

A STUDY COMMENTARY

James

The Exercise of Pure Religion In An Impure World



- Pure Religion and Trials
- The God of Pure Religion
- The Qualities of Pure Religion
- Dealing With Vain Religion

Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world. James 1:27

A Word About This Study Commentary

Since no commentary on the Bible is the final word, this one has been formatted to encourage your study and input. Space has been provided for you to record verses that the Spirit brings to your mind. There are no footnotes since other sources have not been quoted. This is not intended to be an exhaustive commentary, and it is assumed that you will consult other sources in your study.

Cross reference verses are recorded on facing pages as room allows. This is done for convenience, and the context of these references should be studied as well.

“And as for you, the anointing which ye received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any one teach you; but as his anointing teacheth you; concerning all things, and is true, and is no lie, and even as it taught you, ye abide in him.” 1 John 2:27 ASV

“As therefore ye received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and builded up in him, and established in your faith, even as ye were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. Take heed lest there shall be any one that maketh spoil of you through his philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ: for in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and in him ye are made full, who is the head of all principality and power.” Colossians 2:6-9 ASV

James

A Study Commentary

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James
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The Salvation of the Soul

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vs. vs.1

Mt 6:3 Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James, and Joses, and Judas, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended in him.

Joh 7:5 For even his brethren did not believe on him.

1Co 15:7 then he appeared to James; then to all the apostles.

Ac 15:6 The apostles and the elders came together to look into this matter.

13 After they had stopped speaking, James answered, saying, "Brethren, listen to me.

Ga 1:19 But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.

Ga 2:9 and when they perceived the grace that was given unto me, James and Cephas and John, they who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship that we should go unto the Gentiles, and they unto the circumcision.

1Co 9:5 Have we no right to lead about a wife that is a believer, even as the rest of the apostles, and the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?

Mt 6:24 No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

1Co 6:20 for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body.

Joh 7:34 Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, ye cannot come.

35 The Jews therefore said among themselves, Whither will this man go that we shall not find him? will he go unto the Dispersion among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks?

Ac 2:5 Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven.

Ac 8:3 But Saul laid waste the church, entering into every house, and dragging men and women committed them to prison.

4 They therefore that were scattered abroad, went about preaching the word.

Ac 11:19 They therefore that were scattered abroad upon the tribulation that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phoenicia, and Cyprus, and Antioch, speaking the word to none save only to Jews.

2Ti 3:12 Yea, and all that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

Jas 1:21 Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.

26 If any man thinketh himself to be religious, while he bridleth not his tongue but deceiveth his heart, this man's religion is vain.
27 Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

Ac 26:5 having knowledge of me from the first, if they be willing to testify, that after the strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.

Col 2:18 Let no man rob you of your prize by a voluntary humility and worshipping of the angels, dwelling in the things which he hath seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,

vs. 2

1Pe 5: 2 Tend the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly, according to the will of God; nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

3 neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you, but making yourselves ensamples to the flock.

2Pe 1:1 Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained a like precious faith with us in the righteousness of our God and the Saviour Jesus Christ.

Ro 9:3 For I could wish that I myself were anathema from Christ for my brethren's sake, my kinsmen according to the flesh.

2Ti 3:12 Yea, and all that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

Lu 10:30 Jesus made answer and said, A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho; and he fell among robbers, who both stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead.

Joh 9:3 Jesus answered, "It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him.

De 28:1 "Now it shall be, if you diligently obey the LORD your God, being careful to do all His commandments which I command you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth.

2 "All these blessings will come upon you and overtake you if you obey the LORD your God:

Col 1:24 Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body, which is the church, in filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions.

1Pe 3:15 but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.

Mt 5:11 Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you.

Joh 16:20 Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.

21 A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but when she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for the joy that a man is born into the world.
22 And ye therefore now have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no one taketh away from you.

Heb 12:2 looking unto Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of

James 1:1

I. Introduction 1:1

1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are of the Dispersion, greeting.

James is most likely one of the Lord's half brothers (Mark 6:3). Though not a believer prior to Christ's death (John 7:5), he became one soon after, possibly when Christ appeared to him (1Co 15:7). He was a leader in the church in Jerusalem, and though not one of the twelve apostles, was regarded as having authority as an elder (Acts 15:6, 13, Gal 1:19; 2:9). He may also have been an itinerant preacher (1Co 9:5).

The word **servant** means slave or bond-servant; one that has been purchased by and serves one master (Mt 6:24, 1Co 6:20). The fact that James sees his relationship to God and Jesus Christ as the same, shows that he regards them as distinct but equal. To serve one is to serve the other.

The twelve tribes which are of the Dispersion, refers to Jews who were living outside of Israel (John 7:34, 35). Many of these were devout believers who were following the Old Testament teachings (Acts 2:5). Some may have been Jewish Christians who had recently left Jerusalem due to the persecution of the Church by Saul (Paul) and others (Ac 8:3, 4; 11:19).

