.17-18).

II. **DON'T STEAL THE CREDIT** (FOR YOUR SALVATION) (v.17-18)

One of Satan's tricks is to convince us (via the world's system) that our Father is withholding from us what we deserve to have. (ex. Satan's approach to Eve) Yet God only gives what is Best for us; and withholds what is bad.

A.THE **SOURCE** OF GRACE IS **GOD** (IT'S FROM ABOVE) (v.17)

This verse proves that God does not tempt to sin, on the **contrary** He only gives good!

"Good gift" = good giving (describes the act of giving) (God gives generously, not sparingly)
The **way** God gives is good. (He doesn't tempt) God's giving is better than Satan's bargaining (in the end you pay for it dearly) ill. shop keepers in Israel enticing you.

"Perfect gift" = (describes the gift itself) (God gives quality not junk)
what He gives is good (it doesn't lead to death)

(Note: "perfect" [ ] maybe linked in thought to "finished" (same gk. word) (v.15) showing a **contrast** between what sin has to offer and what God has to offer.)

If you look at all that God has given you and swell on that, you won't be tempted to dwell on what He has not given you. Ex. Joseph Gen. 39:7 He focused on the fact that he was put in charge of all, but his master withheld only his wife.

Ill. of a child playing with 10 toys yet he (because of selfish sin nature) desires the 1 toy his friend has.

James by saying that gifts come from above is making the point now that they don't just drop out of the sky. Rather they come from the creater of the sky.

"Father of lights" - creator of the stars. (celestial lights; heavenly luminaries) Gen.1:14-16; Ps.136:7; Jer.31:35.
The stars reflect the glory of their creator Ps.19:1; 136:7.

"variableness" = a change in an establish course or pattern. The point is there is no variation with God. (Gal.3:28; Col.3:11)

"shadow of turning" = no shadow cast by turning. Unlike the "lights" (ex. sun & moon - the two great lights Gen.1) that move because of the Earth's rotation, God does not change in his giving.

B.THE COURSE OF SALVATION IS LIFE (v.18)

1.GOD'S WORK "His **own will**" = reflects God's activity in **contrast** to man's (v.14 "his own lust") God does not tempt to sin, rather He saves from sin! And He **does it alone! So He alone deserves the credit**.

"Begat He us" = He gave us birth. To bring forth. (same GK. word as "bringeth forth" v.15) Sin brought forth **death**! God brought forth **life**!

"Begat" - is aorist tense = shows salvation to be **one time** event. One time fact of conversion; One time spiritual birth.

To be born again = A higher birth which means a higher life. It is beneath our dignity to accept Satan's bait or to desire sinful things.

2.GOD'S MEANS "By the word of truth" (interesting: Jesus is called the Word (Jn.1:1), and the Truth (Jn.14:6).

Peter stated that the word was God`s mean to give us rebirth. I Pet.1:23 "being born again...by the word of God..."

"Faith cometh by hearing.. the Word" Rom.10:17.

Word of truth + in **contrast** to the lies that lust offered.

3.GOD'S PURPOSE "firstfruits" = from OT - first portion of the harvest that belonged to God, with a promise of a full harvest just ahead. (Ex.23:19; Lev.23:9-11; Dt.18:4).

"Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase (Prov.3:9).

2 Possibilities: 1) James (writing to Jews 1:1) is applying this term to Jewish Christians. The implication being: More fruit (saved people) will follow after you.
*2) Regenerated believers (in general) are regarded as the first stage of that ultimate renovation of that ultimate renovation of all creation, which presently resides under the divine curse since the fall. (Rom.8:18-23;30).

We as God's firstfruits should give ourselves totally to Him. (give Him your desires & let Him fill you His way!)

CONCLUSION: No matter what excuses we make, we have no one to blame for our sin but ourselves. No matter what we may think about our goodness, no one should receive the credit for our salvation but God. Don't shift the blame! and Don't steal the credit!

God has a will for your life. He has barriers that He has set up so that you might live a victorious life through temptation.
If you heed the barriers, you will win a crown (v.12); If you break through the barriers and give in to temptation you will find a coffin (v.15). Which will it be? (Wiersbe p.46)

"TRUE RELIGION"

(When we really live the Christian Life)

JAMES 1:19-27

6-3-2020

WE NEED TO PRACTICE TRUE RELIGION (CHRISTIANITY)!

How? By following 3 sequential responses to God's Word.

I. HEAR THE WORD - SWIFTLY (v. 19 - 20)

A. DO BE EAGER TO HEAR

B. DON'T INTERRUPT

C. DON'T BE OFFENDED

II. RECEIVE THE WORD - HUMBLY (v. 21).

A. REMOVE SINFUL HINDRANCES.

B. REMAIN TENDER HEARTED

III. OBEY THE WORD - INTENTLY (v. 22 - 27)

A. THE FOOLISHNESS OF THE "HEARER ONLY"

B. THE FAITHFULNESS OF THE "DOER" (v. 25 - 27)

1. He is conscientious (v. 25)
   a. He is a serious reader.
   b. He is a steady reader.
   c. He is a submissive reader.

2. He is consistent in his practice (v. 26 - 27).
   a. Doing the Word takes self-control (v. 26)
   b. Doing the Word takes sacrifice (service) (v. 27a)
   c. Doing the word takes separation.

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How? By following 3 sequential responses to God's Word.

I. _____ THE WORD - _____ (v. 19 - 20)

A. DO BE _____

B. DON'T _____

C. DON'T BE _____

II. _____ THE WORD - _____ (v. 21).

A. REMOVE _____.

B. REMAIN _____

III. _____ THE WORD - _____ (v. 22 - 27)

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"TRUE RELIGION"

(When we really live the Christian Life)

JAMES 1:19-27

6-3-2020

INTRO: The Word of God is shown in verses 19-27 by 3 figures:

1) as seed "implanted" (v. 21)
2) as a mirror (v. 23)
3) as a Law of Liberty (v. 25)

ill. of a man who knew the Bible inside out, but did nothing.

PROP: **YOU NEED TO PRACTICE TRUE RELIGION (CHRISTIANITY)!**

How? By following 3 sequential responses to God's Word.

I. HEAR THE WORD - SWIFTLY (v. 19 - 20)

A, DO BE EAGER TO HEAR

V. 19 - "swift" = quick, fast, speedy, without delay. From the Greek tachos from which we get our English word "tachometer" which measures the speed of the RPM's on a car motor.

"Swift to hear" - eager and attentive, ready to receive and assimilate the message heard.

B. DON'T INTERRUPT

"Slow to speak" - does not mean slowness in speaking; but is an exhortation to restrain hasty, wrong reactions to what is heard.

Ex. of early church - epistle was publicly read.
Others could interact and share.

I Cor. 14:26-33

"Slow" = tardy, late

note: Not late to church or late signing up to serve the Lord.

- many are anxious to speak about God, the Bible, etc., when they know nothing at all about it (Illus. RCC Ladies Bible study)

Cp. 3:1 "Be not many masters (teachers) . . . " Applic. to human relationships: "He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is a folly and shame unto him.

Ill. People in the Middle East love to talk but don't like to listen.

Don't be anxious to add your two cents.

God has given us 2 ears and one mouth!

C. DON'T BE OFFENDED

"Slow to wrath" - a common wrong attitude of one who is convicted by the Word and doesn't want to accept it.

"Wrath" = deep-seated anger

Illus. of Jew's anger when he was confronted with what Christ said.

Illus. - Acts 7 - Stoning of Stephen.

V. 20 -"Righteousness of God" = the right way of living (in thinking and acting) that God requires of us.

Sinful anger is **never justified**.

"Those admonished would have justified themselves by saying that they were angry on account of false teaching. But it is James' conviction that human wrath does not further spiritual ends, even when it appears in the garb of religious zeal." (Hiebert, p. 127).

II. RECEIVE THE WORD - HUMBLY (v. 21).

A. REMOVE SINFUL HINDRANCES.

V. 21 "Lay apart" = to take off, strip off. Word was used of taking off dirty clothes.

"Filthiness" = dirtiness; moral defilement.
"Filthiness" = a medical term used of built-up ear wax.

"Superfluity of naughtiness" = excess of wickedness (evil).

Ex. When we got saved, we put off the "big" sins. We emptied the cup which was full of sin. Now God calls on you to wipe off the remainder. --- those internal sins of wrong attitude.

Sin prevents you from (soaking in) taking in God's Word.
The only reason people don't come to church is sin.
If a person stays away from church for a couple of weeks, I don't look at them as backsliding, but as one who is already backslidden. He doesn't want to hear the Word, because he is clinging on to his sin.

"All" - "God is never satisfied with partial purity, partial goodness, partial righteousness." (Gaebelein, p. 50)
And any known sin in your life will block your reception of the Word.

B. REMAIN TENDER HEARTED

V. 21 "Meekness" = mildness, gentleness (it's a fruit of the Spirit). It is a humble and gentle attitude which expresses itself in a patient submissiveness to that which you don't want to hear, or like to hear.

*This word stands in contrast to the word "wrath" (v. 19, 20).

Moses and our Lord are the only two men referred to as being meek.

"Meekness" - the kind of man whose feelings and emotions are under control.
He is one who opens his heart with teachableness.

"Engrafted" - implanted.
Not referring to birth (as v. 18) but to growth.
God's word like seed has been planted into your heart. Is it growing and producing fruit? **See Mt. 13:1-9**

"Save your souls" = deliver you life! Rescue your life.

"Soul" (psucha) is the immaterial part of man as it relates to this life. "Spirit" (pneuma) relates to God.

By receiving (accepting) the Word, you are guaranteeing a life without ruin, spiritual tragedy.

III. OBEY THE WORD - INTENTLY (v. 22 - 27)

"Doer" - present tense = continual action. (a habit of life).
A key word in Deut. : DO Obey the Law!

"To whomsoever much is given, much shall be required"

It's easier to know what is right than to do what is right.

To learn and not to do is not to learn. Unless a message is acted upon, it is never learned.

Illus. - Spiritual obesity. Fat and lazy Christians (who know everything and do nothing).

"Arm-chair Quarterbacks - have all the answers but never play the game.

Ex. - The failure in Christian schools today is that the kids have no outlet to live what they have learned.

Knowledge puffs up (proud attitude) Love builds up (proper action).

V. 22 "Deceiving" = to misjudge, miscalculate. To miss the point.

You miss the whole point of God's word if you know and don't do. This is the height of foolishness.

Deceived because he thought he really benefitted. Illus. Wise man (a doer) and foolish man (one who does not do Christ's sayings). Mt. 7:24 - 29.

The gospel should have changed your life! We learn truth to live it! Not admire it, worship it, etc.
Illus. of a plow that was donated and sent to Africa. A primitive tribe did not know its purpose, so they set it up on a pedestal and worshipped it. They perverted it from its original design and purpose.

A. THE FOOLISHNESS OF THE "HEARER ONLY"

V. 23 - "Hearer" = an attender at a lecture (ex. Acts 17; Paul at Mars HIll - Greeks wanted only to hear new things).

Applic. : Going to church is not to see and hear a performance. It is to equip you to serve. You are the performers!

"A man beholding" = Gk. word for male in contrast to female. Women are more sensitive by nature. See flaws more easily. (spend more time in front of the mirror)

The Bible is like a mirror. It reflects defects, needs, areas that need change.

A hearer just likes only his ears tickled. II Tim. 4:3

V. 23, 24 - One who knows the Word but does not obey it is like:
l. a man who is lost while holding a map in his hand
2. a man who knows what is wrong with his health but does nothing about it.

Why are some people content to hear the Word and not do it?

1. They are self-deceived (v. 22). Illus. of intellectuals who lack common sense (not practical). They are deceived into thinking that knowing equals righteousness.

This is not true! Ex. The devils believe (know about God) and tremble (Ja. 2:19).

It's your actions that will one day be judged (these are undeniable).

2. They are careless.

--They take too quick a look (v. 24)
--They look without any intention of changing

Or he may:
--look with someone else in mind
--look with good intentions but never get around to doing them.

B. THE FAITHFULNESS OF THE "DOER" (v. 25 - 27)

l. He is conscientious (v. 25)

a. He is a serious reader.

"Looketh into" = to bend over and look intently. To stoop down to see exactly. To examine it minutely. (ex. Bereans).

"Looketh" - the word was used in secular Greek when referring to those who were bent over looking out their windows at someone else's party.

Ex. Jn. 20:5,11 - Disciples bent over and looked intently into the empty tomb.

b. He is a steady reader.

"Continueth" = remain, stay

c. He is a submissive reader.

"Doer" - He puts it into practice.

The way to prevent forgetfulness is by practicing what you know. We remember very little of what we read, a little more of what we hear, a little more of what we see . . . most of what we practice.

Blessing is only in doing!

(the reward comes only to the doer)

Ex. of learning to ride a bike, drive a car, play trumpet, play a sport, etc. -- You can read all the books you want; you don't gain the blessing of learning how until you do it!

2. He is consistent in his practice (v. 26 - 27).

a. Doing the Word takes self-control (v. 26)

"Seem to be" - He is supposing himself to be religious. The picture here is not of a conscious hypocrite, but of a self-deceived religionist.

"religious" - one who supposedly stands in awe of God. He is one who is very interested in everything (every minute detail) that regards worship of God.

"Bridleth not his tongue" - NOTE: the picture is that of a man putting the bridle in his own mouth, not in that of another.

"Vain" = empty, hollow, useless, dead. Illus. of hollow Easter bunnies -- they look promising but there is nothing on the inside).

V. 26 What you say is an evidence of whether or not you have true religion.

V. 27 How you serve is an evidence of true religion.
How you are separated is an evidence also.

b. Doing the Word takes sacrifice (service) (v. 27a)

"pure" - clean

"Undefiled" = free from contamination (Jews were very interested in this) Ex. priest and Levites who excused themselves from helping the man who fell among thieves.

Good Samaritan had real religion!

- "fatherless and widows" are mentioned because they could never repay you.

--Real living of the Bible is serving, helping, giving, etc. to those who can't pay you back. When you give to them, this shows true, pure motives.

"Affliction" = - stress, pressure, tribulation, trouble.

Serving - Christ "came not to be ministered unto but to minister . . ."

Illus. Christ washed the Disciples feet then said, "You ought to wash one another's (Jn. 13:14) Then He said: "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them" (v. 17).

c. Doing the word takes separation.

"Keep himself unspotted from the world" -
"keep" = guard
"unspotted" = unstained
"world" = world system (see Ja. 4:4)

"In the world but not of the world"

"We reach into the world and get involved. Practice the Bible. We pull men out of the filth without swimming in it ourselves.

A doer will not have the world's mark on his life.

CONCL: l) Do you have devotions or devotion?

2) Are you playing Christianity? Is it a game?

PRACTICAL TIPS:

l. Take notes in church
2. Keep notes at home (ex. post them)
3. Take notes during devotions

l. Listen with "ears to hear"
"mind to obey"
2. Listen to see how it applies to you (don't compare self with others)
3. Examine self daily.
Take the time -- think --
"examine yourselves to see whether ye be in the faith"

1. Plan - schedule obedience to what you know
2. Be determined to practice one truth that God teaches or reminds you of each day.

THE SIN OF PARTIALITY

JAMES 2: 1 - 13

7-1-2020

INTRO:

*** YOU and I MUST <u>NOT</u> HAVE PARTIALITY!** (v. 1)
Why not? 4 Reasons:

I. BECAUSE WHEN YOU ARE PARTIAL, YOU HAVE A <u>WRONG VALUE SYSTEM</u> (v. 2-4)

II. BECAUSE WHEN YOU ARE PARTIAL, YOU ARE <u>INCONSISTENT</u> (v. 5 - 7)

A. <u>THEOLOGICALLY</u> – inconsistent with the method of God (v. 5-6a)
1. Those you reject, God <u>selects</u> (v. 5).
2. Those you reject, you <u>dishonor</u> (v. 6a).

