

# **Be Perfect**

## **Sermons on James**

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**“But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may  
be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”**

**(James 1:4)**

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# Lesson 1

## Introduction to James

### I. Attestation

#### A. external evidence

1. "Eusebius, who put it among the disputed books, accepted it for himself, referring to it as the first of the Catholic Epistles and as used publicly in the churches along with other epistles" (Harrison, p. 383).
2. "The Muratorian Canon omits it" (Thiessen, p. 272).
3. "The old Syriac Version included it" (Ibid).
4. "Although there may be allusions to James in the Apostolic Fathers, the first writer to refer to the work by name and cite it as Scripture is Origen, in his Commentary on John" (Harrison. 382-3).
5. "... Origen recognized James as Scripture, as did also Cyril of Jerusalem, Gregory of Nazianzus, Athanasius, Jerome, and Augustine" (Thiessen, p. 273).
6. "And it is included in the catalogues of accepted books that have come down to us from Asia Minor and Egypt" (Ibid).
7. "It was not until the Third Council of Carthage (A.D. 397) that the Epistle of James came to be generally recognized as canonical" (Ibid).
8. Luther gave the book a secondary position in the Lutheran Bible because it contradicted his belief in salvation by faith alone. He called it "a right strawy epistle" (Harrison, p.383).

#### B. internal evidence

*The Epistle harmonizes with what we know of this James from Josephus (Ant. XX. ix), from the Book of Acts (15:13-21; 21:17-25), and from Galatians (1:19; 2:9,10), and with the known circumstances of the Jewish Christians in the Dispersion (Ibid).*

### II. Author: James - 1:1

#### A. There are three or four (cf. Luke 6:16; **KJV** and **ASV**) New Testament characters named "James."

1. the son of Zebedee, an apostle - Matthew 4:21; 10:2
2. the son of Alphaeus, an apostle - Matthew 10:3; Mark 15:40
3. the Lord's brother - Matt.hew13:55; Galatians 1:19

#### B. Which James wrote this book?

1. He does not call himself an apostle. - 1:1
2. James, the son of Zebedee, was murdered by Herod in A.D. 44.  
(This does not rule him out as the author, for conditions in harmony with the content of the book were present before his death. - cf. "Date") - Acts 12:1-2
3. Nothing is known scripturally of James the less after the establishment of the church.
4. James, the Lord's half brother, became prominent in the first century church. -  
1 Corinthians; 15:7; Acts 1:14; Galatians 1:18-19; Acts 12:17; 15:13,19; Galatians 2:1,9-10,12; Acts 21:18

5. This James became so prominent that he was characteristically referred to by his name alone. - cf. Galatians 1:19; 2:9,12
6. The greeting of 1:1 is similar to that of James, the Lord's brother, in Acts 15:23. No other New Testament epistle begins this way.
7. By far, the most likely author is James, the brother of the Lord.

### III. Date

- A. "If James (the brother of the Lord - K.S.) wrote the Epistle, then we must date it before A.D. 62 or 63, for according to Josephus that was the time when he was killed' (Ibid. 277).
- B. It must have been written after Acts 8:1-4, for the disciples were "scattered abroad."
- C. It must have been written after Acts 11:26, for apparently the name "Christian" was already in use. - 2:7
- D. It apparently was written before Acts 15, because:
  1. There is no mention of the decision of the apostles and elders concerning the Gentiles and the law, even though James was a chief architect of that decision. - Acts 15:13-21
  2. There is no mention of Jewish/Gentile relations, although James specifically deals with "respect of persons." - 2:19; cf. Acts 10:34-35
  3. Disciples were still meeting in synagogues (Or James uses the Jewish term "synagogue" for their worship assembly). - 2:2
  4. A date around the time of the world-wide famine (A.D. 44) would fit, because of the reference to widows and orphans. - 1:26-27
- E. The book may have been written around A.D. 44.

IV. Audience: Christians Everywhere - 1:1,18; 2:1; cf. Acts 8:1-4; 11:19-26

### V. From Where Written

*Though the place of composition is not specifically indicated by the author, certain incidental allusions enable us to determine with a fair degree of certainty where the Epistle of James was written. The reference of the writer to the 'early and latter rain' (James 5:7), is a strong intimation that it was written in the land of Palestine. This division of the rainy season was characteristic of the land, and quite familiar to all who lived, or ever had lived, there. There were springs which produced sweet water; others gave forth only salt water (3:11); and the land produced wine, figs and oil (3:12). These considerations point to Palestine as the land in which the author lived; and, inasmuch as James is prominently mentioned in connection with the church in Jerusalem (Acts 15:13-21), it seems reasonable to suppose that the Epistle was written from Jerusalem in the land of Palestine (Woods. 19).*

VI. Theme: Be Perfect - 1:4,17,25; 2:22; 3:2

## VII. Characteristics

### A. One of Seven "Catholic Epistles"

1. "Catholic" means "general" or "universal."
2. These letters are James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, and Jude.

### B. James wrote from the perspective of a Jewish Christian.

1. "There is no more Jewish book in the New Testament than the epistle of James, not even excluding Matthew, Hebrews, and the Apocalypse" (Thiessen. 271).
2. "It is an interpretation of the Old Testament law and the Sermon on the Mount in the light of the Christian Gospel" (Ibid. 272).

### C. Much of the teaching is a repetition of Jesus' earthly teaching.

1. 1:4; cf. Matthew 5:48
2. 1:5; cf. Matthew 7:7
3. 1:6; cf. Mark 11:23
4. 1:22; cf. Matthew 7:21,24
5. 1:25; cf. Matthew 7:24-26
6. 2:5; cf. Luke 6:20
7. 4:10; cf. Matthew 23:12
8. 4:11-12; cf. Matthew 7:1
9. 5:1; cf. Luke 6:24-25
10. 5:12; cf. Matthew 5:34-37

### D. The book is on practical living throughout. It contains no teaching on the nature of the scheme of redemption. - cf. 1:22-27

### E. "The Letter, because of its eminently practical character, has been quite properly styled 'the Gospel of Common Sense'" (Woods. 17-18).

### F. "There are over 50 imperatives in the Epistle of James. James did not suggest - he commanded!" (Wiersbe. 10)

### G. James deals with the Christian's social relationships to such an extent he has been called the Amos of the New Testament. - cf. 2:1-9; 5:1-6

## VIII. Outline of James

### (Description of the Perfect Christian)

#### Salutation - 1:1

#### A. He Triumphs Over Temptations. - 1:2 - 17

1. Value of Temptations - 1:2-4
2. Prayer for Wisdom - 1:5-8
3. Vanity of Riches - 1:9-11
4. Enduring Temptations - 1:12-15
5. God the Source of Blessings - 1:16-17

#### B. He Receives The Word. - 1:18 - 27

1. Hear the Word - 1:18-21
2. Do the Word - 1:22-27

#### C. He Does Not Have Respect of Persons. - 2:1-13

#### D. His Faith Works. - 2:14-26

- E. He Bridles His Tongue. - 3:1-12
- F. He Has Heavenly Wisdom. - 3:13-18
- G. He Is Not a Friend of the World. - 4:1 - 5:6
  - 1. Friendship With World, Enmity With God - 4:1-5
  - 2. Submission to God - 4:6-10
  - 3. Evil Speaking - 4:11-12
  - 4. God Over Gold - 4:13 - 5:6
- H. He Is Patient. - 5:7-12
- I. He Prays. - 5:13-18
- J. He Restores Brethren Who Sin. - 5:19-20

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## Lesson 2

### Triumph Through Trials

#### James 1:2-12

Introduction:

- A. The “Name It - Claim It” preachers promise health, wealth, and happiness by following Christ.
- B. The Bible promises tribulation for following him. - James 1:2-12
- C. What should be our attitude toward suffering for Christ?