The theme of this book is the exercise of pure religion (26-27) which results in the salvation of the soul (vs. 21; 5:19-20). This salvation does not refer to the initial aspect of salvation whereby we are saved from the penalty of sin, but to the present aspect of salvation whereby we are saved from the power of sin to live in obedience to the Lord. (*See comments on 1:21.*) Religion refers to the practice of an individual's spiritual beliefs (Acts 26:5). Its use in this book does not imply that all religions are equal or true (Col 2:18).

II. Pure Religion and Trials 1:2-15

A. God's Purpose in Trials 1:2-12

2 Count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into manifold temptations;

Fifteen times in this short book James refers to his readers as "brethren", "my brethren", or "my beloved brethren." Though he was the Lord's half brother and a prominent leader in the Jerusalem church, he did not lord it over them (cf. 1Pe 5:2, 3). He saw them as equal brothers and sisters in Christ (cf. 2Pe 1:1). As Jews, they were also related ethnically (e.g. Ro 9:3).

The word **temptation** can mean either to prove the quality of something by a test or experiment, or to entice to do evil. In verses 1-12, temptation refers to testing encountered by Christians who live for God in an ungodly world (2Ti 3:12). In verses 13-15 the word is used for the enticement to sin.

To **fall into manifold temptations** does not mean to fall into sinful behavior, but to encounter difficulties in the normal course of life (e.g. Lu 10:30). In fact, it seems that James is dealing particularly with trials that are not the result of a specific sin (e.g. Joh 9:3). His examples from the life of Abraham, Rahab, and Job lend support to this view. This is an important truth that these Jewish believers would need to understand. They might have thought that the promises of material blessing, specifically made to the nation of Israel (Deut 28:1, 2), would now apply to the church. God's plan for the church is different however. New Testament believers are called to suffer for Christ sake (Col 1:24), and what the people should see is not our prosperity but our hopeful endurance in trials (1Pe 3:15).

The trials are not in themselves joyous, but we consciously **count** them as producing future joy (**all joy**), based on faithful endurance (Mt 5:11, 12, Joh 16:20-22, e.g. Heb 12:2). We should not desire these

Cross Reference Verses

vs. 2

Mt 6:13 And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Mt 26:41 Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

Pr 25:20 As one that taketh off a garment in cold weather, and as vinegar upon soda, So is he that singeth songs to a heavy heart.

Ro 12:15 Rejoice with them that rejoice; weep with them that weep.

1Co 10:13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as man can bear: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it.

2Co 12:9 And he hath said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my power is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

2Co 12:7 And by reason of the exceeding greatness of the revelations, that I should not be exalted overmuch, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, that I should not be exalted overmuch.

Heb 12:6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, And scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

1Pe 4:12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial among you, which cometh upon you to prove you, as though a strange thing happened unto you:

Lu 13:2 And he answered and said unto them, Think ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they have suffered these things?
3 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all in like manner perish.

vs. 3

Jas 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning.

Ro 8:28 And we know that to them that love God all things work together for good, even to them that are called according to his purpose.

Heb 12:10 For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed good to them; but he for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness.

2Ti 4:7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith.

Jude 1:3 Beloved, while I was giving all diligence to write unto you of our common salvation, I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints.

2Ti 2:19 Howbeit the firm foundation of God standeth, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his: and, Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness.

vs. 4

Ro 8: 29 For whom he foreknew, he also foreordained to be conformed to the image of his Son that he might be the firstborn among many brethren

2Co 3:18 But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit.

2Co 1:6 But whether we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; or whether we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which worketh in the patient enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer.

1Co 15:30 Why do we also stand in jeopardy every hour?
31 I protest by that glorifying in you, brethren, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.

32 If after the manner of men I fought with beasts at Ephesus, what doth it profit me? If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.

Heb 11:26 accounting the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he looked unto the recompense of reward.

1Co 9:24 Know ye not that they that run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? Even so run; that ye may attain.

25 And every man that striveth in the games exerciseth self-control in all things. Now they do it to receive a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

26 I therefore so run, as not uncertainly; so fight I, as not beating the air:

27 but I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage: lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected.

Jas 5:11 Behold, we call them blessed that endured: ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, how that the Lord is full of pity, and merciful.

1Co 3:13 each man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it is revealed in fire; and the fire itself shall prove each man's work of what sort it is.

14 If any man's work shall abide which he built thereon, he shall receive a reward.

15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as through fire.

2Co 5:9 Wherefore also we make it our aim, whether at home or absent, to be well-pleasing unto him.

10 For we must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

1Pe 1:7 that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold that perisheth though it is proved by fire, may be found unto praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ:

2Co 4:16 Wherefore we faint not; but though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day by day.

17 For our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory.

James 1:3

temptations (Mt 6:13; 26:41) nor should we impose a false spiritually on those going through them (Pr 25:20, Ro 12:15).

The trials are **manifold** (varied) but not unique or beyond our ability to bear (1Co 10:13, 2Co 12:9). This does not mean that they are simply random happenings, however. God uses trials to accomplish His particular purpose in the life of each believer (2Co 12:7, Heb 12:6), and we should not think it strange when we experience them (1Pe 4:12).