B. <u>LOGICALLY</u> - inconsistent with practice of the rich.
1. Those you favor, <u>oppress you</u> (v. 6b).
2. Those you favor, <u>dishonor God</u> (v. 7)

III. BECAUSE WHEN YOU ARE PARTIAL, YOU BREAK THE <u>ROYAL LAW OF LOVE</u> (V. 8-11).

IV. BECAUSE WHEN YOU ARE PARTIAL, YOU ARE GUILTY OF <u>HYPOCRISY</u> (v. 12-13).

Ask yourself:
1. *Am I as <u>interested in the salvation</u> of a poor man as one who is rich? (i.e. - "wierd vs. normal")*
2. *Am I willing to put as <u>much effort</u> into the winning of one who is uncultured as one who is educated?*
3. *Do I show as much compassion for a black as for a white person?*
4. *Am I more excited when a person gets saved who is talented, gifted (a potential leader) as when one with limited gifts gets saved? (Look at their <u>potential</u>! - What God <u>can</u> make them)*

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*** YOU and I MUST <u>NOT</u> HAVE PARTIALITY!** (v. 1)
Why not? 4 Reasons:

I. BECAUSE WHEN YOU ARE PARTIAL, YOU HAVE A _____ _____ (v. 2-4)

II. BECAUSE WHEN YOU ARE PARTIAL, YOU ARE _____ (v. 5 - 7)

A. _____ – inconsistent with the method of God (v. 5-6a)
1. Those you reject, God _____ (v. 5).
2. Those you reject, you _____(v. 6a).

B. _____ - inconsistent with practice of the rich.
1. Those you favor, _____ <u>you</u> (v. 6b).
2. Those you favor, _____ <u>God</u> (v. 7)

III. BECAUSE WHEN YOU ARE PARTIAL, YOU BREAK THE _____ _____ (V. 8-11).

IV. BECAUSE WHEN YOU ARE PARTIAL, YOU ARE GUILTY OF _____ (v. 12-13).

Ask yourself:
1. *Am I as <u>interested in the salvation</u> of a poor man as one who is rich? (i.e. - "wierd vs. normal")*
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THE SIN OF PARTIALITY

JAMES 2: 1 - 13

7-1-2020

INTRO: Illus. - First time impressions are rarely correct.

60% of those in the Roman Empire were of the poor/slave class.

He is saying: Don't try to combine faith in Christ with partiality (the two don't mix).

Snobbery cannot be combined with genuine Christian faith.

"The Lord of glory" - the glory of God was radiant on the face of Jesus Christ (II Cor. 4:6). In the radiance of divine glory that shines from Jesus Christ, all distinctions between rich and poor really disappear.

"There is no difference between Jews and Gentiles . . ." Gal 3:28

"Respect of persons" = lit. to "receive the face"; to show partiality, personal favoritism.

"Respect of persons" = a biased judgment, based on external appearances or circumstances such as race, wealth, social rank, or popularity while not looking at the person's internal true worth (value).

"Respect of persons" - to judge people superficially rather than on the basis of their true worth in God's sight.

Deut. 1:16, 17 - God commanded the judges to "judge righteously between every man and his brother . . . Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; but ye shall hear the small as well as the great; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man . . ."

Prov. 29:25 - "The fear of man bringeth a snare."

Ro. 2:11 - "For there is no respect of persons with God" (cp. Acts 10:34 - Peter realized that God accepted the Gentile Cornelius).

*** YOU MUST NOT HAVE PARTIALITY! (v. 1)**

Why not? 4 Reasons:

I. BECAUSE WHEN YOU ARE PARTIAL, YOU HAVE A WRONG VALUE SYSTEM (v. 2-4)

"Gold ring" - "It was common to wear rings in the ancient world either as a signet ring or as a piece of jewelry for adornment. Sometimes more than one ring was worn and the social status of a person could be noted by the quality of his ring" (cp. Luke 15:22).

"Goodly" = Gk. "Lampros" - from which we get our Eng. word lamp.

> "Goodly apparel" = shining clothes. Some robes were said to have been made from silver which would glisten in the sunlight (Acts 12:21).

"Vile raiment" = dirty, filthy clothes. The normal toga of the Romans was white, as was the robe of the Jews, and political candidates wore a brighter white, which was produced by rubbing it with chalk.

"Respect" = to look upon with attention or interest or favor.

Note the contrast:
"Sit thou here . . ." - expresses the cordial reception of an usher to a rich man; offers him his seat.

"Stand thou there . . ." - expresses an indifferent, unconcerned, rude command.

"Sit here under my footstool" - the speaker has a good seat but will not offer it. He doesn't even offer the footstool; but basically says "Sit on the floor."

"Footstool" = recently excavated synagogues reveal a stone bench running along the walls, with a lower tier for the feet of those sitting ont he bench.

Such harsh, unloving treatment will all the more embitter and discourage the soul of the poor man who perhaps in a sort of desperation from the hardness of the world outside came to find refuge, consideration,a nd respect from God's children.

Jesus did not respect persons. Even his enemies admitted: "We know you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren't swayed by men, because you pay no attention to who they are" (Mt. 22:16 NIV).

"The Lord looketh on the heart" (I Sam. 16:17).

Illus. - widow gave her last mite.

Appli: Church membership - some do not want certain people to join their church (not high enough on the cultural scale, different skin color, nationality, etc.).

Illus: of rich lady who bought her pastor off. She only wanted certain people to join her church.

"Partial" = to judge between two; to discriminate; to differentiate; made a distinction and favor one over another.

Preferential treatment is wrong because you are rejecting one of God's creatures in doing so. Ex. - You can not say you love God and mistreat one of his children, just as you can't say you respect me and mistreat my daughter.

What partiality is not:

Being impartial does <u>not</u> mean that you are not to have close, intimate friends. Jesus was not wrongly partial when He stayed with Mary, Martha, & Lazarus, or when He took Peter James & John apart.

Nor does it mean that you are to like his habits, or agree with everyone on everything.

This verse is dealing with "not being partial in meeting the spiritual needs of all men (favoring rich or neglecting poor).

V. 4 - "Judges" - you need to judge a person's worth as God judges it (He is an immortal soul, created in the image of God).

"Evil thoughts" Sinful motives. Can this happen in a Church today? <u>Yes</u>!

1) When special attention is given to the rich in hopes that they will give money liberally.

Social and economic distinctions should be wiped out by the Gospel.

In the early church, there must have been a sense of awkwardness when the master would sit next to his slave; or if the slave led the service in which his master was but a member of the congregation.

We cater to the rich because we hope to <u>get something out</u> of them, and to avoid the poor because they <u>embarrass</u> us.

II. BECAUSE WHEN YOU ARE PARTIAL, YOU ARE <u>INCONSISTENT</u> (v. 5 - 7)

A. <u>THEOLOGICALLY</u> - INCONSISTENT WITH THE METHOD OF GOD (v. 5-6a)

1. Those you reject, God <u>selects</u> (v. 5).

"Rich in faith" = wealthy in spiritual matters. Because they lack physical possessions, they are more dependent upon God.

God selected the poor - See I Cor. 1:26-29.

Rich people in a church often prove to be a <u>corrupting</u> influence.
---They think they own the place.
---They try to "buy the preacher off" and get him to compromise.

Illus. of Governor Felix who thought that he could get Paul to offer him a bribe (money so that Felix might do Paul a special favor) - Acts 24:26.

It is possible to be poor in this world and rich in the next, or rich in this world and poor in the next. (Luke 16 - Rich man and Lazarus;

I Tim. 6:17-18 - "Charge them that 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; That they do good, that they be rich in Good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate."

2. Those you reject, you <u>dishonor</u> (v. 6a).

"Despised = to treat without honor; (to dishonor), to view as valueless.

B. LOGICALLY - inconsistent with practice of the rich.

1. Those you favor, oppress you (v. 6b).

"Judgment seats = the place where cases are judged, tribunal, law court.

Acts 5:17-18 - "Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees) and were filled with indignation, And laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the common prison."

The very people you are honoring, are the ones that are persecuting you!

Ex. - It seems that when we see someone with great potential and invest much time in them, that they end up stabbing you in the back.

If we are to honor Christ, we must stand with the oppressed, not with oppressors.
Illus. of children in school who like making friends with the bullies so as not to get beaten up themselves.

2. Those you favor, dishonor God (v. 7)

"Worthy name" = Christian

I Peter 4:14-16 - "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye . . . If any man suffer as a Christian, let him glorify God on this behalf."

III. BECAUSE WHEN YOU ARE PARTIAL, YOU BREAK THE ROYAL LAW OF LOVE (V. 8-11).

James anticipated the reply: "God's Law commands us to love our neighbors, and that was what we were doing when we welcomed the rich man."

If love was your motive - OK!

Why called "Royal Law?"
1) It is given by the King (JN. 13:34)
2) t rules all other laws (Ro. 13:10)

"Royal Law" = the sovereign law from our king - Jesus.

God is not saying that we should not love the rich. What He is saying is that we should not love them anymore than the poor. We need to treat the rich and poor equally.

"Love" = not sentimental or romantic, but an attitude of unselfish devotion to seek the well-being of others.

Our motive is not money - it is the spiritual welfare of others.

The priest and the Levite would be the first to say: "We don't respect persons"; but in actuality they did. But the good Samaritan did not.

"Sin" = to miss the mark.

"Transgressor" = one who oversteps the boundaries (steps across into forbidden territory).

Sin always springs from a lack of love. (Love fulfills the whole OT Law).

Applic. - Being a friend to witness to some people (rich, famous, etc.) is partiality - hence it is sin!

Neglecting to witness to some (ex. poor) is also sin.

James responds in verse 10 because the tendency for man is to think that favoritism is a little thing and to say: "Oh, partiality is not wrong; it's not that bad."

Illus. The law is a unity - One missing piece in a puzzle ruins the whole.

The amount of sin doesn't matter - any is wrong. Someone who kept the law 99% of the time but broke it 1% is like the man who kept the law 1% and broke it 99% of the

time.

Applic. - What known sin (however small) are you tolerating?
Today we are not under the Israelite civil and ceremonial law, but still under the moral law that contains timeless, continuing principles.

If you disobey one law, this shows that you are capable of disobeying all of them.

V. 11 - The kind of sin doesn't matter with God - it's still wrong.

With God it does not matter what law we break. No sin is small with God.

IV. BECAUSE WHEN YOU ARE PARTIAL, YOU ARE GUILTY OF HYPOCRISY (v. 12-13).

Note Context: James is still dealing with his teaching that we are not to be hearers only, but doers.

You can hide attitude (whether or not you are partial), but you cannot hide your works.

Our works will be tried by fire (I Cor. 3). What we said and what we did will be judged.

"Law of Liberty" = law that gives freedom.

We will be judged by an impartial law of love (a law that will give us freedom! (salvation) This mercy of God should motivate us to be merciful.

If God will treat us this way, how should we treat others?

Your practice (treatment of others) must be consistent with how Christ treated you. Did he show special favor to you because of any wealth, gifts, abilities, etc. that you had? -- NO!

V. 13 - refusal to show mercy will be like a boomerang in the day of judgment.

"Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy" - Mt. 5:7.

V. 13 - We must not twist this truth into a lie –

1. It does not mean that we earn mercy by showing mercy, because it is impossible to earn mercy. If it is earned, it is not mercy!

2. Nor does it mean that we should be "soft on sin" and never judge it in the lives of others" (Wiersbe, p. 72)

If you have no mercy for others despite economic level (which is an indication that you are not truly saved) you will find none from God (cp. Matt. 18:21-35 - Parable of the unforgiving master).

Paraphrase - "Mercy smiles in the face of judgment" (Phillips transl.).

Mercy can triumph over judgment (not at the expense of justice) because of Calvary. Christ took our judgment for us.

"Rejoiceth" = triumph

Because God's mercy has triumphed over the judgment we deserved, our mercy must triumph in our treatment of others.

Conclusion: Application to Soul-winning -

Ask yourself:

1. Am I as interested in the salvation of a poor man as one who is rich? (i.e. - "wierd vs. normal")

2. Am I willing to put as much effort into the winning of one who is uncultured as one who is educated?

3. Do I show as much compassion for a black as for a white person?

4. Am I more excited when a person gets saved who is talented, gifted (a potential leader) as when one with limited gifts gets saved? (Look at their potential! - What God can make them)

By God's help we can learn like Peter never to call any man "common or unclean" (Acts 10).

Are you willing to bridge the barriers that are separating us from one another in our church?

(Not form cliques)

Let us look at each other as a true brother in the Lord.

SIGNS OF TRUE FAITH

JAMES 2:14-26

7-22-2020

TODAY, WE NEED TO EXAMINE THE GENUINENESS OF OUR FAITH!

What should I look for?

I. LOOK FOR THE <u>SYMPTOMS OF A DEAD FAITH</u> (V. 14-20)

A. A DEAD FAITH GIVES ONLY <u>LIP SERVICE</u> (v. 14-18)

1. His claim to have faith is <u>constant</u> (v. 14)

2. His claim to have faith is <u>without compassionate action</u> (v. 15-17)

3. His claim to have faith is <u>without concrete proof</u> (verse 18).

B. A DEAD FAITH HAS ONLY <u>HEAD KNOWLEDGE</u> (v. 19-20

II. LOOK FOR THE <u>SIGNS OF A LIVING FAITH</u> (v. 21-26)

<u>Two proofs of righteousness</u> (both involve a living faith)

A. LIVING FAITH <u>OBEYS</u> GOD (v. 21-24
Sacrifice out of obedience to God

1. The evidence of faith (v. 21-24)

"Justified" – has two meanings in the N.T. –

1) To <u>pronounce</u> (declare) to be righteous before God (Ro. 3:24-28
2) To <u>prove</u> (show) to be righteous before men (Mt.11:19; Luke 7:29,35; Ro. 3:4; I Tim:3:16
In this context, James is describing the proof/evidence (showing) of one's righteousness (cp. v. 18 – "shew").

2. The Results of faith (v. 22-23)

A faith <u>that works</u> results in:

1) A more <u>mature</u> faith (v.22)

2) <u>Proof</u> that your conversion experience was real (v. 23a)

3) <u>Friendship</u> with God (v. 23b)

3. The Companion (partner) of faith (v. 24)

B. A LIVING FAITH <u>SERVES</u> GOD'S CHILDREN (v. 25-26)

Take spiritual inventory

SIGNS OF TRUE FAITH

JAMES 2:14-26

8-5-2020

TODAY, WE NEED TO EXAMINE THE GENUINENESS OF OUR FAITH!

What should I look for?

I. LOOK FOR THE <u>SYMPTOMS OF A</u> _____ (V. 14-20)

A. A DEAD FAITH GIVES ONLY _____ (v. 14-18)

1. His claim to have faith is _____ (v. 14)

2. His claim to have faith is _____ (v. 15-17)

3. His claim to have faith is _____ (verse 18).

B. A DEAD FAITH HAS ONLY _____(v. 19-20

II. LOOK FOR THE <u>SIGNS OF A</u> _____ (v. 21-26)

<u>Two proofs of righteousness</u> (both involve a living faith)

A. LIVING FAITH _____GOD (v. 21-24
Sacrifice out of obedience to God

1. The evidence of faith (v. 21-24)

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1) To _____ (declare) to be righteous before God (Ro. 3:24-28
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1) A more _____ faith (v.22)
2) _____ that your conversion experience was real (v. 23a)
3) _____ with God (v. 23b)

3. The Companion (partner) of faith (v. 24)

B. A LIVING FAITH _____ GOD'S CHILDREN (v. 25-26)

Take spiritual inventory

SIGNS OF TRUE FAITH

JAMES 2:14-26

7-22-2020

INTRO: Illus. Physical exams are good (beneficial). If a problem is found, they allow you to do something about it before it is too late. If you are well, it is an encouragement to you.

Paul said, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith" - II Cor. 13:5 (in order to be in the faith, you must have true (genuine) saving faith).

This message is vitally important. We can be wrong in a lot of areas in life, but if we are wrong in this matter of having a genuine faith, we jeopardize our eternal salvation.

--What kind of faith really saves a person?