Body:

#### I. **Count: A Joyful Attitude (Values Determine Evaluation.)** - 1:2

##### A. Definition of Trials

- 1. This is from the Greek noun “*peirasmos*,” found in verses 2 and 12.
- 2. The verb form is found in verses 13 and 14 and is translated “tempted.”
- 3. When used in reference to men, the word means either a “*test, trial*” or “*temptation, enticement to sin*” (Arndt & Gingrich. 646).
- 4. Here it is used to mean sufferings for righteousness sake that try our faith and steadfastness.
  - a. We should strive to avoid enticements to sin. - Matthew 6:13
  - b. But we should rejoice in the sufferings that try our faith. - Matthew 5:10-12; 1 Peter 4:12-16
  - c. In verse 3 James specifically defines *peirasmos* as “testing” (“*dokimion*”).

A. This doesn’t mean we should seek persecution, for tribulation comes to all Christians because we are Christians. - John 15:18-19; 17:14; 2 Timothy 3:12

B. Our values determine our evaluation of suffering for Christ. - 1 Peter 4:12-13

#### II. **Know: An Understanding Mind (Trials Produce Triumph.)** - 1:3

A. “testing” (“*dokimion*”) - “*proving*”(Thayer. 155)

B. “faith” (“*pistis*”) - assurance, conviction based on evidence, trust - Hebrews 11:1,3,6 (NASB)

C. “patience”(“*hupomone*”) - “*endurance, fortitude, steadfastness, perseverance*” (Arndt & Gingrich. 854)

D. “tribulations” - “perseverance” - “proven character” - “hope” - Romans 5:3-4 (NASB)

#### III. **Let: A Surrendered Will (Patience Produces Perfection.)** - 1:4-11

A. God wants us to be perfect. - Matthew 5:48; Hebrews 6:1

1. “perfect” (“*teleios*”) - “*having attained the end or purpose, complete.... fully developed*” (Arndt & Gingrich. 816-17)

2. “complete” (“*holokleros*”) - “*whole, complete, undamaged, intact, blameless*” (Ibid. 567); cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:23



**B. Trials produce perfection IF:**

1. We pray for wisdom. - 1:5
  - a. “wisdom” (“*sophia*”) - “Good judgment in the face of the demands made by human and specif. by the Christian life”(Arndt & Gingrich. 767); cf. James 3:17
  - b. We study for knowledge and pray for the wisdom to apply it. - 2 Timothy 3:14-17
  - c. “liberally” (“*haplos*”) - “generously” (**NASB, ESV**)
  - d. “reproach” (“*oneidizo*”) - “*heap insults upon....* the manifestation of displeasure or regret which too often accompanies the giving of a gift” (Arndt & Gingrich. 573)
2. We pray in faith. - 1:6-7; cf. Matthew 14:22-33
3. We have the right attitude toward riches. - 1:9-11
  - a. terms
    - (1) “glory” (“*kauchaomai*”) - “*boast,... pride oneself*” (Ibid. 426)
    - (2) “exaltation” (“*hupsos*”) - “high position” (**NASB**)
    - (3) “humiliation” (“*tapeinosis*”) - “*lowness, low estate*”(Thayer. 615)
  - b. In Christ, the poor man is spiritually exalted. - 1:9; Ephesians 2:4-7
  - c. In Christ, the rich man is physically lowered. - 1:10; 1 Timothy 6:17-19; Hebrews 10:32-35; Romans 12:16
  - d. Material possessions pass away as quickly as the flowers of the field hit by the hot, dry east wind off the Arabian Desert. - 1:10-11

**IV. Trials Turn to Triumph.** - 1:12; cf. 1 Peter 1:3-9; Titus 1:2  
(Trials - Patience - Perfection - Crown of Life)

Conclusion:

- A. The Lord “never promised us a rose garden” in this life.
- B. Rather, we triumph through tribulation. - Revelation 2:10
- C. Count it all joy to fall into many trials.

**Works Cited**

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**The Bible (English Standard Version)**  
**The Bible (New American Standard Bible)**

## Lesson 3 Don't Blame God James 1:13-17

### Introduction:

- A. When people do wrong, to salve their conscience, they usually try to blame it on someone else.
  - 1. Flip Wilson: "The devil made me do it."
  - 2. criminal: "My father abused me."
  - 3. common excuse: "I'm just human."
    - a. This implies it is human nature to sin.
    - b. If we have a sinful nature, God is at fault, for He made us the way we are.
- B. In order to overcome temptation, we need to learn where to put the blame for sin. - James 1:13-17
- C. What causes people to sin?

### Body:

#### I. **I can't blame God** (God does not tempt us with evil). - verse 13

- A. Our unbelief tries God's longsuffering. - Hebrews 3:8-9
- B. God's commands try our faith. - Hebrews 11:17; Genesis 22:1-18; cf. runner trying out for track team; coach tests his speed; competitor might entice him to slow down or put a stumbling block in his way
- C. But God cannot be tempted with evil, and He does not tempt us to commit evil.

#### II. **It is our own fault when we sin.** - verses 14-15

- A. Temptation (to sin) comes from lust and enticement. - verses 14-15
  - 1. Lust
    - a. Lust in itself is neither evil nor sin.
      - (1) "lust": "denotes strong desire of any kind" (Vine. 3:25)
        - (a) Jesus lusted (had strong desire). - Luke 22:15
        - (b) Paul lusted. - Philippians 1:23
    - b. God has given a lawful fulfillment for every natural, fleshly desire. - e.g., 1 Corinthians 7:2
    - c. But the desire becomes evil, when it is directed toward that which is unlawful. - 1 Corinthians 10:6
  - 2. Enticed: "1. prop. to *bait, catch by bait ... 2. ... to beguile by blandishments, allure, entice, deceive*" (Thayer.128). - 1 John 2:15-17
- B. When we yield to temptation, sin is produced. - verse 15
  - 1. It is not a sin to be tempted. - Hebrews 4:15
  - 2. Jesus did not yield to temptation. - Hebrews 4:15; Matthew 4:1-11
  - 3. Neither should we. - 1 Peter 2:21-22; 1 Corinthians 10:13
- C. Sin brings forth death. - verse 15; Romans 6:23

### **III. God is the source of good rather than evil.**

- A. God is the source all good. - verse 16
- B. He never changes. - verse 17 (reference to sun dial)

#### Conclusion:

- A. When we sin, we have no one to blame but ourselves.
- B. Instead of making excuses for our sins, let us overcome temptation.
- C. Invitation

#### **Works Cited**

- Thayer, J.H., **A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament.**  
Vine, W.E., **An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words.**

## Lesson 4

### Receive the Word

### James 1:18-21

#### Introduction:

- A. Tell about study with young woman in Grenada, Mississippi who understood but did not want to give up living with a man to whom she was not married.
- B. If we are to be saved, we must receive the word of God properly. - James 1:18-21
- C. How should we receive the word of truth?

#### Body:

#### I. Why should we receive the word of truth? - James 1:18

- A. We are born again by the word of truth.
  - 1. It is God's will that we be his children, not that we sin. - James 1:15,18; cf. 1 Timothy 2:3-4
  - 2. The new birth is according to His will. - John 1:11-13
  - 3. The word of truth is the instrument by which God effects this new birth. - John 3:5; Romans 8:14; 1 Peter 1:22-23; Titus 3:5
- B. We thus become His firstfruits from His creation. - cf. Leviticus 23:10; Revelation 14:4
- C. The word is able to save our souls. - James 1:21; Romans 1:16-17

#### II. What hinders the reception of the word?

- A. being swift to speak - James 1:19; cf. Proverbs 29:20; Matthew 16:21-23
- B. being swift to wrath - James 1:19-20; cf. Acts 7:54-59
- C. an immoral life - James 1:21; cf. Luke 16:14; 1 Peter 1:1-2

#### III. How, then, should we receive the word of truth?

- A. Be swift to hear. - James 1:18; cf. Acts 10:33
- B. Be meek. James 1:21; cf. 1 Samuel 3:10

#### Conclusion:

- A. Tell of the willingness of Henry Chinagu to receive the word. He was in his third year of studying to be a Catholic priest in Enugu, Nigeria but who was baptized into Christ after about four hours of study, although it caused him to lose his chance to get an education and caused his family to be evicted from their home.
- B. If we are to be saved, we must so receive the word. - James 1:18-21
- C. Invitation

**Lesson 5**  
**Be Ye Doers of the Word**  
**James 1:22-25**

Introduction:

- A. Have you ever looked at your face in the mirror and wished you could forget what you saw?
- B. This is how many people treat the word of God. - James 1:22-25
- C. What should we do with the word of God?