Finally, the exhortations here are directed to **brethren**. Although God can use trials to bring unbelievers to Himself (Lu 13:2, 3), the teaching in this book is for believers.

3 Knowing that the proving of your faith worketh patience.

James now takes us through the logical steps that show God's purpose for trials. **Knowing** is to know absolutely and be sure of. The reason we can count trials as joy is because we know absolutely that God is accomplishing our good through them (vs. 17, Ro 8:28, Heb 12:10).

The **proving of your faith** is that work of God by which He tests our resolve to live by **faith** in obedience to "*the faith*"—that body of truth (the Scriptures) that governs our life (2Ti 4:7, Jude 1:3). The purpose of this testing is not to prove to God that we are saved, since He knows that (cf. 2Ti 2:19), but rather to produce **patience** (hopeful endurance) in us. This is not endurance for endurance sake, but with a goal in view, which James will explain in the following verses.

4 And let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking in nothing.

We know that God's work in every believer's life is to conform us to the image of His Son (Ro 8:29, 2Co 3:18). Sometimes God does this through trials. If this is the case we are to have the continuing attitude of allowing this **patience** (hopeful endurance) do its **perfect work**.

This **perfect work** is that work that God does to bring us into conformity with His Son—to be Christlike. It is not primarily to make us stronger to endure the next trial, nor to enable us to help others (although these can be present benefits of trials 2Co 1:6), otherwise it would simply be better for God to keep all believers from experiencing trials altogether, which He could do. If there is no resurrection and reward then there is no purpose for trials (1Co 15:30-32, cf. Heb 11:26).

Picture a runner training for a race. Each day he runs farther and gets stronger but this is not his ultimate goal. His goal is to be the first to cross the finish line on race day (1Co 9:24-27). To **be perfect**, means to be **entire** (complete as God would have us), with **nothing lacking**. Trials are part of the maturing process in this life, and the focus is the Judgment Seat of Christ where the believer receives his reward (vs. 12, 5:11, 1Co 3:13-15, 2Co 5:9, 10). It is this expectation that gives value to the **proving** of our faith (vs. 3, 1Pe 1:7).

In the balance of this section (5-12) James gives two reasons for genuine optimism in trials. First, we are not left to our own resources, but have access to the wisdom of God (5-8). Second, all of life's circumstances are momentary in light of eternity, and blessing awaits those who faithfully endure (9-12, c.f. 2Co 4:16, 17).

5 But if any of you lacketh wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

The one thing we may lack while going through a trial is wisdom. The issue here is not why Christians go through trials. James has dealt

Cross Reference Verses

vs. 5

Jas 3:13 Who is wise and understanding among you? let him show by his good life his works in meekness of wisdom.

14 But if ye have bitter jealousy and faction in your heart, glory not and lie not against the truth.

15 This wisdom is not a wisdom that cometh down from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.

16 For where jealousy and faction are, there is confusion and every vile deed.

17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without variance, without hypocrisy.

18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for them that make peace.

Mt 27:44 The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth. (KJV)

2Pe 1:2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

vs. 6-8

Ps 119:105 Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, And light unto my path.

2Ti 3:16 Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness.

17 That the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work.

Pr 11:14 Where no wise guidance is, the people falleth; But in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.

1Th 2:13 And for this cause we also thank God without ceasing, that, when ye received from us the word of the message, even the word of God, ye accepted it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which also worketh in you that believe.

Jas 4:8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye doubleminded.

vs. 9

1Th 4:16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first;

17 then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

1Co 1:26 For behold your calling, brethren, that not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

27 but God chose the foolish things of the world, that he might put to shame them that are wise; and God chose the weak things of the world, that he might put to shame the things that are strong;

28 and the base things of the world, and the things that are despised, did God choose, yea and the things that are not, that he might bring to nought the things that are:

29 that no flesh should glory before God.

Ro 8:16 The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God:

17 and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him.

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

Col 3:2 Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth.

3 For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

4 When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also with him be manifested in glory.

Eph 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them.

2Pe 1:5 Yea, and for this very cause adding on your part all diligence, in your faith supply virtue; and in your virtue knowledge;

6 and in your knowledge self-control; and in your self-control patience; and in your patience godliness;

7 and in your godliness brotherly kindness; and in your brotherly kindness love.

8 For if these things are yours and abound, they make you to be not idle nor unfruitful unto the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

9 For he that lacketh these things is blind, seeing only what is near, having forgotten the cleansing from his old sins.

10 Wherefore, brethren, give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never stumble:

11 for thus shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

vs. 10, 11

Mt 27:57 And when even was come, there came a rich man from Arimathaea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple: 58 this man went to Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded it to be given up.

59 And Joseph took the body, and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth,

60 and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb, and departed.

Lu 16:9 And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when it shall fail, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles.

1Ch 29:15 For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as all our fathers were: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is no abiding.

1Ti 6:7 for we brought nothing into the world, for neither can we carry anything out.