--How can a person tell whether or not he is exercising true saving faith?

Def. of faith: Faith is not a feeling, it is a confidence that God's Word is true and a conviction that it must be obeyed.

There are two types of faith:
1) Dead (unprofitable)
2) Living (profitable)

James in verse 14-20 describes a dead faith--which is actually no faith at all.

TODAY, WE NEED TO EXAMINE THE GENUINENESS OF OUR FAITH!

What should I look for?

I. LOOK FOR THE SYMPTOMS OF A DEAD FAITH (V. 14-20)

This often twisted passage of Scripture of James does not contradict Paul.

Cp. Paul's teaching - "Faith alone" (Rom. 3:28, 4:1-12; Gal. 3:6-14)
Cp. James' teaching - 2:14, 17, 20, 24, 26

Both look at salvation - but from two different time periods. (Paul looks at what it takes to be saved [faith]; James looks at what results from being saved [works]).

See: Ephes. 2:8-10.

"My brethren" is placed in the middle of the question to show tender concern. It shows James' hope that they will not be like the people described.

A. A DEAD FAITH GIVES ONLY LIP SERVICE (v. 14-18)

1. His claim to have faith is constant (v. 14)

"Say" = present tense, showing that this person repeatedly claims to have faith. He is sincere!

Lit. "Can that faith save him" - the Greek has the definite article, which functions as a demonstrative pronoun (It is called "the article of previous reference" and refers back to the word "faith" in the question).

"Works" - does not mean legalistic works for salv. (ex. going back under Judaism) but rather the works of love that spring forth after salvation.

"Faith alone justifies; but faith that justifies is never alone."

Mt. 7:21 - "Not everyone who says to me Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of Heaven."

2. His claim to have faith is without compassionate action (v. 15-17)

"Brother or sister" = believers.

Those of the "household of faith" ()Gal. 6:10)

(NOTE: Obligation is to male and female alike - no partiality - cp. previous context)

Don't confine yourselves to your family only, but also to your spiritual relatives in the Lord's family.

Food & clothing are basic needs of every human being.
Paul said: "And having food and raiment let us be therewith content" (I Tim. 6:8).

"Naked" = wearing only an undergarment (cp. JN. 21:7).

"Daily food" = not even a "day's supply of food"

The double need shows the extremely destitute situation. The individual is both cold and hungry.

To by-pass obvious needs reveals heartlessness. One who is saved and recognizes what Christ has given him will not neglect to give to others. This is true faith!

"Go in peace" - a kind expression designed to give the person a feeling of peace and well-being. Jesus used these words (LK. 7:50; 8:48)--but only after he had met their needs.

"Be warmed and filled" - corresponds to the words "Naked" and "food" -- shows the speaker was well aware of the needs.

Note passive verb "be" - indicating, "Let someone else (ex. God, church, etc.) clothe you and feed you."

A dead faith paralyzes the arm from helping, paralyzes the hand from giving, paralyzes the leg from going, but does not paralyze the tongue from speaking.

People with a dead faith substitute words for deeds.

Appli: When you see a need meet it! Don't just say, "I'll be praying for you . . ."

Appli: These people praise virtue, but do not practice it.

They know the correct vocabulary for prayer and testimony and can even quote the right verses from the Bible.

“Salvation is not seen by words of lips but by works of life.”

Paul said to Titus: “They profess that they know God, but in works they deny Him” (Tit. 1:16).

“Ye give them not” – the problem was not inability to give; but no desire to give.
(If God has given to you [in response to genuine faith when you asked Him], you will give tp others).
Compare Job 31:16-22

To help a person is an expression of love.
John said: I John 3:17-1 – “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? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.”

Ex. Of priest and levite in parable of good Samaritan.

C.H. Spurgeon said: “If you want to give a hungry man a tract, wrap it up in a sandwich” He could also have said, “If you want to give a hungry man a sandwich, wrap it up in a tract.”

People don’t care how much you know, until they know how much you care.

V. 17 – any profession (declaration, testimony) of faith that does not result in a changed life and good works is a false profession.

“Dead” = lifeless; unable to save (cp. v 14b)

The “faith had a splendid opportunity to show its life, but it’s failure to act showed that is was lifeless. (Lenski, p. 589)

Illus. Of a dead tree that bears no leaves, fruit, etc.

Faith in Christ brings <u>life</u> (I John 5:12) (to the inner man – what you <u>are</u>). And where there is life there must be growth and fruit (an outworking – what you <u>do</u>).

“No man can come to Christ by faith and remain the same anymore than he can come into contact with a 220 volt wire and remain the same” (Wiersbe, p, 78

3. His claim to have faith is <u>without concrete proof</u> (verse 18).

In effect he is saying, "Suppose that we have only faith." Then a man could easily challenge us by saying, "You say that you have faith and I merely have good actions. Well, go ahead and show me (prove to me) your faith without actions [it can't be done], and I will show you (prove) my faith by my actions."

"Show"= demonstrate, exhibit.

Faith is invisible, but its fruits are not.

Works <u>prove</u> that he has faith, because without that faith he could not and would not do them (out of pure motives).

Being a Christian involves trusting Christ and living for Christ; you <u>receive</u> the life, then you <u>reveal</u> the life. (Wiersbe, p. 79)

Illus. Of a tight rope walker across Niagara Falls. Asks "Who believes I could carry a person across?" They all did. But none would dare volunteer.

B. A DEAD FAITH HAS ONLY HEAD KNOWLEDGE (v. 19-20

"Believe" = an intellectual acknowledgment in this verse (just as Simon in Acts :13)

"One God" = God is one

Shows unity of Godhead; and monotheism. This was a Jewish confession of faith (Deut 6:4-5 – the "Shema").

James' point is that religious beliefs without religious acts show your beliefs to be nothing more than what the demons have (cp. the demons confession – Mk. 5:1-10; 1:23-34). There are no atheistic or skeptic demons. (agnostic)

An intellectual, orthodox confession of faith is good, but if it is alone, it is tragic! James shatters the idea that knowledge = spirituality.

James wanted to shock his complacent readers, so he used demons as his illustration.

NOTE: James gives the demons even more credit. They "believe" (Intellect) and "tremble" (emotional), but exercise no good acts of the will (volitional).

"Tremble" = to shudder; lit – to bristle. It conveys the picture of a horror that causes the hair to stand on end. They are aware of their doom (Mt. 8:29, 25:51; Lk. 8:31).

True faith involves the whole man. The mind understands the truth; the heart desires the truth; and the will acts upon the truth.

We can't be content with just defending doctrine (dead orthodoxy) – we must live them!

"Wilt thou know" = are you willing to know?

"Vain" = hollow, empty. One who has an outward shell of Christianity but no inner reality.

Dead faith is a counterfeit faith that puts a person to sleep (spiritually) with a false confidence of eternal life.

You may have been deluded by the devil! And accepted an imitation.

Are you willing to examine yourself? (Your faith will stand he acid test if it is real)

II. LOOK FOR THE SIGNS OF A LIVING FAITH (v. 21-26)

Two proofs of righteousness (both involve a living faith)

A. LIVING FAITH OBEYS GOD (v. 21-24

Sacrifice out of obedience to God

1. The evidence of faith (v. 21-24)

Illustration: a child. "Did you get into the pudding?" He/She says "No" but the evidence is all over his face!

"Abraham" – carried a lot of weight with the Jews

We are saved by putting 100% of our faith in the Word of God (Ja. 1:18, 21; I Pet. 1:23; Ro. 10:17)

Faith cometh by hearing.

Faith is only as good as it's object – many say "I believe!" …. But in what??

"Justified" – has two meanings in the N.T. –

1) To declare (pronounce) to be righteous before God (Ro. 3:24-28 {Justified Freely by faith}, 5:1; Lk. 18:14 {Publican was justified})

2) To prove (show) to be righteous before men (Mt. 11:19 {Wisdom is justified of her children}; Luke 7:29, 35; Ro. 3:4; I Tim:3:16 {Christ was proven to be righteous be the power of the Spirit. He promised that He would rise again and He did by the Sprit's power})

In this context, James is describing the proof/evidence (showing) of one's righteousness (cp. v. 18 – "shew").

NOTE: God's declaration of Abraham's righteousness (Gen. 15:6) occurred 30 years before he offered up Isaac (Gen. 22).

"Offered up Isaac" – see Heb. 11:17-19 –

God's commanding Abraham to offer up Isaac seemed inconsistent with God's promise to raise up a nation through Isaac – yet Abraham believed and obeyed and by his sacrificial obedience proved that his faith 30 years prior was real!

Abraham believed God enough not to question Him when God asked him to offer Isaac.

Abraham's obedience proved the reality of his trust.

2. The Results of faith (v. 22-23)

A faith <u>that works</u> results in:

1) A more <u>mature</u> faith (v.22)

"Perfected" = to reach the goal

"Wrought with" = cooperated with; worked together

-- Abraham was not saved by a faith plus works, but by a faith that works.

2) <u>Proof</u> that your conversion experience was real (v. 23a)

"Abraham believed God" – as long as my faith is in <u>me</u>, it won't work. Abraham had faith <u>in</u> God, not about God.

"Imputed" – is a legal or financial term; it means to credit or to "put in one's account." As a sinner, Abraham's spiritual <u>bankbook</u> was empty. He was bankrupt! But he trusted God's word and God put righteousness on his account.

3) <u>Friendship</u> with God (v. 23b) – intimate closeness (Jn. 15:15: " I no longer call you servants… but friends"

Cp. II Chron. 20:7 (Jehosaphat says to God "Abraham your friend); Is. 41:8 (God Himself refers to "Abraham my friend")

3. The Companion (partner) of faith (v. 24)

B. A LIVING FAITH <u>SERVES</u> GOD'S CHILDREN (v. 25-26)

James now uses the opposite extreme (from that of Abraham). People might have said "How do you expect us to live up to Abraham?

"Rahab" – was a Gentile (Canaanite), a woman, immoral, without stature.

Rahab is in the list of heroes of the faith (Heb. 11:31).

See Josh. 2:1-14

"Received" = to welcome and serve

"Sent out" = indicates energetic action; she acted with urgency and personal concern for their safety.

Rahab responded with her mind (she knew her city was condemned), and her emotions ("their hearts melted" – Josh. 2:11), but she also responded with her <u>will</u> – she did something about it (she risked her life to protect the Jewish spies).

Rahab realized her <u>obligation</u> to meet the needs of God's people.

If you had real faith you would:

Love the saints:

because God is love and He lives in you (I Jn. 4:7-8) . . .

Love your mate:
Forgive – because God forgave you.
Serve – because God has been good to you
Witness – because God has saved you.

Just as the body (external) without the spirit (internal) is dead, so Faith (internal) without works (external) is dead also.

In His Original creation, God joined the body and Spirit together. In his new creation, He joins faith and deeds together. " What God joins together we dare not put asunder." Blanchard, p,. 175

James is saying: Faith and works are inseparable. A faith that does nothing is of no more value than a lifeless corpse.

Paul's theme : No man can <u>produce</u> justification <u>by</u> good deeds. James' theme: No man can <u>prove</u> justification <u>without</u> good deeds.

Conclusion:

Take spiritual inventory. Ask yourself:

1) Have I truly realized I was a hell-bound sinner and needed Christ?

2) Have I trusted Christ and Him alone?

3) Has there been a change in my life? "If any man be in Christ he is a <u>new</u> creation…." II Cor. 5:17

   a. Do I sacrifice anything to God?

   b. Do I serve other believers?

4. Do I desire to share Christ with others, or am I ashamed of Him?

5) Do I enjoy the fellowship of God's people?

6) Am I ready for the Lord's return?

Recapitulation –

A. Are the symptoms of a dead faith in your life? Is our profession merely lip service or head knowledge?

B. Or are the signs of a living faith in your life? A faith that sacrifices to God and serves God's children.

*Note: I am not calling on you to examine the strength of your faith, or the amount of it, but the genuineness of it!

How to Talk

JAMES 3:1-12
8-19-2020

WE NEED TO SERIOUSLY GUARD OUR TONGUES!

I. THE POWER OF THE TONGUE (V. 1-6)

A. IT HAS THE POWER TO DIRECT (V. 1-4)

1. Power to direct others (therefore its use is serious) (v. 1)

2. Power to direct your own life (even though its size is small) (v. 2-4)

B. IT HAS THE POWER TO DESTROY (v. 5-6)

1. A fire starts off small (v. 5)
2. A fire heats things up
3. A fire defiles
4. A fire spreads
5. A fire is started from fire

II. THE PROBLEM OF THE TONGUE (V. 7-12)

A. THE PROBLEM OF HUMAN CONTROL (v. 7-8)

B. THE PROBLEM OF SINFUL INCONSISTENCY (v. 9-12)

How to Talk

JAMES 3:1-12
8-19-2020

WE NEED TO SERIOUSLY GUARD OUR TONGUES!

I. THE <u>POWER</u> OF THE TONGUE (V. 1-6)

A. IT HAS THE POWER TO _____ (V. 1-4)

1. Power to direct _____ (therefore its use is serious) (v. 1)

2. Power to direct _____ (even though its size is small) (v. 2-4)

B. IT HAS THE POWER TO _____ (v. 5-6)

1. A fire _____ (v. 5)
2. A fire _____
3. A fire _____
4. A fire _____
5. A fire is _____

II. THE <u>PROBLEM</u> OF THE TONGUE (V. 7-12)

A. THE PROBLEM OF _____ (v. 7-8)

B. THE PROBLEM OF _____ (v. 9-12)

How to Talk

JAMES 3:1-12
8-19-2020

INTRO: Solomon said: "Death and life are in the power of the tongue" Prov. 18:21

The power of speech is one of the greatest powers God has given us. With the tongue, man can praise God, pray, preach, lead a soul to Christ, comfort, encourage . . . What a privilege!

But that same tongue can tell lies, ruin a man's reputation, split a church, or break a person's heart.

WE NEED TO SERIOUSLY GUARD OUR TONGUES!

I. THE <u>POWER</u> OF THE TONGUE (v. 1-6)

A. IT HAS THE POWER TO <u>DIRECT</u> (v. 1-4)

1. Power to direct <u>others</u> (therefore, its use is serious) (v. 1)

In N.T. times, the potential to teach false doctrine was greater than today because they did not have a completed N.T.

In early church, like today, some (no doubt) loved to talk without really having anything to say. Or even worse, what they said was false and misleading (cf. I Tim. 1:7).

It is an awesome responsibility to teach God's Word.

Teachers had better teach God's word accurately and live it consistently. A teacher who is not well-prepared or whose life is not right will face strict judgment for what was said.

This special strictness is on account of a teacher's <u>influence</u> over

other persons.

All men (especially teachers) must recognize the eternal significance of what they say.

We need to realize that "to speak is to teach" - Everytime you speak you are teaching.

--Every word is vital!
A Bible teacher is a doctor of the mind and heart.
We will give an account for every useless word we utter (Mt. 12:36).

2. Power to direct your own life (even though its size is small) (v. 2-4)

He is saying: We all stumble (into sin) in various manners (ex. thoughts [evil motives, evil intentions, evil desires], and actions [we either neglect to do, or do wrong]). . . . But the hardest area to control is your tongue.

"Perfect" = complete, mature.
Your spiritual maturity is measured by your speech.

Our mouths have the potential to control our entire life.

Our mouths are the easiest areas to slip up (an when you do, all your tongue is doing is manifesting what is in your heart).

It is amazing that a 1 lb. bridle controls a 500 lb. animal.

Your guide (direct) that which is large by controlling that which is small.
Illus. Steering column that went out on my V.W. --small but significant!

Just as the bit when turned gives direction to the rider, the direction of a man's whole life may be turned by the use he makes of his tongue.

What you say will determine the course of your life!

The tongue has the power to direct (for good) but it must overcome your contrary old nature.

V. 4 - The bit must overcome the wild nature of the horse, and the rudder, the winds and currents

Sin on the inside and pressures on the outside are seeking to gain control of the tongue.

Illus. of the power of just a few words. Just a simple "Yes" or "No" from the lips of a parent can greatly affect the direction of a child's life.