Body:

I. We must hear it. - James 1:18-20

- A. Hearing the Word is essential. - James 1:18-21
- B. But it is not enough. - Romans 2:13

II. Know it.

- A. Knowing God's Word is essential. - John 6:44-45
- B. But it is not enough. - Romans 2:17-23

III. Believe it.

- A. Faith is essential. - Romans 5:1-2
- B. But faith alone is not enough. - James 2:24

IV. We must **DO** God's Word. - James 1:22-25

- A. One who hears the word but does not do it and thinks he is saved is self-deceived. - James 1:22
- B. He is like a man who looks at his unwashed face in the mirror, turns away forgetting what he has seen, and does nothing about it. - James 1:23-24
  - 1. God's word shows us what we are like and how we need to change. - Hebrews 4:12
  - 2. We must use the mirror of God's word to bring our lives into conformity to Christ. - 2 Corinthians 3:18

V. The mirror we look into is the "perfect law of liberty,"

- A. It is perfect in that:
  - 1. it is flawless - John 17:17; Titus 1:2;
  - 2. it is complete - 2 Timothy 3:16-17; and
  - 3. it perfects us.
    - a. forgiveness of sins - Hebrews 10:14
    - b. maturity in Christ - James 1:4
- B. It is law in that:
  - 1. it is the rule of conduct. - Philippians 3:16,
  - 2. and it is the standard of judgment. - James 2:12

C. It is the law of liberty in that:

1. it frees from the yoke of the law of Moses - Galatians 5:1
2. and it frees us from the bondage of sin. - Romans 6:17-18

Conclusion:

- A. To be blessed, we must be doers of the word. - James 1:22-25
- B. Are you a forgetful hearer or a doer that work?

## Lesson 6

### Vain Religion/Pure Religion

#### James 1:26-27

#### Introduction:

- A. Tell about the owner of a cleaners who asked Robert Jackson if he had refused to take orphans into his home.
- B. James describes two kinds of religion: one vain and the other pure and undefiled. - James 1:26-27
- C. How can we have pure and undefiled religion rather than vain religion?

#### Body:

#### I. Vain Religion

- A. “religion”: “signifies religion in its external aspects ..., religious worship, especially the ceremonial service of religion” (Vine. 3:272)
- B. The Jews thought acceptable religion consisted in proper observance of traditional ceremonies. - Matthew 15:1-2
- C. The Master emphatically taught that acceptable religion consists of inner purity and outward obedience to the commands of God. - Matthew 15:3-9; 23:25-26
- D. Misuse of the tongue:
  - 1. reveals inner corruption - Matthew 12:34-35
  - 2. and is disobedience to the commands of God. - Matthew 12:36-37
- D. Thus, James teaches that one who fails to control his tongue, while thinking he is religious, is deceiving himself and really has vain (“worthless” - **NASB**) religion. - James 1:26

#### II. Pure & Undefiled Religion

- A. “undefiled”: “...unsoiled ... pure from sin” (Thayer. 32)
- B. “to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction”
  - 1. Does this authorize church support of orphanages?
    - a. The context is completely individual. - James 1:19-27
    - b. Two of the three key elements are missing in the passage.
      - (1) the local church
      - (2) church support of a human organizations
    - c. If this passage authorizes church support of orphanages, why doesn't Matthew 25:31-46 authorize church support of organizations to clothe the poor (e.g., Good Will Industries), hospitals, soup kitchens' (e.g., Salvation Army), and Amnesty International?
    - d. Why doesn't Hebrews 13:2 authorize church support of organizations to house the homeless?
    - e. This is the very shifting of responsibility Jesus condemned among the Jews. - Matthew 15:3-6 (individual → church → human organization)

2. Can we fulfill this by having the preacher “visit” for us?
  - a. This is religion by proxy as practiced by denominations with their “pastors.” - “visit”
    - (1) “*go to see, visit ... someone also w. the connotation of care look after widows and orphans ... in their distress* Js. 1:27... (Arndt & Gingrich. 298).
    - (2) “James strikes a downright blow here at ministry by proxy, or by mere gifts of money. Pure and undefiled religion demands personal contact with the world’s sorrow: to **visit** the afflicted, and to visit them **in their affliction.**” (Vincent. 1:736).
  - b. except to be an example to others, the preacher has no more responsibility to “visit” the sick than any other member. - 1 Timothy 4:12
3. The essence of the religion of Christ is not in religious ceremony but in doing good. - Matthew 22:35-40; Galatians 6:9-10
- C. “and to keep himself unspotted from the world”
  1. “the world” - 1 John 2:15-17
  2. “unspotted” - 2 Corinthians 7:1; James 4:4

Conclusion:

- A. Brother, sister, we can be here every time the door is open, sing loudly, “Oh how I love Jesus!”, and still have vain religion.
- B. Do we:
  1. Obey God from the heart or observe human traditions?
  2. Control our tongues?
  3. Do good to others?
  4. Keep ourselves unspotted from the world?
- C. Is our religion vain or pure and undefiled?



## Lesson 7 Respect of Persons James 2:1-9

### Introduction:

- A. Tell about visit of black ladies to the assembly in El Dorado, Arkansas in 1969. Some of the men asked, "What are we going to do?" .I replied, "Invite them back or get another preacher."
- B. This is a problem that has always been with Christians. - James 2:1-9
- C. Is it right to practice respect of persons?

### Body:

#### I. Forbidden

- A. Basis of Command
  - 1. Is respect of persons consistent with the faith (what is believed, the doctrine of Christ)? - Jude 3
  - 2. Is respect of persons consistent with the teaching of the Lord of glory? - John 1:14
- B. Respect of Persons: the fault of one who, when responsible to give judgment, has respect to the position, rank, popularity, or outward circumstances of men - e.g., Luke 18:1-5; John 1:43-46; Acts 10:28; 11:2-3
- C. James forbids it.
  - 1. God has no respect of persons. - Romans 2:11
  - 2. And we are forbidden to have it. - James 2:1

#### II. Exemplified

- A. James exemplified respect of persons based on material wealth manifested in treatment in our assemblies. - James 2:2-4
- B. But it is also wrong on any other basis. - Galatians 3:26-29
- C. It is wrong when manifested in other ways. - Acts 11:1-3

#### III. Condemned

- A. It is caused by evil motives. - James 2:4
- B. God has chosen the poor. - James 2:5
  - 1. God chooses through the gospel. - 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14
  - 2. The gospel is for all. - Mark 16:15-16
  - 3. But the poor are far more likely to receive it. - Luke 6:20; 1 Corinthians 1:26
- C. The rich oppress you. - James 2:6; cf. Acts 4:1-3
- D. The rich blaspheme (speak evil of) the name "Christian." - James 2:7; cf. Acts 11:26; 1 Peter 4:16
- E. It violates the royal law. - James 2:8; cf. Leviticus 19:15,18; Luke 10:25-37; Romans 13:9-10
- F. It causes you to be convicted as a transgressor. - James 2:9; 5:19-20

### Conclusion:

- A. If Jesus were on earth today, He would be the victim of respect of persons! - Isaiah 53:3
- B. Would Jesus turn away from people or turn people away because of poverty, race, tongue, gender, or nationality?
- C. Shall we follow Him?
- D. "My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons."