Mt 13:6 and when the sun was risen, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.

Heb 10:32 But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were enlightened, ye endured a great conflict of sufferings; 34 For ye both had compassion on them that were in bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your possessions, knowing that ye have for yourselves a better possession and an abiding one.

James 1:6

with the why question in verses 3 and 4. The wisdom mentioned here relates to what we should do when trials come, so that the spiritual benefit that God intends will become a reality. James will describe the characteristics of this **wisdom** in chapter 3:13-18.

God is the source of this wisdom and He gives it **liberally to all** who **ask**. The idea of **liberally** is not only generously but purposefully. The wisdom God gives will be related to the trial and His purpose in it, and what we are to do. It is given without scolding (Matt 27:44 “*cast... in his teeth*”), and its principles are found in the Bible (2Pe1:2, 3).

6 But let him ask in faith, nothing doubting: for he that doubteth is like the surge of the sea driven by the wind and tossed.

7 For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord;

8 a double minded man, unstable in all his ways.

We know that the prayer for wisdom is biblical; the question here is, is it a prayer offered in **faith**? The individual who prays must believe that God will give the right answer through His Word and godly counsel (Ps 119:105, 2Ti 3:16, 17, Pr 11:14), and be determined to act accordingly (1Th 2:13). He must not regard the Bible as a mere opinion for consideration.

A **double minded** person is one who vacillates between doing God’s will and his own will. This person is **unstable**, like a wave in the sea whose disposition and direction are produced externally by the wind. He is on a spiritual high one moment and at a low the next. James will point out that this is caused by an impure heart (4:8) and God will not answer this person’s prayer. Before we pray for wisdom we must answer the question, “Am I determined to obey God”? If we are unwilling, we should not expect God to answer.

9 But let the brother of low degree glory in his high estate:

Some trials of life are short-lived and others are for a lifetime. This is where the doctrine of the imminent return of Christ offers genuine comfort (1 Th 4:16-18).

Here is the case of a believer **of low degree** as the world would judge (1Co 1:26-29). James does not exhort this man to get right with God so that God will give him prosperity, but turns his attention to his exalted position in Christ, and what the future holds for him (Ro 8:16,17, Eph 1:3, Col 3:2-4). He should **glory** (rejoice) **in his high estate**. To be otherwise focused, will bring hopelessness. This individual must remember that he is chosen of God (2:5), and his lowly place by the world’s standard, in no way limits him from being all that God wants him to be (1Co 1:27, 28, Eph 2:10). He has as much potential to have an abundant entrance into the kingdom as any other believer (2Pe 1:5-11).

10 and the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away.

11 For the sun ariseth with the scorching wind, and withereth the grass: and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his goings.

The context indicates that this person is also a brother, and there is no indication that his being **made low** (loss of wealth), is the result of sin. Often rich believers are also very godly (Mt 27:57-60), and earthly riches can be used for eternal benefit (Lu 16:9). That **he shall pass away**, reminds us that, in the end, wealth and prominence are temporary (1Ch. 29:15, 1Tim 6:7).

The **sun rising with the scorching wind** may refer to persecution that a believer experiences because of his Christian testimony (cf. Mt 13:6, Heb 10:32, 34). Like the wild flower that, in extreme heat, begins

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vs. 10, 11

2Co 4:17 For our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory.

Ac 8:3 But Saul laid waste the church, entering into every house, and dragging men and women committed them to prison.

4 They therefore that were scattered abroad, went about preaching the word.

Mt 6:19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break through and steal: 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

21 for where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also.

Lu 12:21 So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

Col 3:2 Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth.

3 For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

4 When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also with him be manifested in glory.

Job 1:21 and he said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: Jehovah gave, and Jehovah hath taken away; blessed be the name of Jehovah.

22 In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.

Mr 10:23 And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!

24 And the disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!

25 It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

Lu 15:14 And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that country; and he began to be in want.

15 And he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

16 And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

17 But when he came to himself he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish here with hunger!

18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight:

19 I am no more worthy to be called your son:

1Pe 1:24 For, All flesh is as grass, And all the glory thereof as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower falleth:

25 But the word of the Lord abideth for ever. And this is the word of good tidings which was preached unto you.

2Co 4:18 while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

1Ti 6:17 Charge them that are rich in this present world, that they be not high-minded, nor have their hope set on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.

Jude 1:16 These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their

lusts (and their mouth speaketh great swelling words), showing respect of persons for the sake of advantage.

Mt 6:30 But if God doth so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

Php 4:19 And my God shall supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

vs. 12

1Ti 6:3 If any man teacheth a different doctrine, and consenteth not to sound words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness;

4 he is puffed up, knowing nothing, but doting about questionings and disputes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings,

5 wranglings of men corrupted in mind and bereft of the truth, supposing that godliness is a way of gain.

Mal 3:3 and he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi, and refine them as gold and silver; and they shall offer unto Jehovah offerings in righteousness.