Your words are especially important to the lost. Example -

On April 21, 1855, Edward Kimbell went into a Boston shoe store and led young D. L. Moody to Christ. The result was phenomenal.

Beware of what you say! Your words have the power to direct for good or bad.

Prov. 15:1 - "A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger."

Prov. 12:22 - "Lying lips are abomination to the Lord: but they that deal truly are his delight."

B. IT HAS THE POWER TO DESTROY (v. 5-6)

The tongue is the world's smallest but largest troublemaker.

Our words can start fires (Prov. 26:20-21 - "Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where thee is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth. As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire; so is a contentious man to kindle strife.")

(NOTE: On the other hand, they can start fires of revival).

V. 6 - Children say: "Sticks and stones may break my bones but names will never hurt me." But that is not true! Evil words have the power to destroy!

Sins of the tongue:

1) gossip [when you hear gossip,
   1) stop the conversation;
      2) ask the person to go to the one he/she is talking about to straighten it out]

2) foolish jesting

3) slang ["minced oaths" – ex. substitutes for God ("gosh," "golly"); Jesus ("Gee whiz")]

4) cursing [remember when you hear it -- silence is consent.]

Our tongue has the potential to destroy much good.

Prov. 16:28 - "A whisperer separateth chief friends."
Prov. 17:9 - "He that repeateth a matter separateth very friends."
Prov. 18:8 - "The words of a talebearer are as wounds"

A careless word does destroy as much as a deliberately wrong word. An arsonist and a careless camper can do the same amount of damage.

1. A fire starts off small (v. 5)

A little spark can ruin an entire forest.
Illus. Chicago's fire (8:30 p.m., Oct. 8, 1871) started from a cow kicking over a lantern, which started a barn on fire. Result = 100,000 people left homeless, 17,500 buildings destroyed, 300 people died, it cost the city $400,000,000.

2. A fire heats things up
(The uncontrolled tongue expresses the unrighteousness of the world)

Like a fire, the tongue can heat things up. (Ps. 39:1, 3)

Prov. 17:27 NASV - "He who restrains his words has knowledge; And he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding."

3. A fire defiles
(The uncontrolled tongue stains the whole person)

"Defile" = "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man (ex. food); but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man."

Ex. The Temple was burned and thus defiled (in O.T. by Babylon; 70 A.D. by Romans).

Ex. My home on Arch Street that was burned. The smoke, water damage, and fire itself ruined everything.

Appli: Fiery words can defile a marriage, a home, a S.S. class, a job relationship, friendship, etc.

But this verse is teaching that it will totally, 100% defile your whole

person. We can't sin with our lips and come away without burnt, defiled character.

4. A fire spreads
(The tongue's destructive force ruins a whole life and the lives of others)

A fire not only defiles you, but it spreads to others--to everyone that comes in contact with your life.

The more fuel you give it, the faster and farther it will spread.

5. A fire is started from fire
(The tongue's destructive force is set on fire by the demonic forces of Hell)

We shouldn't call wrong language "gutter language"; rather - "pit language," because it comes right out of the pit of hell!

You must realize that while the tongue can be set on fire of hell, it can also be touched (if you will) by a live coal from God's altar and cleansed! (Is. 6:5-7)

II. THE PROBLEM OF THE TONGUE (v. 7-12)

A. THE PROBLEM OF HUMAN CONTROL (V. 7-8)

"Beasts" - wild animals (ex. dogs, lions, tigers)

"Birds" (ex. parakeets, etc.)

"Serpents" _ex. boa constrictors; snake charmers, etc.)

"Sea creatures" (ex. dolphins, whales)

"Unruly evil" = a restless evil. Picture of a wild animal pacing back and forth, looking for what it may devour. The tongue never rests (by itself) from doing evil. Ex. evil, aggressive words; loud.

"Full of deadly poison" = picture of a snake. He is calling the tongue an uncontrollable, venomous serpent (cp. Rom. 3:13 - "The poison of asps is under their lips")

"Poison" - deceptively mild words. Like venom it slowly sinks in, then kills! Don't use innuendos, jokes, etc. designed to hurt others.

Without God's transforming power, the tongue will not stop (rest) from speaking evil, nor will anything drain it of its poison.

No man is able to tame the tongue (not you, nor others).
Appli: Give up trying to improve your speech and give in to surrendering to the Holy Spirit.

Just as a skillful and strong hand is needed to keep a horse under control and a ship on course (v. 3, 4), we need God's power to control our tongues.

Ps. 141:3-4a - "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips. Incline not my heart to any evil thing."

David knew that the heart is the key to right speech. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." (Mt. 12:34)

The change we need is not plastic surgery on our lips but a real open heart surgery by God on our hearts!

Illus. of a girl who did nothing but gossip. "She came to the pastor one day and said, "Pastor, the Lord has convicted me of my sin of gossip. My tongue is getting me and others into trouble." The pastor knew she was not sincere because she had gone through that routine before. Guardedly, he asked, "Well, what do you plan to do?" "I want to put my tongue on the altar," she replied with pious fervor. Calmly the pastor answered, "There isn't an altar big enough," and he left her to think it over." (Wiersbe, p. 89)

It is one miracle of grace that a man's vocabulary can be radically changed when he comes under the power of the saving Christ! (Colson, p. 51).

Illus. of E.R. Jordan (don't use his name) who was a cursing sailor until saved. Now is a preacher! Only God could do such a change!

B. THE PROBLEM OF SINFUL INCONSISTENCY (v. 9-12)

The unspiritual tongue is capable of going from one extreme to the other (ex. like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde)

V. 9 "Bless" = to speak well of; to praise

"Curse" = lit. to speak down upon, to insult
(gossip, slander, belittling)

Eph. 4:29-30 - "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

Illus. Some drugs (ex. strychnine and opium) can be poisons (if used in a wrong way) or can be cures (when controlled by wise doctors)

The tongue can be used to bless or curse, wound or soothe, heal or harm.

"Made after the similitude of God" = this shows that we should have real appreciation for the worth (value) of every human being.

When you injure a man, you sin against the Creator.

As a dad, if you were to curse my son or daughter you would offend me more than if you were to curse me. It's the same way with God . . . If you knew that God loves others as much as He loves you, you wouldn't curse them.

Many people can speak with perfect courtesy to strangers, and even preach/teach love and gentleness, and yet snap with ungraciousness and impatient anger at their own family at home.

Blessing and cursing should not come out of the same mouth. ~A single mouth ought to produce a single message!"

An ungodly (devilish) message ought not to come out of a saint of God.

Prov. 10:11 - "The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life; but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked."

Prov. 13:14 -"The law of the wise is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death."

Prov. 18:4 - "The words of a man's mouth are as deep waters, and the wellspring of wisdom as a flowing brook."

Water may give life or death (ex. flood).

Sweet water cleanses, gives life, etc., but bitter (salt) water burns (illus. Dead Sea - no cuts on body) and does not give life.

One fountain either has bitter water or sweet water, not both.

Nature produces after its kind (examine your faith!) Your works will reveal its genuineness -- NOTE context 2:14-26.

You don't go to a sweet water source to get bitter. Illus. the Dead Sea will never produce fresh water (until God miraculously changes it). The Sea of Galilee will never produce salt water.

Appli: How easy it is to sing hymns at church, smile, greet each other, etc. - then after the service, get into the family car and argue and fight all the way home!

Conclusion:

*Wisdom from **Proverbs 15** on how to use my tongue:*

1. Speak **soft (gentle)** responses (v.1)
2. Speak **well thought out** answers (v.2)
3. Speak solutions that bring **help & healing** (v.4)
4. Speak with **insight, perception & wisdom** (v.7)

5. Speak by offering advice **at the right time** (v.23)
6. Speak with **kindness & pleasantness** (v.26)
7. Speak with **restraint & self-control** (v.28)
8. Speak with **encouraging**, positive body language & encouraging content (v.30)

Some words that can change your life: "Please" "Thank you" "I'm sorry" "I love you" "I'm praying for you" "Can I help you in any way?"

Wash your mouth out with the soap of the Word of God by the scrubbing power of the Spirit of God.

"Be sure your heart is in gear with the Holy Spirit before you let out the clutch on your tongue" (Colson, p. 56).

The bottom line is this: Seek to please God by everything you say!

"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)

How to Practice True Wisdom

JAMES 3:13-18

9-2-2020

*** WE NEED TO KNOW HOW TO PRACTICE TRUE WISDOM.**

How? By knowing what it is and isn't.

In verses 14-18, two different kinds of wisdom are described: godly and ungodly, a true and false, a real and a counterfeit, a heavenly and a hell-sent wisdom.

I. THE EVIDENCES OF THE "WISDOM" FROM HELL (v. 14-16)

(evidences that "give away" false wisdom)

A. SUCH "WISDOM" HAS AN UNMISTAKABLE IDENTITY (v. 14a)

1. Satan's wisdom is against others - "bitter jealousy"

2. Satan's "wisdom" is only out for oneself - "selfish ambition"

B. SUCH "WISDOM" OFFERS AN UNJUSTIFIABLE COVER-UP (V. 14b)

C. SUCH "WISDOM" COMES FROM AN UNGODLY SOURCE (v. 15)

1. "Out of a sinful heart" (v. 14)
2. It is "not from above"
3. It is "earthly"
4. It is "sensual."
5. It is "devilish."

D. SUCH "WISDOM" PRODUCES UNDESIRABLE FRUIT (v. 16)

The results of worldly wisdom are disastrous!

"Confusion" = disorder; chaos.

"Every evil work" = every rotten practice

II. THE EVIDENCES OF THE WISDOM FROM HEAVEN (v. 13; v. 17-18)

A. THIS WISDOM IS FROM DIVINE ORIGIN (v. 17)

B. THIS WISDOM HAS GOD-HONORING CHARACTERISTICS (v. 17)

It reveals itself in:

1. Holiness - "pure"
2. Meekness
3. Goodness
4. Sincerity

C. THIS WISDOM PRODUCES FRUITFUL RESULTS (v. 18).

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C. SUCH "WISDOM" COMES FROM AN UNGODLY SOURCE (v. 15)

1. "Out of a _____" (v. 14)
2. It is "_____"
3. It is "_____"
4. It is "_____"
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1. _____ - "pure"
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

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How to Practice True Wisdom

JAMES 3:13-18

9-2-2020

INTRO: Context: Note previous context of the tongue - 3:1-12.

In speaking about wisdom, James is shifting just slightly, but the words he uses still point to the fact that he is speaking about the use of the tongue - the wise use of it.

Knowledge is not enough! You need wisdom to know how to use knowledge. We all know people who are very intelligent, perhaps almost geniuses, and yet they can`t carry out the simplest tasks in life. They can run computers, high tech. equipment, etc., but cannot manage their own lives, families (wives and children).

I don't believe our problem is a lack of Bible knowledge but rather a lack of putting it into practical everyday living. "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom" (Prov. 4:7).

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Why? Because when you fear God you practice His word -- you are not merely content to know it.

"Wise" = moral insight and skill in deciding how to obey the truth known. (it's easy to know truth; it's difficult to know how to practice it).

"Understanding" = one who has the knowledge of an expert, specialist.

"Show" = prove. James demands that the possession of wisdom, like faith (2:14-26), must be proved by conduct.

One's works, not words, are the acid test of his wisdom.

Whereas James described the kind of works that prove real faith (in 2:14-26), now he describes the manner in which we work that proves real wisdom (3:13-18).

It's not just what you do that counts--it's how you do it!

We can do all the right things as Christians, but if we do them in the wrong Spirit (attitude) we are just as bad as if we didn't do them at all.

EX: Ladies, what would you think of your fiance if he bought you a $5,000 diamond engagement ring, but threw it at you?

* **WE NEED TO KNOW HOW TO PRACTICE TRUE WISDOM.**

How?

By knowing what it is and isn't.

In verses 14-18, two different kinds of wisdom are described: godly and ungodly, a true and false, a real and a counterfeit, a heavenly and a hell-sent wisdom. You know whenever there is a "real" in circulation, the Devil will always produce a counterfeit.

Illus. Game show "To Tell the Truth" -- "Will the real Mr. _____ please stand up."

I. THE EVIDENCES OF THE "WISDOM" FROM HELL (v. 14-16)

(evidences that "give away" false wisdom)

A. SUCH "WISDOM" HAS AN UNMISTAKABLE IDENTITY (v. 14a)

1. Satan's wisdom is against others - "bitter jealousy"

"Envying" = zeal; neutral word - can be good or bad zeal, context determines.

God-honoring zeal is good, but if the sin nature is allowed to turn your good zeal into bitter zeal against those who you feel are less than you are, then it is wrong.

"Bitter" = comes from a root meaning: "to cut" or "prick"

"This is the kind of jealousy that cannot bear someone else's popularity or success and, given the opportunity, will do anything it can to humiliate and degrade that person . . ." (Blanchard, p. 209).

Do you rejoice when others succeed? Or do you have secret envy and criticism? Do we feel bad when others fail, or glad?

We are not in competition with each other!!

2. Satan's "wisdom" is only for oneself - "selfish ambition"

"Strife" = selfish ambition; Illus. of people who in striving to climb the corporate ladder step on all others to do so.

This word describes one who works, but for selfish advantage--what he can get out of it.

Also means - saying/doing anything it takes to accomplish my Purpose or get my own way.

Illus. of people who work only for pay/$.

It describes one who works to promote a definite cause (even a good cause) in an unethical manner.

The end does not justify the means.

On T.V., in the movies, in magazines, etc., the "wise man" is portrayed as the "clever guy," "tough guy," "the smart operator," who knows how to bribe, cheat, lie, speak harshly, etc., as he practices his "sophisticated" worldly wisdom of selfish ambition.

B. SUCH "WISDOM" OFFERS AN UNJUSTIFIABLE COVER-UP (V. 14b)

You know when you are bitterly zealous and when you are being divisive because of personal ambition, and James is now telling you not to compound your sin by justifying it -- by
1) boasting about it or
2) denying it (by lying against the truth)

Men will go to great lengths to try to hide their true selves from each other and even from their own eyes.

"Glory not" = don't take pride in your supposed superiority over others. You are not to boast about your type of wisdom which does not know how to behave even in defending a good cause.

"Lie not" - By your wrong attitude your are denying the truth you claim to possess and defend.

A bitter and selfish attitude is never justified!

We are deceived into believing the lie of the Devil that we are justified.

C. SUCH "WISDOM" COMES FROM AN UNGODLY SOURCE (v. 15)

1. "Out of a sinful heart" (v. 14)

2. It is "not from above"
Only good and perfect gifts (things) come from above (1:17).

3. It is "earthly"

"Earthly, sensual, devilish" - correspond to the Christian's 3 enemies: "The world, the flesh, and the devil" (Eph. 2:1-3).

"Earthly" = limited to this globe; not in God's heaven.

Cp. Paul's rebuking the Corinthians. "The wisdom of the world is foolishness with God" (1:20; 2:5-6)

I am not saying that the world does not have knowledge - it has a great deal. The problem is that there is not a whole lot of wisdom. Man is unlocking the secrets of the universe (built into creation by God), yet he does not know what to do with them.

4. It is "sensual."

"Sensual" = "from the soul" (the immaterial part of man as it relates to this life - that part of man that he has in common with animals). The spirit of man is the immaterial part of man as it relates to God.

5. It is "devilish."

"Devilish" = inspired by evil spirits; demons who carry out Satan's work.

APPLI: When you are acting with bitter zeal, and selfish ambition, you are actually a puppet for Satan.

Even if you supposedly are acting so for a "noble cause," he is laughing all the time.

"James detects the work of demons in seeking to corrupt the harmony and very life of the Body of Christ" (Hiebert, p. 232).

D. SUCH "WISDOM" PRODUCES <u>UNDESIRABLE FRUIT</u> (v. 16)

The results of worldly wisdom are <u>disastrous</u>!

"Confusion" = disorder; chaos. Jesus used this word to describe the disorder and instability of the world in the last days (Lk. 21:9). "You shall hear of wars and commotions."