## **Lesson 8**

### **Just One Little Sin**

#### **James 2:10-13**

#### Introduction:

- A. People characteristically minimize sin.
    - 1. “It was just a little white lie.”
    - 2. “But we’re in love and plan to get married.”
    - 3. “That huge department store chain will never miss this.”
  - B. We can never realize the heinousness of sin until we comprehend that our sins killed the Son of God. - Romans 5:8
  - C. How serious is “just one little sin”? - James 2:10-13
- I. “Just one little sin” makes one a sinner. - James 2:10
- A. God expects us to keep all His law. - Leviticus 19:37; Matthew 28:20
  - B. We do not have the right to try to decide which are important enough that we have to keep them. - Matthew 23:23; e.g., Sandy’s Baptist friend who said we “majored in minors and minored in majors” because we oppose instrumental music in worship
  - C. If one violates one divine precept, if he were equally tempted in another area, he would sin in that regard also. cf. 1 Samuel 15:1-23; James 2:9
  - D. It only takes one sin to cause one to be condemned. - Romans 6:23; Acts 8:18-23
- II. “Just one little sin” is not nullified by faithful observance of all the rest of God's law. - James 2:11
- A. Should a murderer go free because of an otherwise exemplary life? - Ezekiel 18:26
  - B. God will not pass over a sin committed in weakness by an otherwise righteous man. - Mark 10:17-22
- III. “Just one little sin,” if unforgiven, will condemn us in judgment. - James 2:12
- A. We shall be judged. - Romans 14:10
    - 1. for every little evil deed - 2 Corinthians 5:10
    - 2. for every little evil word - Matthew 12:36-37
    - 3. for every little evil purpose - Matthew 5:27-28
  - B. We shall be judged by the law of liberty - cf. James 2:8; Romans 2:16
    - 1. The Jews could have kept the law of Moses and were inexcusable for failing. - Deuteronomy 30:14; Romans 8:3
    - 2. How much more so if we fail to keep the “law of liberty”? - Romans 6:17-18
- IV. For those who heed, the mercy of God triumphs over the judgment of “just one little sin.” - James 2:13
- A. for the alien - Titus 3:5
  - B. for the erring Christian - Hebrews 4:14-16
  - C. To obtain this mercy, we must be merciful. - Matthew 5:7

#### Conclusion:

- A. Friend, if you are guilty of “just one little sin”:
  - 1. You are a sinner.
  - 2. You stand condemned.
  - 3. An otherwise good life will not justify you.
  - 4. Unless you repent, you will be condemned in judgment.
- B. Will you not repent, that mercy might triumph over judgment?

## Lesson 9 Faith and Works James 2:14-26

### Introduction:

- A. Perhaps the most fundamental doctrine of Protestant theology is salvation by faith alone.
  - 1. “Wherefore, that we are justified by faith only is a most wholesome doctrine and very full of comfort” (**Methodist Discipline**).
  - 2. *We believe the Scriptures teach that the great gospel blessing which Christ secures to such as believe in Him is justification; that justification includes the pardon of sin and the promise of eternal life on principles of righteousness; that it is bestowed, not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood....* (Hiscox Standard Baptist Manual).
- B. So strongly does the book of James appear to deny this doctrine, Martin Luther, a leading advocate of the doctrine of salvation by faith alone, was led at one point to deny that James belonged in the inspired canon of Scripture.
  - 1. “right strawy epistle”
  - 2. “no gospel character in it”
  - 3. “I will not have it in my Bible in the number of the proper chief books.”
- C. What is the relationship of faith and works?

### Body:

#### I. According to Paul - Romans 4:1-5

- A. The Jews first thought the Gospel was for Jews only. - Acts 11:19
- B. The conversion of Cornelius convinced them to preach to Gentiles. - Acts 11:18
- C. Many still thought it was necessary to keep the law of Moses and be circumcised. - Acts 15:1,5
- D. Had they been correct in binding the law, sinless perfection would have been required; thus, salvation would have to be earned, a matter of boasting. - Galatians 3:10
- E. These judaizers laid great stress on their physical relationship to Abraham. - Luke 3:8; John 8:33
- F. Paul showed that salvation was not through the law of Moses. - Romans 3:27-28
- G. Abraham was Paul's case in point of justification by faith without the law of Moses or circumcision. - Romans 4:1-5; cf. Genesis 15:1-6
- H. The kind of works Paul denied were boastful works. - Ephesians 2:9
- I. Paul did not deny the necessity of works of obedience to the gospel for salvation. - Galatians 5:6; 3:26-27; Romans 6:3-4; Philippians 2:12; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9

#### II. According to James - James 2:14-26

- A. Question: Will faith without works save? - verse 14
- B. Answer - verses 15-25
  - 1. Faith without works is dead. - verses 14-20
    - a. It is like good wishes without good deeds. - verses 15-17; cf. 1 John 3:16-18
    - b. It cannot be demonstrated. - verse 18
    - c. It is like that of demons. - verse 19; cf. Deuteronomy 6:4

2. Justification is by works. - verses. 21-25
  - a. example of Abraham - verses 21-24; cf. Genesis 15:6
    - (1) What kind of person was Abraham?
      - (a) Hebrew
      - (b) godly
      - (c) man
      - (d) child of God
    - (2) His works perfected his faith. - Genesis 22:1-18; Hebrews 5:8-9
    - (3) He became the friend of God. - 2 Chronicles 20:7; Isaiah 41:8; John 15:14
  - b. example of Rahab - verse 25; Joshua 2:1-22; 6:22-25
    - (1) What kind of person was Rahab?
      - (a) Gentile
      - (b) immoral
      - (c) woman
      - (d) alien
    - (2) How was she justified?
      - (a) she heard. - Joshua 2:10
      - (b) She believed. - Joshua 2:11; Hebrews 11:31
      - (c) She obeyed. - Joshua 2:12-21; James 2:25
    - (3) The Scriptures commend her working faith, not her lie.
- C. Conclusion: Faith without works is dead. - James 2:26
- D. James does not deny salvation by faith, but he does deny salvation by faith alone. - James 2:14,17,20,22,24,26

### III. Objections Answered

- A. Paul refers to the justification of sinners, whereas James refers to the justification of Christians.
  1. Both appeal to the same quotation to prove their point. - Genesis 15:6; Romans 4:3; James 2:23
  2. In each instance, Abraham had been a child of God a number of years. - Genesis 12:1-4, 7; 13:3-4; 14:18-19
  3. Abraham's initial justification was by a working faith. - Hebrews 11:8
  4. Rahab was an alien when she was justified by works. - James 2:25
  5. Both the alien and the Christian must be justified by faith that works.
    - a. alien - Mark 16:15-16
    - b. Christian - Matthew 28:20
- B. James speaks of justification before men. - James 2:18
  1. James speaks of salvation. - James 2:14
  2. What man saw Abraham offer Isaac? - James 2:21; Genesis 22:3,5,12
  3. Abraham's obedience proved his faith to God. - Genesis 22:11-12
- C. Paul writes of true faith, whereas James writes of alleged but false faith. - James 2:18
  1. What makes faith saving faith is works of obedience. - James 2:14,17,20,22,24,26
  2. we are justified by works. - James 2:24
  3. Paul does not contradict this truth. - Galatians 5:6

- D. The devils (demons) just believe in God, not in Christ. - James 2:19; cf. Mark 5:1-14
1. They believe in one God. - James 2:19
  2. They believe in Jesus Christ - Mark 5:7
  3. They confessed their faith in Christ. - Mark 5:7
  4. They worshiped Christ. - Mark 5:6
  5. They submitted to Him. - Mark 5:12-13
  6. They feared the judgment. - James 2:9
  7. But they were lost. - Matthew 8:29

#### IV. Summary

- A. The “works” Paul teaches do not justify are the works of the law of Moses. - Galatians 5:1-4
- B. The “works” James teaches do justify are the works of obedience to the Gospel. - Luke 17:10
- C. Faith alone:
1. Does not profit. - James 2:14
  2. will not save. - James 2:14
  3. Is dead. - James 2:17,20,26
  4. Cannot be shown. - James 2:18
  5. Is possessed by demons. - James 2:19
  6. Is incomplete. - James 2:22
  7. will not justify. - James 2:24
- D. The alien must work to be saved. - Matthew 7:21; Galatians 5:6; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Hebrews 5:8-9
- E. The Christian also must work to be saved. - Philippians 2:12; James 1:27

#### Conclusion:

- A. Faith only may be “very full of comfort,” but it is also very full of damnation.
- B. To be justified, saved, you must obey Christ.
- C. Has your faith been perfected by works? - Acts 22:16

## Lesson Ten

### The Tongue: Small But Powerful

#### James 3:1-12

#### Introduction:

- A. Some animals are very small but quite dangerous. - e.g., The coral snake is among the smallest of North American snakes, and is the smallest poisonous snake in North America, but it is also the most deadly.
- B. The tongue is also small but powerful. - James 3:1-12
- C. How important is it to control the tongue?