1Co 9:25 And every man that striveth in the games exerciseth self-control in all things. Now they do it to receive a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

Re 2:10 Fear not the things which thou art about to suffer: behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life.

1Pe 1:6 Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, ye have been put to grief in manifold trials,

7 that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold that perisheth though it is proved by fire, may be found unto praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ:

Mt 25:21 His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

Lu 9:24 For whosoever would save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.

Joh 14:15 If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments.

vs. 13

Job 2:4 And Satan answered Jehovah, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life.

5 But put forth thy hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will renounce thee to thy face.

Lu 22:31 Simon, Simon, behold, Satan asked to have you, that he might sift you as wheat:

1Co 10:13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as man can bear: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it.

2Co 12:7 And by reason of the exceeding greatness of the revelations, that I should not be exalted overmuch, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, that I should not be exalted overmuch.

James 1:12

to droop and drop its petals, and **the grace of the fashion of it** (the external glory) is lost, so this person may because of his testimony, lose his wealth, but his reward for enduring will be much greater (vs. 12, 2Co 4:17). This could have happened to some who fled during the persecution directed by Saul (Acts 8:3, 4).

To an unbeliever this scenario would be a disaster, but the Christian should not see it that way. God may allow this trial to focus his attention on true riches (Mt 6:19-21, Lu 12:21). If this happens, he can rejoice because his true worth is not seen in his bank account but in what he is in Christ (Col 3:2-4). Job is an example of this kind of believer (Job 1:21, 22), and James will refer to him later (5:11).

In Mark 10:23-25 the Lord spoke of the difficulty for the wealthy to be saved because they trust in their riches. This passage could also apply to such a person who through the loss of his wealth is **made low** (humbled). God could use this experience to bring the individual to Himself for salvation and forgiveness. Certainly this would result in true rejoicing. The parable of the prodigal son would be an example of this (Luke 15:14-19).

The reference to withering **grass** comes from Isaiah 40:7, 8, where Isaiah compares the temporary nature of earthly things, to the enduring Word of God (cf. 1Pe 1:24-25). When times are difficult it is easy to envy the rich (See Psalm 73.), but we must realize that earthly wealth is temporary and very fickle (2Co 4:18, 1Ti 6:17). It may be that some of these believers were showing special favor to the rich in hopes of sharing in their wealth (2:3, cf. Jude 16). It is better to trust in God who has promised to supply all our needs according to His riches in glory (Mt 6:30, Php 4:19).

12 Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he hath been approved, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord promised to them that love him.

Here is the concluding verse of this section. It emphasizes the purpose and goal of trials. That trials are part of God's will, even for faithful believers, would have been difficult for Jewish Christians to understand, and opposition to this biblical truth led to false teaching then, even as it does today. The prosperity-gospel message is not new (cf. 1Tim. 6:3-5).

Blessed is "to be supremely blest." This person continues to endure testing with a view to the promised reward at the Judgment Seat of Christ. His **approval** comes from the Lord who, like a refiner, looks for His reflected image in the purified gold (e.g. Mal 3:3). The reward is the imperishable (1Co 9:25) **crown of life**, which is especially for those who are faithful while suffering for Christ (Re 2:10). See 1Pe 1:6-7. This is not a literal crown that we would wear, but rather a future reward of responsibility in Christ's kingdom (e.g. Mt 25: 21). The **life** is the fullness of life of which God is the source, and which will be fully revealed in eternity (Lu 9:24, Col 3:3, 4). The Lord identified those who **love Him** as those who keep His commandments (Joh 14:15)

B. Satan's Purpose in Trials 1:13-15

13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempteth no man:

We know that Satan will use times of trial to entice us to sin (Job 2:4, 5). He must get God's approval for any action however (Lu 22:31), and we are assured that God will not allow trials in our lives that are beyond our ability to bear with His help (1Co 10:13). As a result, we can never blame God or our circumstances when we sin. Although God uses Satan (2Co 12:7), it is not His intent that we sin (**he himself temp-**

Cross Reference Verses

vs. 13

2Co12:9 And he hath said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my power is made perfect in weakness.

Job 2:6 And Jehovah said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thy hand; only spare his life.

Heb 12:9 Furthermore, we had the fathers of our flesh to chasten us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?

10 For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed good to them; but he for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness.

Mt 4:1 Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

Heb 4:15 For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

1Jo 3:5 And ye know that he was manifested to take away sins; and in him is no sin.

Ps 2:7 I will tell of the decree: Jehovah said unto me, Thou art my son; This day have I begotten thee.

8 Ask of me, and I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance, And the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.

Mt 4:4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Ge 3:6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and she gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat.

vs. 14

Lu 22:15 And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer.

Ro 13:14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof

Jas 4:7 Be subject therefore unto God; but resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

Ro 6:12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey the lusts thereof:

13 neither present your members unto sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves unto God, as alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

Ro 7:20 But if what I would not, that I do, it is no more I that do it, but sin which dwelleth in me.

vs. 15

Ge 2:17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

Ro 5:12 Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned:--

13 for until the law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over

them that had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression, who is a figure of him that was to come.