Instead of promoting harmony, this "wisdom" causes disruption; instead of creating a closer fellowship, it destroys it.

Illus. Church business meetings.

"God is not a God of disorder but of peace." (I Cor. 14:33).

Illus. of a Christian on a talk show who was defending Christ (against the blasphemous "Last Temptation of Jesus" movie), but in an uncontrolled, impatient manner. He said great things, but the manner in which he said them made his <u>emotions</u> stand out above his message, and no one understood him.

"Every evil work" = every rotten practice

"evil" = foul, rotten (used of rotten fruit), good for nothing

APPLI: Instead of a church, family, friendship, etc., growing, it becomes rotten.

Your attitudes (bitterness, strife) will result in actions! (practices)

No sin is isolated or benign. Sin like cancer is malignant. It spreads and destroys. It will always work its way out.

Because of bitter zeal and selfish ambition: Satan fell, Cain killed Abel, Absalom stole the hearts of Israel, Haman erected his own hanging scaffold, and the Jewish leaders delivered Jesus to Pilate.

The result of such action is splits - split relationships: split families, split friendships, split churches.

One of the sins that God hates is that of sowing "discord among the brethren" (Prov. 6:16-19).

II. THE EVIDENCES OF THE WISDOM FROM HEAVEN (v. 13; v. 17-18)

A. THIS WISDOM IS FROM DIVINE ORIGIN (v. 17)

True wisdom comes only from God.

I Kings 4:29 - "And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore."

Prov. 2:6 -"For the Lord given wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding."

Eccles. 2:26 - "For God giveth to a man that is good in his sight wisdom, and knowledge, and joy: but to the sinner he giveth travail, to gather and to heap up, that he may give to him that is good before God. This also is vanity and vexation of spirit."

I Cor. 2:6, 10 -"Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought . . . But God hath revealed them to us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

B. THIS WISDOM HAS GOD-HONORING CHARACTERISTICS (v. 17)

It reveals itself in:

1. Holiness - "pure"

"First, pure" - points out that the inner quality is of utmost importance! God is primarily concerned with what we are and only then with what we do.

"Pure" = holy, set apart from contamination unto God.

We need to practice a lifestyle that flees away from inner contamination. We need to develop a delicate sensitivity to pollution of any kind.

(A pure person will have pure words
thoughts
actions)

2. Meekness (v. 13b; v. 17)

v. 13 "Meekness" - is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22) so it cannot be manufactured by man.

Meekness is not weakness but power under control. The Greek word was used for a horse that had been broken so that his power was under control.

II Tim. 2:24 - "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient.

I Pet. 3:15 - "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear."

a. Peaceful personality

"Peaceable" - seeks to restrain discord, and promotes "right relationships between man and man, and between man and God."

**But note: it does not pursue peace at the expense of purity! It will not compromise with sin to maintain peace.

Illus. Abraham Lincoln has been called a man of velvet steel.

What we need to be are Christians with steel convictions but with velvet attitudes in dealing with others.

b. Gentle personality

"Gentle" = a considerate person. Respects the feelings of others.

It's the disposition of a superior to an inferior who will listen to his speech when really it is an earsore to listen.

c. Reasonable personality

"Easy to be entreated" = reasonable; easily persuaded when one learns that he has been wrong.

Describes one who is open to new light, and is willing to learn from others.

It's not a stubborn know-it-all.

The only one who ever lived who didn't ever change his mind, or take advice, or revise his opinions was Jesus Christ because He was God incarnate!

Many people think that stubbornness is conviction, and that they are always right and never wrong. When God's wisdom is at work, there is a willingness to listen, think, pray, and obey whatever God reveals.

Are you teachable?

3. Goodness

a. "Full of mercy"

"Mercy" = compassion that leads one to help. One who withholds judgment, knowing it belongs to God.

"Full" = shows that heavenly wisdom is characterized by an abundant measure of mercy.

b. "Full of good fruits"

The phrase "full of . . . good fruits" stands in contrast to "every evil work" (v. 16)

4. Sincerity

a. Undivided

"Without partiality" = undivided. Not being "two-faced" toward people. Not one who is always looking to choose sides to join (Ex. Corinthians's sin - chap. 1)

It is the direct opposite of the duplicity of an uncontrolled tongue as described in v. 9-12.

b. Unhypocritical

"Without hypocrisy" = true wisdom is free from all masks because it has nothing to hide. It is genuine and sincere! What he says is what he is.

C. THIS WISDOM PRODUCES FRUITFUL RESULTS (v. 18).

"The fruit of righteousness" = the fruit that righteousness produces can only be sown by peacemakers.

"A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger." (Prov. 15:1)

Col. 4:5-6 - "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man."

Eph. 4:2,3 - "With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

We all want to see fruit. But if your attitude is not that of heavenly wisdom, you will see none.

Paul urged us in Eph. 4:15 to always speak the truth "in love"

When you speak in true wisdom, you never have to shout.

When you teach, if you speak in a tempestuous, harsh manner, your students will not receive what you are saying. (ex. Mad-dog - a teacher I had).

**Don't throw out seed (Ex. "Hey, bud, get saved or go to hell" "Turn or burn") but plant it in love and care.

Righteousness is no sudden growth but is the product of seed sown in peace.

Our lives are lives of sowing and reaping (Gal. 6:7). The way you sow is just as important as what you sow!

If we live in God's wisdom and sow righteousness in peace, we will reap God's blessing. If we live in man's worldly wisdom and we sow in discord and selfishness, we reap "confusion and every evil work."

. . . What do you want to reap??

Conclusion:

"Right relationships are the soil in which the reward of righteousness alone can grow . . . nothing good can ever grow in an atmosphere where men are at variance with each other" (Barclay, p. 62).

"Lord, make me an instrument of your peace!
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
Where there is sadness, joy."

WORLDLINESS

JAMES 4:1-10
9-13-2020

WE NEED TO CONFRONT THE WORLDLINESS THAT IS IN OUR LIVES!

3 Facts about worldliness:

I. SELFISH PLEASURE IS THE CAUSE OF WORLDLINESS (V. 1-3)
(Answers the question, Where does worldliness come from?)
2 Evidences of selfish pleasure:

A. CONFLICT (V. 1-2)
1. Internal conflict (with yourself)
2. External conflict (with others)

B. UNANSWERED PRAYER (V. 2b - 3)
1. Because of Prayerlessness (absence of prayer) (v. 2b)
2. Because of Selfishness (wrong motives in prayer) (v. 3)

II. SPIRITUAL ADULTERY IS THE CONSEQUENCE OF WORLDLINESS (V. 4-5)
(Answers the question, What is the result of worldliness?)
3 results of spiritual adultery:

A. YOU MAKE YOURSELF GOD'S ENEMY (V. 4)

B. YOU GRIEVE THE HOLY SPIRIT (V. 5)

C. YOU FORFEIT GOD'S BLESSINGS (V. 6)

III. SUBMISSIVE REPENTANCE IS THE CURE FOR WORLDLINESS (V. 7-10)
(Answers the question, What is the remedy for worldliness?)
2 Steps toward submissive repentance:

A. YOU MUST HUMBLY SEEK GOD (V. 7-8a)
1. Submit under God's authority (v. 7a)
2. Resist (take a stand against) Satan (v. 7b)
3. Draw near to God (v. 8a)

B. YOU MUST TOTALLY FORSAKE SIN (V. 8b-9)
1. You need a thorough cleansing from sin (v. 8b)
2. You need a genuine sorrow for sin (v. 9)

Conclusion: VERSE 10

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JAMES 4:1-10
9-13-2020

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I. _____ **IS THE <u>CAUSE</u> OF WORLDLINESS (V. 1-3)**
(Answers the question, Where does worldliness come from?)
<u>2 Evidences</u> of selfish pleasure:

A. _____ (V. 1-2)
1. Internal conflict (with yourself)
2. External conflict (with others)

B. _____ (V. 2b - 3)
1. Because of _____ (absence of prayer) (v. 2b)
2. Because of _____ (wrong motives in prayer) (v. 3)

II. _____ **IS THE <u>CONSEQUENCE</u> OF WORLDLINESS (V. 4-5)**
(Answers the question, What is the result of worldliness?)
<u>3 results</u> of spiritual adultery:

A. YOU MAKE YOURSELF _____ (V. 4)

B. YOU GRIEVE THE _____ (V. 5)

C. YOU FORFEIT _____ (V. 6)

III. _____ **IS THE <u>CURE</u> FOR WORLDLINESS (V. 7-10)**
(Answers the question, What is the remedy for worldliness?)
<u>2 Steps</u> toward submissive repentance:

A. YOU MUST HUMBLY _____ (V. 7-8a)
1. _____ under God's authority (v. 7a)
2. _____ (take a stand against) Satan (v. 7b)
3. _____ to God (v. 8a)

B. YOU MUST TOTALLY _____ (V. 8b-9)

1. You need a _____ from sin (v. 8b)
2. You need a _____ for sin (v. 9)

Conclusion: VERSE 10

WORLDLINESS

JAMES 4:1-10

9-13-2020

INTRO:

WE NEED TO CONFRONT THE WORLDLINESS THAT IS IN OUR LIVES!

3 Facts about Worldliness:

I. <u>SELFISH PLEASURE</u> IS THE <u>CAUSE</u> OF WORLDLINESS (v. 1-3)

<u>Two Evidences</u> of selfish pleasure:

A. <u>CONFLICT</u> (v. 1-2)

1. Internal Conflict (with yourself)

"Among you" = <u>in</u> ( ) you)personally)

I Pet. 2:11 - "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;"

It is <u>inner</u> conflicts (feelings of tension and frustration) that cause <u>outer</u> conflicts.

"In your members" = inside your body parts

These conflicts come from a self-centered, pleasure-seeking <u>old Nature</u> (Rom. 7:14-25; 8:6-7).

"Lusts" = pleasures; we get our English word "hedonism" from Greek. Hedonism is the doctrine that pleasure is the "sole or chief good in life."

Cp. "Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God" - II Tim. 3:4

"That war" - describes a constant military campaign. These pleasures are described as alien soldiers that demand gratification and scheme as to how to get it. Our selfish pleasures like soldiers scheme and make plans to enter into conflict with anyone else who thwarts (stops) the fulfillment of those desires.

APPLI: Do you know why you are mad and defensive when someone points out sin in your life? It is because you are letting your fleshly appetites say: "No! Stop this person from keeping from us what we want!"

2. External Conflict (with others)

If there is war on the inside there will be war on the outside.

People who live for self-pleasure are constantly grasping after an eluding goal. Such failure disappoints and frustrates the person, who, unless he repents, will take his frustrations out on others.

NOTE: Punctuation is not inspired. James is saying because you lust
( ) and don't receive what you want, you strike out at others.
(CP. anger is just as guilt-worthy as murder - Mt. 5:21-22)

Ex. - In an outburst of rage, some people say, "I'm so mad, I could kill him!"
"Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer" (I John 3:15).

James is saying: You are zealous with jealousy ( ) to have something but do not have the power (ability) to obtain it, so you get into skirmishes (fights--whether verbal or physical) and into long, drawn-out wars.

If you're not worldly, then where are your conflicts with others coming from?

``disunity in our homes and in the Body of Christ are manifestations.

Selfishness drives people apart.

"Thou shalt not covet" is the last of God's ten commandments, but its violation can make us break all of the other

nine! Covetousness can make a person murder, tell lies, dishonor his parents, commit adultery, etc. (Wiersbe, p. 121).

ILLUS: Of sinful nature of a child who does not get his own way.

Are you living to please yourself? Or are you living to please God? If you are living to please yourself--you are worldly! Let God be the one who satisfied you, who gives you pleasure in His way.

B. UNANSWERED PRAYER (v. 2b-3)

1. Because of prayerlessness (absence of prayer) (v. 2b)

You can measure your worldliness by how little you pray.

Because you are worldly, instead of turning to God (the Giver of every good and perfect gift) you attempt to satisfy your selfish wants through your own efforts. This is exactly the way the world does!

You need to wrestle (like Jacob) with God in prayer and not quit and forsake God, going out to satisfy your needs your own way.

Do you know why you don't ask God! Because you know that what you want is not His will for you.

2. Because of selfishness (wrong motives in prayer) (v. 3)

God does not answer every prayer; you must meet his conditions (cp. Ja. 1:6).

"Amiss" = = evil, bad

It is possible to ask for good things for a bad reason.

If you only ask for things to spend it on your selfish pleasures (like prodigal son - Lk. 15:14), you are worldly.

II. SPIRITUAL ADULTERY IS THE CONSEQUENCE OF WORLDLINESS

(v. 4-6)
(Answers the question, What is the result of worldliness?)

Israel was viewed as married to God (Isaiah 54:5 - "For thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of hosts is His name; and thy Redeemer the Holy one of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall he be called.")

The Church today is pictured as the Bride and Christ is the groom (Eph. 5:22-32)

And you belong to God! ("You are not your own . . ." I Cor. 6:19-20).

A believer selfishly living for what he wants is a spiritual adulterer. EX: When we stop looking for satisfaction in our wife and get satisfaction in someone else's wife, this is adultery!

"Friendship" = affectionate love; also means to kiss.

"World" = not physical creation; but world system.

If we are going to build friendships with the unsaved, we will have to do it on their terms--because our terms are "spiritually discerned" (I Cor. 2:15) and they are spiritually blind to them.

It breaks God's heart to see His children commit spiritual adultery.

"Enmity" = the opposite of friendship

You have an attitude of personal hostility toward God (objective genitive).

You cannot embrace both God and the world. "You cannot serve two masters" - Mt. 6:24.

Your friendship with the world shows:

1. That you do <u>not</u> <u>love God</u>
   "Love not the world . . .the love of the Father is not in Him . . ." (I Jn. 2:15).

2. That you are <u>unfaithful</u> to the Savior you claim is your Lord.

3. That you are <u>in agreement</u> with the world's philosophy, practices and goals.

We are "in the world but not of it" (Jn. 17:15)

ILLUS: of a ship sailing in the ocean. "The ship must navigate in the water, but the passengers, crew, cargo, and engines are kept separate from the water. If the ocean gets into the ship, it begins to sink. If the world seeps into the life of a Christian, he is headed for wreckage" (Colson, p. 68).

<u>3 Results</u> of spiritual adultery:

A. YOU MAKE YOURSELF GOD`S ENEMY (v. 4)

   "Maketh himself" - You make a <u>deliberate choice</u> to be a friend of the world (no one forced you). But in doing so <u>you</u> become God's enemy! This is why God is not blessing you! Do you expect to get from someone who is your enemy? Not any more than we should be giving arms, etc., to Russia.

B. YOU GRIEVE THE HOLY SPIRIT (v. 5)

   Exod. 20:5 - "I . . . am a jealous God."

The Holy Spirit "Lusteth" (yearns; greatly desires your affection) for you with jealousy against all others that would try to steal you away.

God (like a good spouse would be) is unwilling that you share your affections with the world.

God refuses to share you with another. The Holy Spirit, imparted to us by God at conversion, yearns enviously for our total loyalty and devotion to Jesus Christ.

C. YOU FORFEIT GOD'S BLESSINGS (v. 6)

James is saying: God gives a greater grace than the pleasures that the world offers.

But if you will remain proud, God will not give it to you! The proud man says, "I don't need God's grace. I am self-sufficient; I am the standard of excellence; I feel sorry for those of you who need God's grace."

The humble, on the other hand, hold themselves out like empty vessels, saying to God, "Fill me. I want what you offer!"

III. SUBMISSIVE REPENTANCE IS THE CURE FOR WORLDLINESS (v. 7-10)
(Answers the question, What is the remedy for worldliness?)

2 Steps toward submissive repentance:

A. YOU MUST HUMBLY SEEK GOD (v. 7-8a)

God is calling out for you to return to him!

1. Submit under God's authority (v. 7a)

"Submit" = take your place under God's supreme will.

NOTE: God does not force submission. It is voluntary.