#### Body:

- I. Not everyone should teach. - 3:1-2 (As important as teaching the truth is, since it involves the use of the tongue, it can lead to sin.)
  - A. What does this mean? - 3:1
    - 1. It was characteristic of Jewish Christians to want to become teachers. - Romans 2:17-20; 1 Timothy 1:7;
    - 2. Some wanted to teach for the wrong reasons. - Matthew 23:5-7; Acts 20:33
    - 3. Not everyone is qualified to teach. - Romans 12:4-7; 2 Timothy 2:2
    - 4. All should strive to become qualified to teach. - 1 Peter 3:15; Hebrews 5:12
  - B. Why was this said? - 3:1-2
    - 1. Teachers receive a stricter judgment. - 3:1; Matthew 18:6-7
      - a. By false teaching they can lead others astray. - 2 Peter 2:1-2
      - b. By inadvisable speech, they can drive others away. - 2 Timothy 2:24
      - c. By sinful life, they can cause others to stumble. - 1 Timothy 4:12
    - 2. It is very difficult not to sin with the tongue. - 3:2
      - a. He is not saying that we cannot keep from sinning. - Romans 6:11-12; 1 Corinthians 15:34; 1 John 2:1; 3:8
      - b. This is a generalization with exceptions, like a proverbial statement. - 3:7; cf. Proverbs 18:22
      - c. The tongue is the hardest member of the body to control. - 3:2
      - d. A man who controls his tongue is “perfect.” - *ibid* (“Perfect in the sense in which the apostle immediately explains himself; that he is able to keep every other member of the body in subjection” (Barnes).
      - e. This does not excuse the misuse of the tongue. - Matthew 12:36-37; James 1:26
      - f. It does show we can control the bodily passions and avoid sin.
        - (1) If we can control the tongue we can control the whole body. - James 3:2
        - (2) We can control the tongue. - James 1:26
        - (3) Therefore, we can control the whole body. - cf. 1 Corinthians 10:13
- II. The tongue is small but powerful. - 3:3-5
  - A. The tongue is like:
    - 1. a small bit that turns a large horse. - 3:3
    - 2. a small rudder that turns a large ship. - 3:4
    - 3. a small fire that ignites an inferno. - 3:5

- B. Even so the tongue has great power. - Proverbs 10:11
  - 1. to do good - Mark 16:15-16; Ephesians 4:29; Proverbs 25:11
  - 2. to do harm - Proverbs 26:20; Ephesians 4:25; 5:4

III. The tongue is untamable. - 3:6-8

- A. The tongue has incredible power to harm. - 3:6
  - 1. a “world of iniquity” - The tongue utters and leads to all the evil in the world. - e.g., Proverbs 26:21
  - 2. defileth (stains) the whole body. - Matthew 12:34-35
  - 3. “setteth on fire the course (wheel) of nature” - inflames the whole round of one’s life
  - 4. “is set on fire of hell”
- B. An untameable beast must be caged. - 3:7-8
  - 1. Generally speaking, man is able to tame beasts (A tamed beast needs no restraints). - 3:7; cf. Genesis 1:27-28; 9:2
  - 2. But the tongue, being untameable, must be restrained. - 3:8; Proverbs 10:19
    - a. An untameable beast is kept caged.
    - b. God has given us pearly white bars to cage the tongue, and, for those who have lost those bars, he has provided shutters (Clench the teeth, close the lips, and restrain the tongue). - Psalm 141:3
    - c. The unrestrained tongue can do more harm than a room full of rattle snakes! - Psalm 140:3

IV. It is totally inconsistent for teachers of the word to misuse the tongue. - 3:9-12

- A. Should one and the same tongue:
  - 1. bless (praise, thank) God - cf. Psalm 145:21; 1 Corinthians 10:16
  - 2. and curse (petition God to destroy) men who are made in God’s likeness? - 3:9-10; cf. Genesis 1:27; 1 John 4:20; Romans 12:14
- B. This is as absurd as:
  - 1. the same spring sending out fresh and salty water - 3:11
  - 2. or a fig tree producing olives. - 3:12

Conclusion:

- A. The tongue is very small but very powerful. - Proverbs 18:21; e.g., power for good or harm within the atom
- B. We must cage this untameable beast.

## Lesson Eleven Two Wisdoms James 3:13-18

### Introduction:

- A. We should all want to have wisdom. - Proverbs 4:7
- B. How do we know whether or not we have true wisdom?

### I. Wisdom is known by deeds rather than words. - James 3:13

- A. “Among the Jews, Sophos (“wise”) was a technical term for the teacher, the scribe, the Rabbi” (**Theological Dictionary of the New Testament**. 7:505). (James Cooper, **Expository Sermons on the Epistle of James**. 28)
- B. The Jewish disciples wanted to be teachers. - James 3:1
- C. what qualifications should one meet to be a teacher? - cf. Deuteronomy 1:13
  - 1. wisdom: “... *sophia* is the insight into the true nature of things” (Vine. 4:221) (the ability to properly use knowledge - James 1:5)
  - 2. endowed with knowledge: “understanding” (**American Standard Version, New King James Version, New American Standard Bible**), “knowing, skilled” (Vine 2:301) - 2 Timothy 2:15
- D. How does one demonstrate wisdom and knowledge?
  - 1. “good conversation”: “good conduct” (**NKJV**); “good behavior” (**NASB**)
  - 2. works
  - 3. meekness

*... the exercises of it are first and chiefly towards God. It is that temper of spirit in which we accept His dealings with us as good, and therefore without disputing or resisting.... does not fight against God and more or less struggle and contend with Him. This meekness, however, being first of all a meekness before God, is also such in the face of men, even of evil men, out of a sense that these, with the insults and injuries which they inflict, are permitted and employed by Him for the chastening and purifying of His elect (Trench, **Synonyms**. 152).*

*... the meekness manifested by the Lord and commended to the believer is the fruit of power. The common assumption is that when a man is meek it is because he cannot help himself; but the Lord was 'meek' because he had the infinite resources of God at His command. Described negatively, meekness is the opposite to self-assertiveness and self-interest; it is equanimity of spirit that is neither elated nor cast down, simply because it is not occupied with self at all (Vine. 3:55-56).*

“gentleness, mildness, meekness” (Thayer. 535)

“the government of the passions” (MacKnight)

### II. Earthly Wisdom - James 3:14-16

- A. Evidence - verse 14
  - 1. bitter envying - “an envious and contentious rivalry, jealousy” (Thayer. 271)
  - 2. strife - “faction” (**ASV**), “self seeking (**NKJV**) , “selfish ambition” (**NASB**), “denotes ambition, self-seeking, rivalry, self-will being an underlying idea in the word; hence it denotes party-making” (Vine. 2:68).