Ro 6:23 For the wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Ro 5:1 Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Ro 8:33 Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

Isa 59:1 Behold, Jehovah's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear:

2 but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, so that he will not hear.

1Jo 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1Co 10:5 Howbeit with most of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

1Co 11:30 For this cause many among you are weak and sickly, and not a few sleep.

1Jo 5:16 If any man see his brother sinning a sin not unto death, he shall ask, and God will give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: not concerning this do I say that he should make request.

vs. 16, 17

2Co 11:3 But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve in his craftiness, your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity that is toward Christ.

2Co 4:6 Seeing it is God, that said, Light shall shine out of darkness, who shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

2Ti 1:10 but hath now been manifested by the appearing of our Saviour Christ Jesus, who abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,

1Jo 1:5 And this is the message which we have heard from him and announce unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

Joh 8:44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and standeth not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof.

Eph 6:12 For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

James 1:14

teth no man), but that we grow spiritually (2Co 12:9).

It is also true that Satan cannot entice God to go beyond His will, **for God cannot be tempted with evil** (Job 2:6). We know that whatever God does, it is for our good (Heb 12:9, 10).

One might wonder if God cannot be tempted with evil, was the temptation of Christ genuine (Mt 4:1, cf. Heb 4:15). Adam proved that sinless human nature can be tempted. Christ is both God and man so He could be tempted by Satan, but He could not sin (1Jo 3:5). Satan's temptation appealed to genuine sinless desires of the Lord, which will be fulfilled in the Kingdom age (Ps 2:7, 8). Jesus was not controlled by desires, but by the Word of God (Mt 4:4). Adam on the other hand, yielded to his desires and disobeyed God's word (Ge 3:6).

14 but each man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed.

Lust means desire which is part of our created nature. Desires are not sinful in themselves (Lu 22:15), but can lead to sin (Ro 13:14). Scripture combines all sin into three categories. *“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.”* (1Jo 2:16) The picture here is of the desire taking control, and the individual is **drawn away** by it into sin. This is the way Satan works, but he cannot force us to sin; it's a matter of our **own** choice (4:7, Ro 6:12, 13). The temptation itself is not sin, but it will lead us into sin if we allow our desires control us (Ro 7:20).

15 Then the lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin: and the sin, when it is full-grown, bringeth forth death.

When **lust conceives** (captures our will) the end result is **sin**. Satan's goal in this process is our **death**. Death is separation not annihilation. Spiritual death is separation of the individual from fellowship with God, which was the immediate death Adam experienced (cf. Ge 2:17). Physical death is separation of the person from his physical body, and is the result of sin (Ro 5:12-14).

When the believer commits sin, the wages of that sin is death (Ro 6:23). This does not mean he is no longer saved, since salvation is based on God's will (vs. 18), and His justifying us by faith (Ro 5:1; 8:33). Sin does effect our fellowship with God however (Isa 59:1, 2), and this fellowship must be restored through confession (1Jo 1:9). When a child disobeys his parents he does not cease to be their child, but their love relationship suffers. Unconfessed (**full-grown**) sin can eventually result in God's judgment of premature physical death (1Co 10:5; 11:30, 1Jo 5:16).

III. The God of Pure Religion 1:16-25

A. His Character 1:16-17

16 Be not deceived, my beloved brethren.

17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning.

Satan is the great deceiver (2Co 11:3) whose mission is to lead us away from the truth into error. James doesn't want his readers to think that because they are going through trials, that God has changed. What is **good** comes from God alone, who is the **Father of lights**, both created and spiritual (2Co 4:6, 2Ti 1:10, 1Jo 1:5). Satan is the father of lies and ruler of darkness (Joh 8:44, Eph 6:12).

God's gifts are both **good** (beneficial) and **perfect** (complete), and include what He gives and what He withholds—things that are

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vs. 16, 17

Ac 14:17 And yet He left not himself without witness, in that he did good and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness.

Mal 3:6 For I, Jehovah, change not; therefore ye, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed.

1Co 13:12 For now we see in a mirror, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know fully even as also I was fully known.

Re 21:4 and he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more: the first things are passed away.

Joh 16:22 And ye therefore now have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no one taketh away from you.

Jer 18:6 O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith Jehovah. Behold, as the clay in the potter's hand, so are ye in my hand, O house of Israel.

7 At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up and to break down and to destroy it; 8 if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.

9 And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it;

10 if they do that which is evil in my sight, that they obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them.

Jon 4:2 And he prayed unto Jehovah, and said, I pray thee, O Jehovah, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I hastened to flee unto Tarshish; for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and abundant in loving-kindness, and repentest thee of the evil.

1Co 10:13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as man can bear: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it.

Jas 1:2 Count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into manifold temptations.

Ro 8:28 And we know that to them that love God all things work together for good, even to them that are called according to his purpose.

2Co 5:7 For we walk by faith, not by sight.

vs. 18

Joh 1:13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

1Co 1:30 But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who was made unto us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption.