There was a time in your life (was there not?) when you with child-like faith submitted to God and obeyed Him right away. But now you think you are smart and can rationalize your way out.

2. Resist (take a stand against) Satan (v. 7b)

Instead of giving in to the world's system which is controlled by "the prince and power of the air", the "god of this world" -- God exhorts us to stand in opposition to Satan.

"He will flee from you" - We have God's promise that victory is possible (cp. Christ's victory - Mt. 4:1-11) if we stand with firm confidence in God's promise and with the whole armor of God (Eph. 6:12-17).

When Satan sees that he has been defeated, he like an embarrassed coward will run away and vanish.

3. Draw near to God (v. 8a)

Worldliness is what separated you from God, and now you must return.

True repentance will be evidenced by a desire to get as close to God as possible. God will favorably respond ("draw nigh to you") but you must make the first move (cp. Prodigal Son - Lk. 15:20)

B. YOU MUST TOTALLY FORSAKE SIN (v. 8b-9)

Worldliness always leaves its mark. Cleansing from its pollution and stains is needed.

1. You need a thorough cleansing from sin (v. 8b).

"Hands" - symbolic of evil actions (deeds; outer defilement). You have done that which is wicked and have "bloody hands"

"Hearts" - symbolic of evil motives (thoughts; inner defilement)

"Doubleminded" = two-souled (cp. 1:8). Refers to divided affections (the world and God).

2. You need a genuine sorrow for sin (v. 9)

"Be afflicted" = be aware of your wretchedness and shame because of sin.

"Mourn and weep" = have deep grief and sobbing tears because of sin.

(Cp. Peter's weeping - Mk. 14:72)

"Laughter" = loud, hilarious times as pleasure-loving friends of the world.

Laughter has its place (Ps. 126:2), but not when you are in sin.

"Joy to heaviness" = downcast expression - as publican who felt such shame for sin that he would not lift up his eyes to heaven (Lk. 18:13).

We need to be broken-hearted over our sins (cp. Isaiah's reaction) rather than being great justifiers of our sin.

"A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise" (Ps. 51:17) (Cp. Ps. 34:18).

"To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my Word" (Is. 66:2)

The Error of "Playing God"

JAMES 4:11-17

10-14-2020

*** DON'T DO GOD'S JOB!**

Verses 11-17 shows 2 jobs that belong only to God:

I. NEVER JUDGE APART FROM GOD'S WORD (V. 11 - 12)
(We need to get off the judgment seat and let God's Word do the judging!)

Because when we judge without God's Word:

A. WE ARE SETTING OURSELVES UP ABOVE GOD'S WORD (LAW) (V. 11)

1. God's Word (Law) is the Judge, not you (v. 11a)

2. God's Word (Law) is to be obeyed, not replaced (v. 11b)

B. WE ARE FORGETTING THAT GOD IS THE LAWGIVER AND JUDGE (V. 12)

1. He alone has authority to establish the Law ("Lawgiver")

2. He alone has ability to enforce the Law ("Judge")

II. NEVER PLAN APART FROM GOD'S WILL (V. 13 - 17)
(We need to get out of the driver's seat and let God direct our lives!)

3 Questions to Answer:

A. WHEN WE MAKE PLANS,
DO WE CONSIDER THE UNCERTAINTY OF LIFE? (V. 13 - 14a)

B. WHEN WE MAKE PLANS,
DO WE CONSIDER THE BREVITY OF LIFE? (V. 14b)

C. WHEN WE MAKE PLANS,
DO WE CONSIDER GOD'S WILL FOR OUR LIVES? (V. 15-16)

1. When you seek God's will, it shows your dependence upon God (v. 15)
2. When you don't seek God's will, it shows your arrogance against God (v. 16)

Conclusion: V. 17

The Error of "Playing God"

JAMES 4:11-17

10-14-2020

*** DON'T DO GOD'S JOB!**

Verses 11-17 shows 2 jobs that belong only to God:

I. NEVER _____ APART FROM _____ (V. 11 - 12)

(We need to get off the _____ and let God's Word do the judging!)

Because when we judge without God's Word:

A. WE ARE _____ ABOVE GOD'S WORD (LAW) (V. 11)

1. God's Word (Law) is the Judge, not you (v. 11a)

2. God's Word (Law) is to be obeyed, not replaced (v. 11b)

B. WE ARE _____THAT GOD IS THE LAWGIVER AND JUDGE (V. 12)

1. He alone has authority to _____ the Law ("Lawgiver")

2. He alone has ability to _____ the Law ("Judge")

II. NEVER _____ APART FROM _____ (V. 13 - 17)

(We need to get out of the _____ and let God direct our lives!)

3 Questions to Answer:

A. WHEN WE MAKE PLANS,
DO WE CONSIDER THE _____ OF LIFE? (V. 13 - 14a)

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DO WE CONSIDER THE _____ OF LIFE? (V. 14b)

C. WHEN WE MAKE PLANS,
DO WE CONSIDER _____ FOR OUR LIVES? (V. 15-16)

1. When you seek God's will, it shows your _____ upon God (v. 15)
2. When you don't seek God's will, it shows your _____ against God (v. 16)

Conclusion: V. 17

The Error of "Playing God"

JAMES 4:11-17

10-14-2020

INTRO: Note previous context of worldliness (v. 1-10). The religion of worldliness is basically "humanism" - in which man becomes the measure of all things. He views himself as God. He is not bound by God's laws, so he thinks he can judge without God. He is not dependent upon God's will, so he thinks he can plan without God. He thinks he can chart the course for his own life and for the lives of others.

Humanistic man (like Satan) is so proud that he basically usurps those prerogatives that belong only to God.

(Today, men are legislating new laws in our country, and trying to throw out the Constitution, which was based on God's laws/principles. Today men think they are God by trying to "create" new life [test-tube babies; cloning, etc.] and by destroying life [ex. abortion]. Today, man wants to be free and easy and come and go as he pleases and be the <u>sole</u> determiner of his future.)

"God is not in all his thoughts" - Ps. 10:4.

Who does little man think that he is (cp. v. 12 - "Who art thou?"), usurping God's job?

ILLUS: how people (in pride and self-exaltation) like to do someone elses' job.

Today the humanistic thinking of this world system has infiltrated the church! When we set ourselves up as judges and as determiners (planners) of our futures.

These functions belong only to God!

It is His job to judge others and direct our lives.

*** <u>DON'T DO GOD'S JOB!</u>**

There are jobs that God has told us to do and some jobs we must never do (because they belong to Him only).

Verses 11 - 17 show <u>two jobs</u> that belong only to God:

I. NEVER JUDGE APART FROM GOD'S WORD (v. 11-12)

(We need to get off the judgment seat and let God's Word do the judging!)

When we confront a lost person about his need of Christ, we are not judging him! God's Word is!

When we confront an erring brother - again, it is God's Word that is doing the judging.

We are commanded by Christ to "judge righteous judgment" (Jn. 7:24).

Paul said: "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."

Judgment from God's Word (to the person face-to-face) is not wrong--it is commanded! (Matt. 18) What is wrong is your criticizing others behind their back.

"Speak not evil" = lit. don't speak down upon, or speak against.

Refers to "running each other down," critical, derogatory, malicious, harsh, unloving speech about people.

When you backbite, pass on juicy rumors or tantalizing tidbits of gossip, you are doing the Devil`s work for him. (He is the accuser of the brethren - Rev. 12:10).

When you judge without God's Word:

A. WE ARE SETTING OURSELVES UP ABOVE GOD'S WORD (LAW) (v. 11)

1. God's Word (Law) is the Judge, not you (v. 11a)

   How do you know when you are judging someone? When you say:

   I think that _____ is a _____.
   I believe that _____ should be doing _____.
   I don't think this _____ is being done right.

   You set yourself up above the Law by adding to it your own personal rules. You become a pope and add to Scripture.

   "Speaketh evil of the Law" = criticizes the Law (implying that it is not good, and that a new, better Law needs to be enacted).

To tear someone to pieces with words is to break the "royal Law" of Love! (cp. Ja. 2:8; see also Mk. 12:31; Gal. 5:14).

You who break this royal law deceive yourselves into believing that it is a good Law for some people sometimes, but a superior person like yourself cannot be bound to it.

2. God's Word (Law) is to be obeyed, not replaced (v. 11b).

No new laws (legislation) are to be added by you (ex. legalism - "You are not spiritual unless you obey my laws). You must never replace God's Laws (principles) with your own personal judgment.

All we are appliers of God's Laws. We can't make up any laws.

What hypocrisy! To nullify (make void) God's Law by adding your own Laws and replacing God's (the Pharisees did this - Mt. 15:3, 6).

B. WE ARE FORGETTING THAT GOD IS THE LAWGIVER AND JUDGE (v. 12)

1. He alone has authority to establish the Law ("Lawgiver")

God has established the laws of the universe (gravity, etc.), the laws of righteous government (Rom. 13), and the laws which all men are to obey (the Word of God!).

God is the only Lawgiver. Rom. 14:4 & 10 - "Who are you to judge another man's servant" - That man is responsible to his own Master!

2. He alone has ability to enforce the Law ("Judge")

He alone can judge because He alone can save!

When you save someone, then you can talk about them -- Did you die for them!?

Heb. 9:27-28 - "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgement: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

He alone can judge because He alone can destroy!

The Father "hath committed all judgment unto the Son" (Jn. 5:22).

"God shall judge the secrets of men" (Ro. 2:16).

The only legitimate judging is God`s Word!

"Who art thou" (v. 12b) = Who do you think you are?

When we condemn others we are saying, "I am the Law."

Who do you think you are? What right do you have to set yourself up as legislator, judge, prosecutor, and chief executioner?

II. NEVER PLAN APART FROM GOD'S WILL (v. 13-17)

(We need to be get of the driver's seat and let God direct your life!)

Just as v. 11-12 did not mean you should never judge, this does not mean that you should not plan. You must! But you should seek God's plans and make them your plans.

(God's will for you is revealed through Scripture, and through His personal working in the details of your life [See Prov. 3:5-6])

The sin described now is planning without God - this is sheer secularistic behavior - it is worldliness!

"Go to now" = come now, listen now.
(Move [change] the way you're thinking)

V. 13 describes a traveling business man, who has all the details of part of his future worked out. He has everything predetermined!

1) He has a predetermined plan - "Today or tomorrow"
2) He has a predetermined place (destination)
   He plans to travel - Do you seek God's will before you decide to move?
3) He has a predetermined period of time
4) He has a predetermined program (he plans what he will do.
   Do you ask God for His will for your career?)
5) He has a predetermined purpose (he plans how much he will prosper.
   Are you dependent on God's will?)

He displays "calculated arrogance" (cp. v. 16). No one can alter his plans - not even God.

3 Questions to Answer:

A. WHEN WE MAKE PLANS,
DO WE CONSIDER THE <u>UNCERTAINTY</u> OF LIFE? (v. 13-14a)

The language reflects assurance and self-confidence; they assume that the outcome of their plans will occur exactly as planned.

Nothing in the future can be predetermined by you! Jesus said, "Take no thought for the morrow."

"Boast not thyself of tomorrow . . ." (Prov. 27:1)

READ Luke 12:16-20.

We should never make plans and <u>then</u> ask God to bless them!

NOTE: There is a big difference between telling God, "I want to do so and so; please bless my plans." and praying, "What is thy will for me, O Lord? Help me to plan as thou wouldst have me plan, so that I may do thy will." (Colson, p. 73).

B. WHEN WE MAKE PLANS,
DO WE CONSIDER THE <u>BREVITY</u> OF LIFE? (v. 14b)

Vapor = ex. breath appearing momentarily in the cold air; ex. smoke that quickly dissipates; ex. steam from a tea kettle.

Other figures applied to the duration of human life:
"a shadow that declineth" (Ps. 102:11)
"a breath" (Job 7:7)
"the cloud" (Job 7:9)
"grass" (Ps. 103:15)

God tells us to number our days (Ps. 90:12 - "So teach us to number our days--that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom")

If we would remember how short life is, we would put a different priority on our planning (ex. you pack a suitcase differently when you have much time, than you would if there was a fire in your house).

C. WHEN WE MAKE PLANS,
DO WE CONSIDER <u>GOD'S WILL</u> FOR YOUR LIVES? (v. 15-16)

We tend to make our own decisions, then get ourselves in hot water, and expect God to "pay the bill."

People say: I want God's will for every area in my life--and then they are mad, disappointed, etc., when God gives it to them. EX: "I'm willing for God to break up this dating relationship." (yet they are not really) . . . "I am willing to do God's will just as long as it is not _____."

1. When you seek God's will, it shows your <u>dependence</u> upon God (v. 15)

   "If the Lord will" = shows God's <u>sovereignty</u>.

   God alone can make our plans prosperous!

   "If the Lord will" = 2 ideas:

   1) We are saying "If God <u>permits me</u>, I will . . ."
      Acts 18:21 - After going to Jerusalem, Paul said, "I will return again unto you <u>if God will</u> (permit)
      I Cor. 4:19 - "I will come to you shortly <u>if the Lord wills</u>."

   2) We are saying "If God <u>gives me</u> life, strength, opportunity, I will . . ."

   Paul said: "I trust <u>in the Lord</u> that I will come to you shortly" (Phil. 2:19, 24). That is, "if it is the Lord's will."

   We depend upon God for <u>life itself</u> ("we shall live"), and we depend upon Him for <u>ability</u> ("and do this or that")

2. When you don't seek God's will, it shows your <u>arrogance</u> against God (v. 16)

   Such worldly (secular) overconfidence reveals pride and <u>dethrones</u> God out of your life!

   Some wrongly think that the will of God is optional: something they can accept or reject.

It's an obligation! You cannot "take it or leave it"

We say to our children: "Who do you think you are? You need permission from me - I am you dad!" . . . Our lives belong to God (our Father). We are His children (and servants). We are not our own. Therefore we must acknowledge that Christ owns us.

Conclusion: V. 17

Your planning is a moral issue - if you plan wrong (without seeking God for direction), it is sin!

For you to know that you should seek God's will, and for you not to do it, is sin!

Jesus taught that the servant who knows his father's will and does not do it will be punished with a heavy whipping (Lk. 12:47). "To whom much is given . . . much required"

God not only has a plan for the world, He has a plan for your life.

He has a "race marked out for us" to run (Heb. 12:1).

He has "good works prepared in advance" for his "workmanship" to do (Eph. 2:10).

"Too many Christians look upon the will of God as bitter medicine they must take, instead of seeing it as the gracious evidence of the love of God" (Wiersbe, p. 129).

We need more than careful planning; we need prayerful planning.

Have you been doing God's job? Who do we think we are?

Judging others is His job!
Guiding your life is His job!