B. Nature - verse 15

1. origin: earthly - "existing upon the earth, earthly, terrestrial... the wisdom of man, liable to error and misleading" (Thayer. 236-7). - cf. Philippians 3:18-20
2. appeal: sensual - "a. *having the nature and characteristics of the psuche*, i.e. of the principle of animal life, which men have in common with the brutes b, governed by the *psuche*, i.e. the *sensuous* nature with its subjection to appetite and passion" (Thayer. 677-8). - cf. Jude 17-19
3. nature: devilish - "*resembling or proceeding from an evilspirit, demon-like*" (Thayer. 124) - cf. John 8:44

C. Results - verse 16

1. confusion - "instability..., denotes a state of disorder, disturbance, confusion, tumult ... revolution or anarchy" (Vine. 1:227)
2. every evil work - worthless, vile, wicked, base

II. Wisdom from Above - James 3:17-18

A. Evidence - verse 13

1. good conversation
2. meekness

B. Nature - verse 17

1. pure - "pure from defilement, not contaminated" (Vine. 3:231); cf. Matthew 5:8; 1 John 3:3; Galatians 1:8-9
2. peaceable - cf. Matthew 5:9
3. gentle - "equitable, fair, moderate, forbearing, not insisting on the letter of the law; it expresses that considerateness that looks humanely and reasonably at the facts of a case" (Vine. 2:144-5).; cf. Philippians 4:5
4. easy to be intreated - "willing to yield" (NKJV),
5. mercy - "it is the outward manifestation of pity; it assumes need on the part of him who receives it, and resources adequate to meet the need 'on the part of him who shows it" (Vine. 3:60). "kindness or good will towards the miserable and afflicted, joined with a desire to relieve them" (Thayer. 203).; cf. Matthew 5:7
6. good fruits - cf. Galatians 5:22-24
7. without partiality - cf. James 2:1
8. without hypocrisy - "genuine, sincere" (Arndt & Gingrich. 76)

C. Results - verse 18

1. the fruit of righteousness is sown - Ephesians 2:10
2. in peace - Romans 12:18
3. by them that make peace - cf. Matthew 5:9; Romans 5:1; 1:16-17; Ephesians 4:1-3; Philippians 4:7

Conclusion:

A. Wisdom is proven by its fruit.

1. Wisdom From Above - James 3:13
  2. Earthly Wisdom - James 3:14
- B. Which do we exhibit?

## Lesson Twelve War and Peace James 4:1-10

### Introduction:

- A. The most destructive force among men is war. - “War is hell” (Sherman)
- B. The most ardent desire of mankind is for peace. - cf. Numbers 6:22-26
- C. These same principles are true among brethren. - Ephesians 4:1-3
- D. We can eliminate war among brethren by eliminating what causes the war.
- E. How can we eliminate wars among brethren?

### I. What causes war? - 4:1-5

- A. War in the heart causes wars among brethren. - 4:1
  - 1. “wars”: “a prevailing state of strife” (Woods. 199)
  - 2. “fightings”: “separate conflicts” (Ibid)
  - 3. “lusts” (*hedonon*): “any desire of sensual gratification” (Barnes); cf. Galatians 5:17; 1 Peter 2:11
- B. Selfish hearts cause:
  - 1. selfish actions - 4:2
    - a. “lust”: “covet” (ASV); cf. Colossians 3:5-6
    - b. “kill” - cf. 1 John 3:15; 1 Corinthians 3:3
  - 2. and selfish prayers - 4:3
    - a. “amiss” (*kakos*): “to be influenced by low, mean, selfish considerations” (Woods. 206)
    - b. “consume”: “consume wastefully, squander” (Ibid)
    - c. It is not wrong to pray for material things. - Matthew 6:11; 3 John 2
    - d. It is wrong to pray selfishly.
- C. War in the heart comes from friendship with the enemy. - 4:4-5
  - 1. “world” - 1 John 2:15-17
  - 2. By being friends with the world we declare war against God. 3. By being friends with the world we are unfaithful to God.

### II. What brings peace? (Seven Imperatives for Peace) - 4:6-10; cf. Psalms 138:6; 1 Corinthians 10:13; 1 Peter 5:5

- A. Submit to God. - 4:7; cf. Luke 1:26-38
- B. Resist the devil. - 4:7
- C. Draw nigh to God. - 4:8; cf. Hebrews 10:22
- D. Cleanse your hands. - 4:8; cf. Isaiah 1:16
- E. Purify your hearts. - 4:8; cf. Matthew 5:8
- F. Mourn and weep. - 4:9; cf. Matthew 5:4; 2 Corinthians 7:10
- G. Humble yourselves. - 4:10; ct. 1 Peter 5:6-7

### Conclusion:

- A. What a delight it would be to live in a world without war! - Numbers 6:26
- B. What a delight to be in a church where there is no war! - 1 Corinthians 1:10; Philippians 2:1-4
- C. To have peace among brethren, we must have peace in our hearts. - 1 Peter 1:22

## Lesson Thirteen Speak Not Evil One of Another James 4:11-12

### Introduction:

- A. The subject of our conversations reveals the content of our hearts. - Matthew 12:34-35
  - 1. Men who talk about sports are interested in sports.
  - 2. Men who tell dirty jokes have dirty minds.
  - 3. Women who talk about their children are interested in their children.
  - 4. Women who talk about filth have filthy minds.
  - 5. Men and women who talk about God's word and work are interested in His word and work.
  - 6. Men and women who speak evil of other people hate those people!
- B. James forbids evil speaking. - text
- C. What is evil speaking? Why is it forbidden?

### I. What is evil speaking? - James 4:11

- A. definition of "evil speaking": "*speak against, speak evil of, defame, slander*" (Arndt & Gingrich, p. 413)
- B. This does not include:
  - 1. Answering a false teacher. - Acts 15:1-2
  - 2. Rebuking a sinner. - Galatians 2:11-14
- C. It does include gossip and slander. - Psalm 15:1-3

### II. Why should we not speak evil of others? - James 4:11-12

- A. Evil speaking springs from sinful judging. - James 4:11
  - 1. We are required to judge people in some ways. - John. 7:24
    - a. We must judge if a teacher teaches the truth. - 2 John 9-11
    - b. We must judge sinners in the church. - 1 Corinthians 5:12-13; James 5:19-20
  - 2. Some judging is sinful.
    - a. hypocritical and hypercritical - Matthew 7:1-5
    - b. without trying to learn all the facts - John 7:51
    - c. based on opinions - Romans 14:1-3,10-14
    - d. the destiny of one's soul - 1 Corinthians 4:3-5
    - e. based on human religious laws - Galatians 2:3-5
    - f. based on the law of Moses - Colossians 2:14-17
    - g. based on assumed motives ("evil surmisings" - "evil suspicions" - **NKJV, NASB**) - 1 Timothy 6:4
- B. Sinful judging is the result of pride. - James 4:11-12; cf. verse 10
  - 1. The one who does so thinks he is better than the one he defames. - cf. Philippians 2:3
  - 2. He thinks he is above the law that forbids slander, gossip, and hatred. - Ephesians 4:31-32
  - 3. He sets himself up as judge of both the law and his neighbor.
    - a. Our responsibility is to obey the law. - James 1:22-25
    - b. Christ alone is Lawgiver and Judge. - 1 Corinthians 9:21; John 5:22

### Conclusion:

- A. How many disputes between brethren would immediately cease if evil speaking, sinful judging, and pride were eliminated among brethren?
- B. What do our mouths reveal about our hearts?

## **Lesson Fourteen**

### **Life Without God**

#### **James 4:13-17**

#### Introduction:

- A. Khrushchev threatened America, “We will bury you!” Now Russian communism is dead, and American freedom lives on. - cf. “The best laid plans o’ mice and men gang aft a-glee” (Robert Burns, “Ode to a Field Mouse”)
- B. The lesson James is teaching is important. - text
  - 1. “Go to now”: “his is an interjection designed to excite attention” (MacKnight. 599). - verse 13
  - 2. It concerns how I make plans for my life. - verses 14-15
- C. Where should God be in my plans for my life?

#### Body:

#### I. I must not ignore God. - James 4:13-16 (This is “ungodliness.”)

- A. How do some fail to include God in their plans? - verse 13
  - 1. by failing to obey the gospel - Acts 24:25
  - 2. by letting things of the world crowd out the Lord - Luke 8:14
- B. Why is this foolish?
  - 1. They fail to realize the uncertainty of life. - verse 14; Proverbs 27:1; Luke 12:13-21
  - 2. They fail to recognize the brevity of life. - verse 14; Psalm 90:12
  - 3. They fail to recognize God controls the future. - verse 15; Psalm 127:1 (“Man proposes, but God disposes” - Thomas a' Kempis)
  - 3. Their boasting in their own plans betrays their sinful pride. - verse 16; 1 Corinthians 1:31

#### II. I must obey God. - James 4:17

- A. To know and do not compounds the guilt. - Luke 12:47-48
- B. We must make the doing of good in God’s service the goal and direction of our lives. - Philippians 2:12
  - 1. This means we will become Christians. - Acts 26:28-29
  - 2. This means we will labor diligently in His service. - Romans 12:11

#### Conclusion:

- A. What are your plans for the future?
  - 1. Are you ignoring God? - Luke 12:20
  - 2. Are you obeying God? - Philippians 2:12
- B. Invitation

## **Lesson Fifteen Poor Rich Men James 5:1-6**

### Introduction:

- A. "Money Talks" - but what does it say?
- B. James warns that the rich man's money testifies against him in judgment. - text
- C. Why would rich men "weep and howl"?"