1Pe 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Joh 3:3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Col 1:5 because of the hope which is laid up for you in the heavens, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel.

1Pe 1:23 having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth.

1Co 1:30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who was made unto us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption:

Eph 2:8 for by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not of works, that no man should glory.

2Co 5:17 Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new.

vs. 19, 20

Jer 15:18 Why is my pain perpetual, and my wound incurable, which refuseth to be healed? wilt thou indeed be unto me as a deceitful brook, as waters that fail?

Mr 3:5 And when He had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved at the hardening of their heart, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he stretched it forth; and his hand was restored.

Eph 4:26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath. 27 neither give place to the devil.

Ps 103:8 Jehovah is merciful and gracious, Slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness.

Pr 16:32 He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; And he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city.

Tit 1:7 For the bishop must be blameless, as God's steward; not self-willed, not soon angry, no brawler, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre

Ga 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 meekness, self-control; against such there is no law.

Pr 10:19 In the multitude of words there wanteth not transgression; But he that refraineth his lips doeth wisely.

Pr 29:20 Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? There is more hope of a fool than of him.

Pr 18:13 He that giveth answer before he heareth, It is folly and shame unto him.

17 He that pleadeth his cause first seemeth just; But his neighbor cometh and searcheth him out.

James 1:18

pleasant and trials. His purpose is to do His “*perfect work*” in us (vs. 4). God’s **good gifts** are also His witness to the world in general (Acts 14:17).

God cannot change (**with whom can be no variation** [fickleness]) as to His nature (Mal 3:6). The trials of this life often bring discouragement and confusion, much like trying to see in a **shadow** as compared to direct sunlight. James is making it clear that this **shadow** experience is not because God has changed. The fact is that in this life, we do not always see things clearly, but we will when we are with Christ (1Co 13:12. Rev 21:4, e.g. John 16:22). God’s actions may change based on our response to His dealing with us (Jer 18:6-10), but this is because His nature does not change (cf. Jonah 4:2).

The atheist and agnostic will never find hope or purpose in the trials of this life, which are common to all (1Co 10:13). Only faith in the omnipotent, omniscient God who cannot change, allows us to count these experiences as joy (1:2). As believers we know that “*all things work together for good*” (Ro 8:28). We may not know how this will happen, but we know it will. This is what it means to “*walk by faith, not by sight*” (2 Co 5:7).

B. His Will 1:18-21

18 Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

The greatest good that God has done for us is to save us. This salvation is a result of the working of **His own will** (Joh 1:13, 1Co 1:30). He **brought us forth**—“*begat us*” (1Pe 1:3, cf. Joh 3:3), by means of the **word of truth**—“*the gospel*” (Col 1:5, 6, 1Pe 1:23).

In the Old Testament, **firstfruits** were the first of the harvest given as a thanksgiving offering to God. It also acknowledged that the entire harvest was God’s provision. So it is in salvation; it is all from God (1Co 1:30, Eph 2:8, 9). James and his readers were among the first members of the church, and millions have been added by God since then. Each believer is a new **creature** (2 Co 5:17).

19 Ye know this, my beloved brethren. But let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:

20 for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

Since we **know** that the character of God is good and unchangeable (vs. 17), and that by His will He has saved us (vs. 18), then when trials come we must first listen to God. Often the first response to trials is anger, and sometimes toward God (Jer 15:18 cf. Isa 45:24). This happens because we feel unjustly treated.

Anger is an involuntary emotion and is not sinful in itself (Mr 3:5). Anger by itself cannot produce anything good, but it can motivate us to good actions, if we respond biblically. If anger controls us however, it can lead to sin and hinder the work of God (Eph 4:26, 27). This **wrath** (vengeance) that is **of man** (of our fleshly nature) is self-centered, and does not produce **the righteousness of God** (cf. Heb 12:11). Being slow to anger is a godly characteristic (Ps 103:8, Pr 16:32, Tit 1:7). It is the fruit of the Spirit (Ga 5:22, 23), and James would certainly have seen this attribute in Jesus.

The conclusion then, is that we must be **swift to hear** and **slow to speak** (cf. Pr 10:19; 29:20). In personal relationships, this refers to finding out the full story before we do or say anything (Pr 18:13, 17), but in context it means to be a **hearer of the word**—the Bible (vs. 23).

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vs. 20

Jer 15:16 Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy words were unto me a joy and the rejoicing of my heart: for I am called by thy name, O Jehovah, God of hosts.

Ps 119:105 Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, And light unto my path.

vs. 21

Lu 9:24 For whosoever would save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.

25 For what is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose or forfeit his own self?

Heb 10:39 But we are not of them that shrink back unto perdition; but of them that have faith unto the saving of the soul.

Lu 9:25 For what is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose or forfeit his own self?

1Co 3:15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as through fire.

Ro 13:12 The night is far spent, and the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.

Ga 3:27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ.