I. Never judge apart from God's Word

II. Never plan apart from God's Will

THE MADNESS OF MATERIALISM

JAMES 5:1-6

10-28-2020

*** BEWARE OF GREED!**

Why such a warning? 2 Reasons:

I. THE GREEDY PERSON WILL NOT ESCAPE GOD'S JUDGMENT (V. 1-3)
(The Verdict Declared)

A. HIS JUDGMENT IS CERTAIN (V. 1-2)

1. You might as well start crying now (v. 1)

2. You might as well kiss your wealth good-bye (v. 2-3a)

B. HIS JUDGMENT IS CORRECT (righteous) (V. 3)

1. Your own wealth will witness against you (v. 3b)
(Money's Testimony)

2. Your own wealth will destroy you (v. 3c)
(Money's Torment)

II. THE GREEDY PERSON WILL NOT ESCAPE GOD'S NOTICE (V. 4-6)
(The Evidence Disclosed)

A. HE KNOWS WHEN YOU ARE DISHONEST IN YOUR PURSUIT OF WEALTH
(V. 4) (To pursue your wealth, you are stealing from others)

B. HE KNOWS WHEN YOU ARE SELFISH IN YOUR ENJOYMENT OF WEALTH
(V. 5) (To enjoy your wealth, you neglect others)

C. HE KNOWS WHEN YOU ARE CORRUPT IN YOUR PROTECTION OF WEALTH
(V. 6) (To protect your wealth, you hurt others)

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Why such a warning? 2 Reasons:

I. THE GREEDY PERSON WILL NOT ESCAPE GOD'S _____ (V. 1-3)
(The Verdict Declared)

A. HIS JUDGMENT IS _____ (V. 1-2)

1. You might as well _____ (v. 1)

2. You might as well _____ (v. 2-3a)

B. HIS JUDGMENT IS _____ (righteous) (V. 3)

1. Your own wealth will _____ (v. 3b)
(Money's Testimony)

2. Your own wealth will _____ (v. 3c)
(Money's Torment)

II. THE GREEDY PERSON WILL NOT ESCAPE GOD'S _____ (V. 4-6)
(The Evidence Disclosed)

A. HE KNOWS WHEN YOU ARE _____ IN YOUR PURSUIT OF WEALTH (V. 4) (To pursue your wealth, you are _____ from others)

B. HE KNOWS WHEN YOU ARE _____ IN YOUR ENJOYMENT OF WEALTH (V. 5) (To enjoy your wealth, you _____ others)

C. HE KNOWS WHEN YOU ARE _____ IN YOUR PROTECTION OF WEALTH (V. 6) (To protect your wealth, you _____ others)

THE MADNESS OF MATERIALISM

JAMES 5:1-6

10-28-2020

INTRO: James is following up on what he has just said. He addresses those who confidently plan to get rich without considering the will of God (4:13-17), and succeed in their plan.

The people James now addresses are unbelievers; there is no mention of "brethren" until v. 7. James speaks of the unsaved, lost rich man to give a lesson to the saved--that is, Christians "who would wish to be rich."

Read I Tim. 6:6-11 (* v. 9).

Jesus said: "Beware and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions" (Lk. 12:15 NASB).

"Greed (covetousness) is idolatry" (Col. 3:5).

NOTE: Poor people are in as much danger of being greedy, as rich!

*** "BEWARE OF GREED!"**

Why such a warning? 2 Reasons

I. THE GREEDY PERSON WILL NOT ESCAPE GOD'S <u>JUDGMENT</u> (V. 1-3)
(The Verdict Declared)

God is not opposed to people simply because they are <u>wealthy</u>; He is condemning them because they have made it their life's goal to be wealthy. Because this was what they lived for, they revealed detestable character--they were greedy!

A. HIS JUDGMENT IS <u>CERTAIN</u> (V. 1-2)

1. You might as well <u>start crying now</u> (v. 1)

Typically, these type of people live as if there is no God, no judgment, no eternity, no heaven or hell, but James warns of a misery that is coming.

Rich men don't see their reality. Money is like <u>novocaine</u>. It numbs you regarding the life after this one.

Because they are unsaved (as evidenced by what their god is: money), they ought to be weeping now.

Severe trouble and misery are coming for the one who lives for money.

Read Luke 16:19-26 - The rich man who went to hell.

- Eternal torment (v. 23)
- Eternal unfulfilled desire (v. 24)
- Eternal memory (v. 25)
- Eternal separation from God (v. 26)

"Weep" = to cry out loud

"Howl" = to continually moan with agony (these are the sounds that will be heard in hell)

James calls on the greedy to weep and howl now because perhaps if they would realize/see that one day they are going to lose all, maybe they would repent. But the point is that God's judgment is certain! unavoidable! You will not escape!

2. You might as well <u>kiss your wealth goodby</u> (v. 2-3a)

3 Types of wealth mentioned:

1) food that rots (v. 2a)
2) clothes that are moth-eaten (v. 2b)
3) money that rusts (v. 3a)

a. Food that rots

"Riches" = refers to foodstuffs. The form of wealth is perishable - grain, etc. (cp. Lk. 12:16-20 - the rich man's barn)

"Corrupted" = to decay, rot

b. Garments are moth-eaten
In the Orient, richly embroidered and decorated outer robes (a symbol of wealth) when stored up in quantity would provide a natural home for a larva of moths.

c. Money that rusts
Gold and silver do <u>not</u> tarnish or decay.

This places even more emphasis on this statement and looks at the gold and silver from God's perspective.

In God's omniscient mind, your judgment is so certain, that your wealth is as good as wasted and worthless already.

"Corrupted . . . moth-eaten . . . rust" - shows that riches are temporal and uncertain.

I Tim. 6:17 - "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"

"Wealth is worthless in the day of wrath" (Prov. 11:4)

B. HIS JUDGMENT IS CORRECT (righteous) (v. 3)

1. Your own wealth will witness against you (v. 3b)
(Money's Testimony)

The rust that had gathered upon unused treasures would undeniably point out the greed of its possessors.

The rich would rather prefer to let things rot rather than give them to the poor. Why?

Because giving to the poor is one way of giving to the Lord--and they hate the Lord.

"Witness" - every man will be without excuse at the judgment. Rev. 20 - judgment is according to works. Your works will not lie.

2. Your own wealth will destroy you (v. 3c)
(Money's Torment)

"Shall eat" = future judgment

Rust destroys things slowly, but James says it will be like fire (which spreads rapidly as it destroys).

A terrible picture of doom!

Anyone who makes materialism their god, will spend eternity in hell.

Greed for wealth has taken the lives (and souls) of many people.

"Neither thieves, nor covetous . . . shall inherit the kingdom of God" (I Cor. 6:10).

"Eat your flesh as fire" - "Physical terms are here used to describe the burning regrets and tormenting consciences" [Colson, p. 77] (of men who remember their lost, worthless wealth while they suffer in hell).

Practical APPLI to believers: Don't ever envy the rich (wealth is not a sign of God's blessing)

"Heaped treasure together" - Jesus said, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth . . ." (Mt. 6:19ff).

"Heaped treasure" = to store it up. God gives us money to use for his glory (not merely to have a large bank account. What good is money--Christian--if it is not invested in eternal purposes?)

Of course, there is nothing sinful about saving.

"For the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children" (II Cor. 12:14).

But it is wrong to store up wealth when you owe money to your employees or when you have bills to pay.

"For the last days" = in (cp. v. 5b) the last days. Just 10 years after James wrote this letter, Jerusalem fell to the Romans, and all this accumulated wealth was taken. This is a reference to the time just prior to judgment.

We are living in the last days! (Paul even believed he was!)

In the judgment day, gold and silver will be about as worthless as rusted-out iron!

II. THE GREEDY PERSON WILL NOT ESCAPE GOD'S NOTICE (V. 4-6)

(The Evidence Disclosed)

James now clearly points out the guilt of the greedy. He has declared the verdict (judgment) and now he gives the evidence.

And God is an eye and ear witness to the sinful crime.

A. HE KNOWS WHEN YOU ARE DISHONEST IN YOUR PURSUIT OF WEALTH (V. 4) (To pursue your wealth, you are stealing from others)

"You kept back by fraud" = kept back is (remote agent) as opposed to (direct agent). In other words, these big shots (bosses, owners, etc.) let others keep back (withhold) wages and they did nothing about it.

The Mosaic Law strictly prohibited this type of injustice.

Deut. 24:14-15 - "Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren, or of thy strangers that are in thy land within thy gates: At his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it; for he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it: lest he cry against thee unto the Lord and it be sin unto thee."

"If money talks," said a popular comedian, "All it ever says to me is good-bye!"

"The hire (pay) . . . crieth" - pictures the money continually screaming out for vengeance. (Illus. the phrase "money talks" - joke)

EX: of inanimate things crying out in an appeal against injustice like the blood of Abel (Gen. 4:10) and the sin of Sodom (Gen. 18:20; 19:13).

APPLI: "The laborer is worthy of his hire" Never fail to give to others what they have earned (their pay). Never fail to give to God what He deserves (your offering).

No wrong will ever go unnoticed by God. He keeps accurate accounting books.

"Lord of Sabaoth" = Master of armies; the Lord Almighty. The one who is in full control of the situation. And He is not blind or deaf to what is going on.

You can't hide your dishonesty from God! "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do" (Heb. 4:13).

READ Psalm 139:1-12.

God has all the facts. he does not judge like man does. Nothing can be covered up with God."

For the Christian, honesty is <u>not</u> the best policy -- it is the <u>only</u> one!

B. HE KNOWS WHEN YOU ARE <u>SELFISH</u> IN YOUR <u>ENJOYMENT</u> OF WEALTH (V. 5) (To enjoy your wealth, you <u>neglect</u> others)

"Lived in pleasure" = soft, luxuriously; delicate living, like a king.

"On the earth" - their delights were limited to the things of this world--not God.

Cp. rich man in Matt. 19. He loved his riches. There is a danger in having wealth. It makes us feel like we don't need God.

"Easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle . . ."

"Wanton" = wasteful self-indulgence like the prodigal son who spent his substance in riotous living (Lk. 15:13).

Even if you have earned your money lawfully (In the will of God), you must not waste it on selfish living.

Luxury is waste and waste is sin.

"A magazine advertisement told of the shopping spree of an oil-rich Sultan. He purchased 19 Cadillacs, one for each of his 19 wives, and paid extra to have the cars lengthened. He also bought two Porsches, six Mercedes, a $40,000 speedboat and a truck for hauling it. Add to the list 16 refrigerators, $47,000 worth of women's luggage, two Florida grapefruit trees, two reclining chairs, and one slot machine. His total bill was $1,500,000, and he had to pay another $194,500 to have everything delivered! Talk about living in luxury!" (Wiersbe, p. 147).

"Nourished" = to fatten

The picture is of oxen being fattened for slaughter. ILLUS. of how they pump all kinds of chemical junk into animals to fatten them up to get more meat to sell.

"Day of Slaughter" = reference to day of judgment.

"Do not weary yourself to gain wealth" (Prov. 23:4).

You and I may possess many things, but we do not own them. We are stewards, investing these things in eternity and doing God's will.

C. HE KNOWS WHEN YOU ARE CORRUPT IN YOUR PROTECTION OF WEALTH (V. 6) (To protect your wealth, you hurt others)

The rich man has hurt and kills for material goods.

"The love of money is the root of all (kinds of) evil . . ." (I Tim. 6:10).

"Condemned" - judged those who worked for you as guilty for something. The rich can easily pay off the pagan court (judge) and have the innocent put to death (EX. Christ's death - 30 pieces of silver.

"Killed" - Jewish idea: to deprive one of his living (pay) is to murder him (Eccles. 34:22).

EX. of hurting other people over pursuit of money: 1) Defrauding a brother (Corinthians going to court with another brother over money, ruining the testimony of Christ.);2) when someone dies, people who don't get part of the will are jealous.

Living for money will make you do crazy things!

King Ahab coveted Naboth's vineyard and had him killed to get it and satisfy his greed (I Ki. 21).

"The non-resistance of the righteous confirms (proves) the guilt of the rich . . ." (Hiebert, p. 294).

CONCLU: In this passage, there is not a word against riches as such, but only against the ungodly way in which they are gained and used.

We are to gain money by hard work (Prov. 6:6) and use it for God's glory.

You can convert the perishable into the imperishable. Because you sacrifice and give money to the Lord's work, many souls have been brought to Christ. Money that went for this building, tracts, missionaries, etc., is for one purpose: that souls be saved and edified.

"Imagine that lovely money when someone will come up to you and say, `Welcome to heaven. I have some wonderful news for you. Do you remember that gift you sent regularly to that missionary society? Well, I was converted through the preaching of a missionary who would not have been in my part of the world if it had not been for your giving. You sent him out to preach the gospel, and I am in heaven as a result.'." (Blanchard, p. 338)

The Bible teaches a principle that what we keep, we lose. What we give to God, we deep, and He adds interest to it.

Gal. 6:7-8 - "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

APPLI. to unsaved: Is. 55:1-2 - "Why do you spend money for non-bread?" Eternal life is a gift.

REMAIN PATIENT

JAMES 5:7-12
11-4-2020

When treated like dirt; when putting up with injustice:
WE MUST BE PATIENT!

What is the secret to remaining patient?

REMEMBER 2 PROMISES:

I. REMEMBER THAT THE LORD WILL <u>SOON RETURN</u> (V. 7 - 9)
(His appearing is expectant)

A. Therefore, <u>be confident</u> (v. 7)
(have a patient attitude that is confident)

B. Therefore, <u>take courage</u> (v. 8)
(have a patient attitude that is encouraged)

C. Therefore, <u>don't complain</u> (v. 9)
(have a patient attitude without grumbling)

II. REMEMBER THAT THE LORD WILL <u>SURELY REWARD</u> (V. 10 - 11)
(His awarding is guaranteed)

A. God's reward is guaranteed on <u>his terms</u> (v. 10-11a)

B. God's reward is guaranteed in <u>his time</u> (v. 11b)

C. God's reward is guaranteed because of <u>his tenderness</u> (v. 11c)

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A. Therefore, be _____ (v. 7)
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B. Therefore, take _____ (v. 8)
(have a patient attitude that is encouraged)

C. Therefore, don't _____ (v. 9)
(have a patient attitude without grumbling)

II. REMEMBER THAT THE LORD WILL _____ (V. 10 - 11)
(His awarding is guaranteed)

A. God's reward is guaranteed on _____ (v. 10-11a)

B. God's reward is guaranteed in _____ (v. 11b)

C. God's reward is guaranteed because of _____(v. 11c)

REMAIN PATIENT

JAMES 5:7-12
11-4-2020

INTRO: Note: Previous context V. 4-6.

We are often frustrated by the apparent prosperity of the wicked.
David's answer: Ps. 37:7 - "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him; fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass."

Our old nature tends to want God to make right all the wrongs that people have done to us right now!

The American prayer for patience is: "Give it to me now!"

"Patient" = “Macrothumia” (v. 7-10) - "restrain your heat" (to be able to put up with much friction without burning up and firing out at someone. Long fused.) The word occurs 4 times in v. 7 - 10. Long tempered, as opposed to short tempered. This word used most often in describing patience with people.

“Endure” & “Patience” = “Hupomone” (v.11) - to remain under control, keep composure; to be able to put up with much pressure without exploding. EX: sign on cans - "Warning: contents under pressure." "Endure," "patience" (from same root) - this word is used most often of circumstances.

When treated like dirt; when putting up with injustice:
WE MUST BE PATIENT!

What is the secret to remaining patient?

REMEMBER 2 PROMISES: 1) the Lord will soon return
2) the Lord will surely reward

Rev. 22:12 - "And behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."

I. REMEMBER THAT: THE LORD WILL SOON RETURN (V. 7 - 9)

(His appearing is expectant)

It has been calculated that there are 1,835 references to the Second Coming in the Bible.

A. THEREFORE, BE CONFIDENT (V. 7)

(Have a patient attitude that is confident)

"The coming" = lit. the presence, the appearing.

The farmer is an illus. of patience because of confidence. He knows the harvest is coming, but first the rain must fall.

In Israel, he is concerned with two seasons:

1) Early rain (Nov.-Dec.) to loosen soil, to plant
2) Latter rain (Jan.-April) to mature crops; before reaping.

There is nothing a farmer can do to speed up (hasten) these rains. All he can do is patiently wait for them.

If a man is impatient, he had better not become a farmer. The only thing that grows overnight is weeds!

"In the farmer world, patience is a fruitful virtue" (Motyer).

The value ( ) of the harvest makes it worth it to wait patiently!
The confidence of the harvest makes it easy to wait patiently.

There must first be some "rainy days" before harvest time. There will be rainy, dismal days in our lives before Christ's coming; just as the rain was for the good of the crop, your trial will make Christ's appearing that much more special to you.

B. THEREFORE, TAKE COURAGE (V. 8)
(Have a patient attitude that is encouraged)

"Stablish your hearts" - "Stablish" = to set up. Hymn - "Are we down-hearted? NO! NO! NO!"

James is saying, "Lift up your droopy, depressed hearts because the Lord is one His way!"

Such encouragement gives us inner stability.

"Draweth nigh" = (Perfect tense) - Christ's coming (appearance) has come near and still is near (His bodily presence is near, but has not actually arrive yet; no one has seen Him yet in visions either).