### Body:

#### I. Who is rich?

- A. not just those who have riches - James 2:23; Genesis 13:2,5-6
- B. but those whose attitude and actions toward wealth are wrong. - Mark 10:23-25; 1 Timothy 6:6-10
  - 1. How do I acquire wealth?
  - 2. Do I trust wealth for security?
  - 3. How do I use my wealth?

#### II. The rich shall have miseries because of: - James 5:1

- A. The Vanity of Riches - James 5:2-3
  - 1. They perish. - verse 2; cf. Matthew 6:19-21; 1 Timothy 6:17
  - 2. They witness against. - verse 3
  - 3. They consume. - verse 3
- B. The Sins of the Rich - James 5:3-6
  - 1. Hoard - verse 3
    - a. It is not sinful to save. - 2 Corinthians 12:14
    - b. It is sinful to hoard.
  - 2. Defraud - verse 4; cf. Deuteronomy 24:14-15; Jeremiah 22:13; Colossians 4:1
  - 3. Live in pleasure - verse 5; cf. Amos 6:3-7; Luke 21:34-35
  - 4. Persecute the Just - verse 6
    - a. the Just One - Acts 7:52
    - b. our example - 1 Peter 2:21-23

### Conclusion:

- A. Howard Hughes, one of the wealthiest Americans of the twentieth century, died an alcoholic, paranoid, recluse.
- B. Place your trust, not in riches, but in the living God.

## Lesson Sixteen Patience James 5:7-11

### Introduction:

- A. The “gospel of health and wealth” promises that living for Christ will turn this world into a bed of roses.
- B. But the Lord promises us affliction.
  - 1. The disciples to whom James wrote suffered at the hands of the wealthy. - James 5:6
  - 2. We too must suffer for Christ. - 2 Timothy 3:12
- C. How shall we respond to affliction for Christ? - James 5:7-11

### Body:

#### I. Patience - James 5:7-8

- A. meaning
  - 1. “*makrothumeo*” (James 5:7,8,10) - cf. Ephesians 4:2
    - a. “*to persevere patiently and bravely... in enduring misfortune and troubles*” (Thayer. 387)
    - b. “long-tempered” (Wiersbe. 153) - cf. Matthew 5:44-45
  - 2. “*hupomone*” (James 5:11) - cf. 1:3-4; “endurance under great stress” (Wiersbe. 154)
- B. example: the farmer - cf. Deuteronomy 11:13-14
- C. means: a “stablished” heart (“*to strengthen, make firm*” - Thayer. 588) - Acts 14:21-22

#### II. Motive: “The Coming of the Lord” - James 5:7-9

- A. The hope of the Lord’s return gives us reason to endure. - Romans 8:18; 2 Corinthians 4:17-18
- B. His coming is near. - James 5:8
  - 1. not that we can know when He is coming - Mark 13:31-32
  - 2. but that He could return at any time - Mark 13:33
- C. He is ever near. - James 5:9
  - 1. to see wickedness - Hebrews 4:13
  - 2. to answer the prayers of the afflicted - 1 Peter 3:12
- D. Impatience causes condemnation. - James 5:9
  - 1. “Grudge”: “Murmur” (ASV); “*to sigh, to groan*” (Thayer. 587)
  - 2. this is sin. -1 Corinthians 10:10; ct. Exodus 5; Numbers 14:1-38

#### III. Examples

- A. The Prophets - James 5:10; cf. Matthew 5:10-12
- B. Job - James 5:11; cf. Job ch's. 1-2; 13:15; 42:7-17

### Conclusion:

- A. The Lord does not settle all His accounts in October (Southern saying among those who borrowed from the bank to plant crops and repaid the loan after the fall harvest).
- B. “Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord.”

## Lesson Seventeen

### Swear Not

### James 5:12

#### Introduction:

- A. What is your habitual reaction when:
  - 1. you hurt yourself?
  - 2. someone makes you angry?
  - 3. someone challenges the truthfulness of a statement you have made?
- B. The problem of swearing is practical, universal, and perplexing.
  - 1. Nothing is more common than frivolous and false swearing.
  - 2. Opposite this are many who believe that even solemn, religious and judicial oaths are forbidden.
- C. What does James teach about swearing?

#### Body:

- I. What is swearing? - James 5:12; cf. Matthew 5:33-37
  - A. “swear” “*to affirm, promise, threaten, with an oath ... to call a person or thing as witness, to invoke*” (Thayer. 444).
  - B. “oath”: “An appeal to God in attestation of the truth of a statement or of the binding character of a promise.... Sometimes the appeal was to the sovereign or other sacred object” (**Davis Dictionary of the Bible.** 570).
  - C. “for swear”: “to swear falsely, to undo one’s swearing” (Vine. 2:126).
  - D. The fact one uses the word “affirm” rather than “swear” does not alter the fact that, when something is called to witness that a person is telling the truth, he is swearing.
- II. The Sermon on the Mount is the background of James prohibition against swearing. - cf. James 5:12; Matthew 5:33-37
  - A. The Law of Moses forbid:
    - 1. frivolous oaths - Exodus 20:7
    - 2. false oaths - Leviticus 19:12
    - 3. swearing in the name of false gods - Deuteronomy 6:13-15
  - B. Jewish tradition approved:
    - 1. frivolous swearing - Matthew 26:73-74
    - 2. evasive swearing - Matthew 23:16-20
  - C. Jesus and James forbid all such swearing. - Matthew 5:33-36; James 5:12
  - D. Thus, it is definitely sin to swear:
    - 1. frivolously
    - 2. falsely
    - 3. evasively
- III. Does this condemn solemn judicial and religious oaths?
  - A. God Himself swore by Himself. - Genesis 22:15-18; Matthew 5:48
  - B. Jesus testified under oath. - Matthew 26:63-64; Luke 6:40 Paul used solemn, religious oaths. - Romans 1:9; Philippians 1:8; 3:17
- IV. Two great principles stand behind this prohibition.
  - A. solemn regard for truth - Ephesians 4:25
  - B. solemn reverence for God and His name - Revelation 4:8

V. Why is swearing forbidden?

- A. All oaths ultimately involve God. - Matthew 5:34-36 (spiritual, natural, national, personal)
- B. Swearing is of Satan. - Matthew 5:37; cf. Genesis 3:4-5; John 8:44
- C. It causes us to be condemned. - James 5:12; cf. 3:2; Matthew 12:36-37
- D. Swearing is Satan's empty hook to catch fools! - James 1:14
  - 1. It does not cause one to be believed.
  - 2. It lowers one in the eyes of others.
  - 3. It accomplishes nothing.