It's like waiting for someone who ha been coming to your home from a long journey. Knowing this--that he will get to your house soon--is an encouragement for you to stay awake and anxious.

(Jesus said continually "Watch!")

C. THEREFORE, DON'T COMPLAIN (V. 9)
(Have a patient attitude without grumbling)

"Grudge not" = do not sigh or groan; inner attitude of criticism and fault-finding which will result in complaining and blaming other believers who are not responsible for the oppressed circumstances.

Don't lash out (let your frustrations out) against those who are near and dear to you!

The relationships that first see the effects of pressures on us are those closest to us (family and church).

Satan will work his hardest at getting us to minimize God's blessings and maximize and magnify little problems.

James' point: When times and circumstances are bad on the job, at home, in society, etc. (when the world mistreats you [cp. v. 5]) -- Don't take it out on your brothers!

Church should be a place to relieve tensions.

Cp. Israel who took their irritations out on Moses.

"To walk in love with saints above
will be a wondrous glory;
To walk below with saints we know--
well, that's another story!"

"Standeth before the door" - he has been standing at the door.

(Cp. Rev. 3:20 - "Behold I stand at the door and knock . . .") Imagine someoneatthedoorofyourhome-He'sthere! He'satthedoor! Readytoopen the door and come in.

II. REMEMBER THAT: THE LORD WILL SURELY REWARD (V. 10 - 11)

(His awarding is guaranteed)

A. GOD'S REWARD IS GUARANTEED ON HIS TERMS (V. 10-11A)

You must be faithful in serving Christ.

Jesus said: "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your **reward** in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets that were before you" (Mt. 5:11-12; cp. Acts 7:52; Heb. 11).

"Prophets" -

EX. Jeremiah ("Weeping Prophet") (had no success in men's eyes, seemed to be a failure.)
EX. Ezekiel
EX. Isaiah (preached & people wouldn't listen)
EX. Daniel (faithful - and thrown into lion's den)

"Spoke in the name of the Lord" - "Satan tells the faithful Christian that his suffering is a result of sin or unfaithfulness; and yet his suffering might well be because of faithfulness!" (Wiersbe, p. 156)

> "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (II Tim. 3:12)

"We call them blessed" - such examples of patience are worthy of honor and admiration.

B. GOD'S REWARD IS GUARANTEED IN HIS TIME (V. 11B)

"Heard" - points to the public reading of Scripture in the church.

Job lost everything for doing good! (see Job 1:1, 13-22; 2:7-10) But his end was blessed! (Job 42:10-17).

God only promises that our end will be good. This is all that really matters.

ILLUS: Sports event (football, baseball, basketball) - The only score that counts is the score at the end.

We already know the score at the end -- it's revealed in the Bible. God's trophy is waiting for us! The patient will win it! ("crown of life" for enduring testing - Ja. 1:12).

Secret to patience = knowing an end is coming (at the end, a reward awaits you)

ILLUS: Dentist drilling your teeth - He says, I'm almost done"

ILLUS: Sitting through a boring class - You can make it because you desire the diploma

ILLUS: Pregnant mother at the end - can endure because she knows at the end will be a child

ILLUS: Standing in a long line in bank - end: cash check

ILLUS: Being stuck in traffic - end: reach destination

Eccles. 7:8 - "Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof, and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit."

"In due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal. 6:9)

The God who showed His abundant compassion and mercy in rewarding Job is the same today! You may not be rewarded in this life (because the Lord may come back before); but I assure you that if you are not, you will have an even greater reward in the next!

C. GOD'S REWARD IS GUARANTEED BECAUSE OF HIS TENDERNESS (V. 11C)

Some would say, "If God is so compassionate and merciful, why didn't He protect Job from all the suffering to begin with?"

Answer: We don't know (with our finite minds) all the mysteries of God's workings, but we do know this:
1) God was glorified 2) Job was purified (Job 23:10)

"Pitiful" = (compassion) tenderness of the heart. God feels for us when we hurt.

Jesus is "touched with the feelings of our infirmities" (areas we struggle with) (Heb. 4:15). He sympathizes with us.

Conclusion:

ILLUS: Hymn "It's just Like His Great Love" (P. 184).

Suffering seems so long.

ILLUS: Do you ever notice how long water takes to boil when you are looking at it?

Take your eyes off of your suffering (injustices) and put them on Christ's return and reward.

Jesus said, "Behold, I come quickly and my reward is with me . . ." (Rev. 22:12; cp. Is. 40:10)

We must remember to be patient! Col. 3:12 - "Clothe yourselves with . . . patience"

Moses' impatience robbed him of a trip to the Holy Land; Abraham's impatience led to the birth of Ishmael (the enemy of the Jews); and Peter's impatience almost made him a murderer (Wiersbe, p. 161).

When pressure comes, it's easy to run! It's easy to strike out against others!

We need to remember to look up! And remain patient.

I. The Lord's Return is Soon

II. The Lord's Reward is Sure!

Concl. Hymn - "It Will be Worth It All"

WHERE TO CALL FOR HELP

JAMES 5:13-20
11-18-2020

*** WE NEED TO KNOW WHERE TO CALL WHEN WE NEED HELP!**

I. CALL OUT TO <u>THE LORD!</u> (V. 13) ***(private prayer)***

A. In times of pressure, we are to pray (v. 13a)

B. In times of pleasure we are to praise (v. 13b)

II. CALL FOR YOUR <u>PASTOR</u> (V. 14-15) ***(pastoral prayer)***

A. The pastor's prayer (v. 14)

B. The lord's promise (v. 15)

III. CALL ON <u>EACH OTHER</u> (V. 16-20) ***(personal prayer)***

In order for us to go to each other and to encourage others to come to us:

A. We need <u>humility</u> (to confess our sins) (v. 16a)
(Be one who can keep confidences)

B. We need <u>righteousness</u> (to have power in prayer) (v. 16b - 18)
(Be one who has godly character)

C. We need <u>concern</u> (to restore an erring brother) (v. 19-20)
(Be one who is really concerned)

1. Such concern <u>saves lives</u> (v. 20a)

2. Such concern <u>stops sin</u> (v. 20b)

WHERE TO CALL FOR HELP

JAMES 5:13-20
11-25-2020

*** WE NEED TO KNOW WHERE TO CALL WHEN WE NEED HELP!**

I. CALL OUT TO _____! (V. 13) ***(private prayer)***

A. In times of _____, we are to _____ (v. 13a)

B. In times of _____ we are to _____ (v. 13b)

II. CALL FOR YOUR _____ (V. 14-15) ***(pastoral prayer)***

A. The pastor's prayer (v. 14)

B. The lord's promise (v. 15)

III. CALL ON _____ (V. 16-20) ***(personal prayer)***

In order for us to go to each other and to encourage others to come to us:

A. We need _____ (to confess our sins) (v. 16a)
(Be one who can keep confidences)

B. We need _____ (to have power in prayer) (v. 16b - 18)
(Be one who has godly character)

C. We need _____ (to restore an erring brother) (v. 19-20)
(Be one who is really concerned)

1. Such concern _____ (v. 20a)

2. Such concern _____ (v. 20b)

WHERE TO CALL FOR HELP

JAMES 5:13-20
11-18-2020

INTRO: When you need help finding a business location, you go to the Nynex Yellow Pages.

When you need help finding a phone number, you dial 555-1212.

When you need help in an emergency, you dial 911.

When you need spiritual help, God (in verses 13-20) tells you where to call. The major theme in verses 13-20 is prayer!

*** WE NEED TO KNOW WHERE TO CALL WHEN WE NEED HELP!**

Tradition says that James spent so much time on his knees praying for the people that his knees "became as hard as a camel's" (cited by Hiebert, p. 316).

I. CALL OUT TO THE LORD! (V. 13) (private prayer)

Our God is a God for all seasons. He's there when you are on the mountain tops and when you are in the valley.

There are storms and there are times of peaceful calmness.

You can call on God anytime.

Psalm 18:3, 6 - "I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised; so shall I be saved from mine enemies. In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God; he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even unto his ears."

He is anxious to deliver, guide, strengthen, comfort, bless.

A. IN TIMES OF PRESSURE WE ARE TO PRAY (V. 13A)

"Afflicted" = to undergo trouble, evil, bad, affliction; to suffer ill treatment by others.

Every time this verb is used in N.T., it refers to someone being treated badly by others. (cp. II Tim. 2:3, 9; 4:5). Cp. its use in verse 10 - the mistreatment of God's prophets.

God's answer to handling people who treat you badly is not: retaliation (revenge), nor ignoring the situation -- but private prayer!

Present tense = Continual praying. Don't let anything keep you from praying!

Instead of having self-pity or complaining about the terrible situation ---- turn to God!

Pray for wisdom.
Pray for patience.
Pray for God's will to be done.

B. IN TIMES OF PLEASURE WE ARE TO PRAISE (V. 13B)

"Merry" = - good, warm feelings inside; to be cheerful.

"Sing psalms" - present tense: to keep this positive attitude, keep on singing psalms (praises) to God.

--We need to memorize more psalms.
--We need more psalms put to music.

Among my favorite songs are:

Psalm 19:7-10 (v. 10 = chorus)	SING
Psalm 25:1-3	THEM

Both contrasting verbs - "afflicted" and "merry" cover a wide range of varied emotional experiences in life.

The point is: whatever your situation - call out to God! Either by prayer or praise.

In doing so, you will strengthen your own walk with God.

NOTE: You are not to limit your praying to bad times, nor your praise to good times (Paul and Silas praised God with song with bleeding backs and chains [Acts 16:25])

"When the world is on top of you, pray; when you are on top of the world, praise." (Blanchard, p. 363).

II. CALL FOR YOUR PASTOR (V. 14-15) (pastoral prayer)

A. THE PASTOR'S PRAYER (V. 14)

"Sick" = lit. without strength, weak. The present tense points to a long term illness.

Sometimes when church members become ill, they fail to notify their pastor, and then they feel neglected because he does not come to visit them!

Plurality of elders (Acts 14:23; Phil. 1:1; I Thes. 5:12) (churches large enough to have more than one pastor - ex., youth pastor, Spanish pastor, etc.)

The scene is a sick man confined to his bed at home.

NOTE: The elders go to him; he does not go to a healer at a public healing service somewhere.

NOTE: God does not say: Call a praise; go to the Temple; call up a TV evangelist or faith healer.

God established the local church with a pastor(s) as the overseer to be at your side when you need him.

"Anointing him" = aorist participle. This activity occurred before the praying. After anointing him. . . pray . . . having already anointed him.

"Oil" - the common form for olive oil.

"Oil" - a Jewish custom showing courtesy for another person. Cp. Ps. 23:5 - "Thou anointest my head with oil." A good host would perform this for visitors.

The Jews had 3 things they would do for visitors:
1) wash feet 2) greet with kiss 3) anoint head with oil

READ Luke 7:44-46
(other Scriptures regarding anointing with oil - See Ps. 23:5, Ec. 9:8, II Sam. 12:20, Dan. 10:3, Mk. 6:13)

It was refreshing! Especially in hot, dry climate. Oil had medicinal purposes also (Wisdom of Ben Sira 38:9-15).

But here the thought is that of showing care and concern for the person.

B. THE LORD'S PROMISE (V. 15)

"Prayer of faith" - cp. Ja. 1:6 - "nothing doubting"

What is "the prayer of faith"? The answer is in I Jn. 5:14-15. When you know what you are asking is God's will, you can be confident that you will receive.

"Prayer is not getting man's will done in heaven. It is getting God's will done on earth." (Robert Law)

NOTE: It is the Lord who raises him up and not the prayer or some magical oil. God works in response to prayer.

"Shall save the sick" - Sick = to be weary, fatigued (points to the physical exhaustion that being laid up in bed produces).

Sick bodies are very often the result of sick spirits.

Unconfessed sin can lead to lingering illness:

I Jn. 5:16 - "Sin unto death"
I Cor. 11:30 - Lord's supper mis-used; result:
"Many are weak & sickly . . . many sleep"

READ Ps. 32:1-5 - David's sin and resultant physical affliction

Doctors say that 80 % of all illnesses are due to "emotional problems"; when Biblically diagnosed, they are revealed to be sin.

Guilt for sin breaks down the immunity processes in our body. Our resistance is weakened.

III. CALL ON EACH OTHER (V. 16-20) (personal prayer)

In order for us to go to each other and to encourage others to come to us:

A. WE NEED HUMILITY (to confess our sins) (v. 16a)
(Be one who can keep confidences)

"Confess" = be open. Admit specific areas of sin (ex. thought life, tongue, attitude, sinful habits)

It does not only mean to confess to one you have sinned against; but admit to those you can share confidences with. Share the areas you stumble in so that you can be prayed for!

This does not mean confession in a public worship service. He says it is to be to "one another" privately.

We don't do this because we are proud.
IF we would do this, we would have:
1) specific prayer support
2) encouragement and accountability
3) a powerful deterrent to sin

NOTE: James does not say: "Confess your sins to a priest in a confessional booth" but to one another (we are all priests!)

B. WE NEED RIGHTEOUSNESS (to have power in prayer) (v. 16b-18)
(Be one who has godly character)

V. 16 lit. - "The effective (energized) prayer (request) of a righteous one is strong to do much" (it is very powerful!)

"The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and His ears are attentive to their prayer" (I Pet. 3:12)

Elijah was:
1) a "Man" - we tend to view Bible heroes as superhuman.
2) "of like passions" = same nature (feelings, experiences) as others.

Elijah had the same struggles and weaknesses as other men have.

"He prayed fervently" = lit. He prayed with prayer. The Hebrew would repeat the word to stress intensity.

Elijah prayed that it wouldn't rain as a form of judgment on the idolatrous kingdom of Ahab and Jezebel (I KI. 17ff).

Too many people don't pray in their prayers. They just lazily say religious words, and their hearts are not in their prayers (Wiersbe, p. 172).

C. WE NEED CONCERN (to restore an erring brother) (v. 19-20)
(Be one who is really concerned)

"Of you" = Lit. "in you" (in your midst; in your church, among you)

"Err" = to wander away from living the truth.

In context, an ethical, rather than doctrinal, wandering is primarily in view.

Gal. 6:1 - "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye who are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

If he listens, we have gained (won) our brother (Mt. 18:15).

Churches around the world would easily double or triple in size (without winning one new soul) if we practiced this.

1. Such concern saves lives (v. 20a)

"Converteth" = to turn a person around. Same word used of Peter (Lk. 22:32).

"Sinner" = one who misses the mark. He is not living up to what God commands.

"Save a soul from death" = deliver a life from physical death.

Christian, if there is sin in your life, it will kill you! (ex. Ananias and Sapphira)

Sin always leads to death! "Sin when it is finished bringeth forth death" (See Ja. 1:15-16: L.S.D. ----Lust ---- Sin ---- Death)

"Chastening" - Heb. 12
"One sinner destroyeth much good" (Eccles. 9:18)

2. Such concern <u>stops sin</u> (v. 20b)

"Hide" = cover

"Hate stirreth up strife: but love covereth all sins" (Prov. 10:12).

This does not mean that love "sweeps the dirt under the carpet." Where there is love, there must be truth and righteousness!

Love will seek to get the sin covered under the blood!

By turning the sinner around, you are making sure that:

1) he sinful lifestyle stops
2) the sin is no longer publicized to the hurt of the church body (sin in a sense is contagious-it spreads)
3) the sin is covered by the blood (I Jn. 1:9)

True love seeks to cover sin (God's way). ILLUS: Noah's two sons walked in backwards to cover their father's nakedness.

We are disgusted when we hear of a rape or murder in which everyone just stood around and did not get involved. Are we any better?

When you know of a brother in sin, and you do nothing about it -- you then have sinned! We must also not be content with just admonishing him one time and think: "My work is done." What if, before you were saved, God said, "He heard the gospel once--that is enough."?

Conclusion:

I. CALL OUT TO THE LORD!

II. CALL FOR YOUR PASTOR

III. CALL ON EACH OTHER

HYMN: "What a Friend We Have in Jesus"