Conclusion:

- A. The solution is in the heart.
  - 1. Reverence God.
  - 2. Love the truth.
- C. Just speak the truth and say no more. - Matthew 5:37; James 5:12



## Lesson Eighteen Life's Changing Scenes James 5:13-16

### Introduction:

- A. Life brings rapid transition. - Song: "Time is filled with swift transition."
- B. James tells us how to be mature Christians.- James 1:4
- C. How does the mature Christian handle life's changing scenes? - James 5:13-16

### I. When Afflicted: Pray. - James 5:13

- A. Affliction is the common lot of mankind.
  - 1. "affliction": *compounded from the adjective **kakos**, evil and **pascho**, to suffer; hence, literally, to suffer evil. It is, therefore, sufficiently comprehensive to embrace every type of affliction, whether of outward bodily character or of inner mental anguish* (Woods. 295).
  - 2. All people have trouble. - Job 14:1
  - 3. Sometimes people suffer because of their own sins. - Luke 15:11-19
  - 4. Christians suffer for righteousness' sake. - 2 Timothy 3:12
  - 5. Sometimes suffering has no apparent, moral cause. - Luke 13:4-5
- B. How shall we handle affliction?
  - 1. wrong:
    - a. alcohol or drugs - Proverbs 20:1
    - b. murmuring about God - 1 Corinthians 10:10
    - c. murmuring about brethren - James 5:9
  - 2. right
    - a. Rejoice. - James 1:2-3; 1 Peter 4:12-13
    - b. Patiently endure. - James 1:12; 5:10
    - c. Pray. - James 5:13

### II. When Merry: Sing Psalms. - James 5:13

- A. "merry"
  - 1. "cheerful" (**ASV, NASB, NKJV**)
  - 2. "literally, to have the mind well.... happy, or free from trouble... the opposite of affliction" (Barnes)
- B. "psalms": "any song of praise" (Ibid)
- C. The natural response of a cheerful heart is singing; for the Christian, it is singing psalms. - Acts 16:25
- D. The Christian who does not enjoy praising God in song will not enjoy heaven (assuming he makes it)! - Revelation 14:1-3

### III. When Sick: Call the Elders of the Church. - James 5:14-15

- A. Is this miraculous or providential?
  - 1. If this is miraculous, why call the elders?
  - 2. Anointing with oil can be either medicinal or miraculous.- Luke 10:33-34; Mark 6:13
  - 3. The reasons to insist this is miraculous are one of two false positions.
    - a. charismatic: all answer to prayer miraculous
    - b. some brethren: cannot pray for material needs - Matthew 6:11; 3 John 2
  - 4. Since neither language, context, nor other scripture demands the limited, miraculous application, we should accept this as a general promise and duty.
- B. "Call," don't assume they know. Would you assume the doctor knows you are sick?

- C. the “elders,” not the “pastor” or “preacher”
- D. What are they to do?
  1. Pray: all healing is ultimately in God’s hands. - James 5:15
  2. Anoint with oil, i.e., use all natural means available.
  3. “in the name of the Lord”
    - a. by His authority - Colossians 3:17
    - b. depending on Him - Acts 4:10-12

IV. When in Sin: Confess - James 5:16; cf. 1 John 1:9

- A. Sin affects fellowship:
  1. with God - 1 John 1:6
  2. with brethren - Ephesians 5:11
- B. Confess sin to those with whom fellowship is affected.
  1. always to God - 1 John 1:9
  2. to one wronged - Matthew 5:23-24
  3. to brethren who know of sin - James 5:16

Conclusion:

- A. The Lord has not promised us a life free from problems. - e.g., “I never promised you a rose garden.”
- B. But He has promised us a way to meet all life’s problems.
- C. The mature Christian handles life’s changing scenes in the proper ways.
- D. Invitation

## Lesson Nineteen The Power of Prayer James 5:13-18

### Introduction

- A. Tell of Jesus' prayers in the garden. - Matthew 26:36-46
- B. If the Master needed the power of prayer to strengthen His resolve to go to the cross, do we not also need prayer? - Luke 6:40
- C. How can we obtain the power of prayer for our good?

### Body:

#### I. The Power of Prayer

- A. Alleviate the Afflicted - James 5:13
- B. Save the Sick - James 5:14-15
- C. Save the Erring Child - James 5:15-16

#### II. The Source of the Power: God Answers Prayer - James 5:15; 1 John 5:14-15 (Prayer moves the hand of the one who moves the world. )

#### III. The Conditions of Prayer

- A. faith - James 5:15; cf. 1:6-8
- B. confession - James 5:15-16; Acts 8:22
- C. fervor - James 5:16; cf. Luke 22:44
- D. righteousness - James 5:16; 1 Peter 3:12; 1 John 3:7
- E. according to His will - James 5:17-18
  - 1. Elijah was not different from us. - James 5:17 ("with a nature like ours" - **NKJV, NASB**)
  - 2. There is no compelling reason to believe God's answer was miraculous. - 1 Kings 17:1; 18:41-45
  - 3. Even if it were, it still demonstrates that God hears and answers His people's prayers.
  - 4. Elijah's prayer was according to God's will. - Deuteronomy 28:15,23; 1 Kings 18:1; cf. 1 John 5:14-15 (We must pray that God's will be done on earth, not that our will be done in heaven.)
  - 5. At another time God told Elijah no. - 1 Kings 19:4; 2 Kings 2:11 (We ask for what we want; God gives us what we need.)

We ask for what we think we need; God gives us what He knows we need.)

### Conclusion:

- A. Scriptural prayer has the power to change life. - James 5:15-16
- B. Don't forget to pray. - James 5:13

## Lesson Twenty If Any of You Do Err James 5:19-20

### Introduction:

- A. One of the most common temptations I face is having conversations with other preachers about fellow preachers. - cf. James 4:11
- B. The purpose of James is to tell us how to be mature Christians. - James 1:4
- C. The final and highest mark of the mature Christian is the proper treatment of erring brethren. - James 5:19-20
- D. What should I do about a brother who errs from the truth?

### I. What is the condition of a brother who errs?

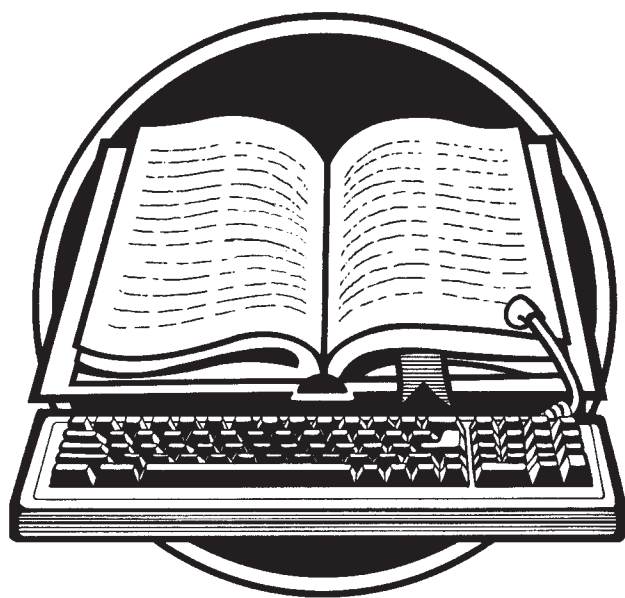
- A. The one who errs is a brother. - James 5:19
- B. He has erred from the truth. - James 5:19
  - 1. "err": "*pass. to be led into error ... esp. through ignorance to be led aside from the path of virtue, to go astray, sin ... Jas. v.19*" (Thayer. 514).
    - a. in doctrine - 2 Timothy 2:16-18
    - b. in practice - Galatians 6:1
    - c. through ignorance - Matthew 15:14
    - d. through rebellion - Hebrews 3:12
  - 2. truth - John 17:17
    - a. We are saved by the truth. - James 1:18,21
    - b. we must continue in the truth. - 2 John 4,9
- C. The brother who does so is dead. - James 5:20
  - 1. not physically
    - a. All shall die physically, whether in sin or not. - Hebrews 9:27
    - b. The soul shall not die physically. - Matthew 10:28
  - 2. spiritually
    - a. Death is the result of separation. - James 2:26
    - b. Sin separates the soul from God. - Isaiah 59:1-2; Ezekiel 18:20
  - 3. ultimately, the second death - Revelation 21:8

### II. What should the mature do about the erring brother?

- A. We should not:
  - 1. gossip about him. - James 4:11
  - 2. ignore the sin. - Galatians 6:1-2
- B. We should convert him. - James 5:19-20
  - 1. "convert": "*to cause to return, to bring back*" (Thayer. 243) - cf. Acts 26:20
  - 2. As the result, we:
    - a. save a soul from death. - cf. Matthew 16:26-27
    - b. hide a multitude of sin.
      - (1) "hide": "to cover, conceal, so no trace of it can be seen" (Vine. 2:218))
      - (2) not by seeking to conceal them - Proverbs 28:13
      - (3) but by being forgiven of them - Psalm 32:1-5

### Conclusion:

- A. There is no greater work than converting souls in error. - Daniel 12:3
- B. Brother, sister, what are we doing about our brethren in error? - James 5:19-20



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