Col 3:8 but now do ye also put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, railing, shameful speaking out of your mouth:

9 lie not one to another; seeing that ye have put off the old man with his doings,

10 and have put on the new man, that is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of him that created him:

2Ti 2:21 If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, meet for the master's use, prepared unto every good work.

Ro 6:4 We were buried therefore with him through baptism unto death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life.

Col 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God.

1Th 2:13 And for this cause we also thank God without ceasing, that, when ye received from us the word of the message, even the word of God, ye accepted it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which also worketh in you that believe.

Lu 8:11 Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.
15 And that in the good ground, these are such as in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, hold it fast, and bring forth fruit with patience.

1Pe 1:9 receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

2Pe 1:8 For if these things are yours and abound, they make you to be not idle nor unfruitful unto the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

11 for thus shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

vs. 22

Ro 2:13 for not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.

Ro 10:17 So belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

Joh 15:22 If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no excuse for their sin.

vs. 25

2Co 3:18 But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit.

2Ti 3:16 Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness.

17 That the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work.

Joh 8:31 Jesus therefore said to those Jews that had believed him, If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples;

32 and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

James 1:21

God's word is our source of comfort and wisdom (Jer 15:16, Ps 119:105). Our first response then when trials come, should be to ask God for wisdom and then listen for His answer in His Word.

21 Wherefore putting away all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness, receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

To save your souls does not refer here to salvation from eternal damnation, but the saving of this life by serving God rather than self (Lu 9:24, 25, Heb 10:39). The phrase, "*forfeit his own self*" in Luke 9:25 is the same phrase translated "*he shall suffer loss*" in 1 Corinthians 3:15 where the focus is the Judgment Seat of Christ and the gain or loss of rewards. To save our souls we must be **putting away all filthiness and wickedness**. This means to cast aside the deeds of the old life and put on Christ likeness (Ro 13:12, Ga 3:27, Col 3: 8-10). God wants us to be a "*vessel unto honor*", usable to Him (2Ti 2:21).

James is not advocating a reformed life, but a new life (Ro 6:4) based on the **word** of God (Col 3:16). The idea of **receive** is to take what is offered because it has value (1Th 2:13). The **word**, is pictured as seed that is **implanted** in our hearts and produces fruit (Lu 8:11, 15). We are to continually receive this **word** with **meekness**—a humble attitude ready to submit our will to God's will. This is the path to a fruitful life for God, which is the saving of our **souls** (1Pe 1:9, 2Pe 1:8, 11). The salvation of our soul is the objective of this book.

C. His Word 1:22-25

22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves.

It is interesting that often when the Scriptures are taught and truth has been acknowledged, that we go away feeling the mission has been accomplished. This is a particularly cunning delusion since it has an aura of spiritually associated with it. If that's where it ends however, we are **deluding** (deceiving) our **own selves**. We must be **doers of the word** (c.f. Ro 2:13). Hearing is essential (Ro 10:17), but it is not the end of the matter. Hearing God's Word brings responsibility to obey (John 15:22).

23 For if any one is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a mirror:

24 for he beholdeth himself, and goeth away, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

James likens the person in verse 22 to a **man** (male) who looks at himself **in a mirror** and sees something that needs attention. He does not correct the situation at that point however, and as a result soon forgets about it. He goes on his way thinking all is fine, but to others, it is obvious that he missed some grooming procedure that morning. Essentially the **mirror** was of no value to him.

25 But he that looketh into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and so continueth, being not a hearer that forgetteth but a doer that worketh, this man shall be blessed in his doing.

The Bible is really a **mirror** with two components. One shows us what we are and the other, what Christ is (2Co 3:18). The point is that as we look into this **mirror** (the Word) and obey it, we become more and more like Christ. Scripture is given to correct us (2Ti 3:16, 17).

People often think of the Bible as restrictive and confining. In reality, it is the way to true freedom (Joh 8:31, 32). We can understand that laws, while restricting those who would do harm, are made to provide

Cross Reference Verses

vs. 25

2Pe 1:3 seeing that his divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that called us by his own glory and virtue.

Jas 2:12 So speak ye, and so do, as men that are to be judged by a law of liberty.

Joh 20:5 and stooping and looking in, he seeth the linen cloths lying; yet entered he not in.

1Pe 1:12 To whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto you, did they minister these things, which now have been announced unto you through them that preached the gospel unto you by the Holy Spirit sent forth from heaven; which things angel desire to look into.

Joh 8:31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; (KJV)

1Th 2:13 And for this cause we also thank God without ceasing, that, when ye received from us the word of the message, even the word of God, ye accepted it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which also worketh in you that believe.

Ro 8:29 For whom he foreknew, he also foreordained to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren:

30 and whom he foreordained, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

Col 3:1 If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God.

2 Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth.

3 For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

4 When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also with him be manifested in glory.

vs. 26,27

Ac 26:5 having knowledge of me from the first, if they be willing to testify, that after the strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.

Mt 23:13 But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye shut the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye enter not in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering in to enter.

15 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he is become so, ye make him twofold more a son of hell than yourselves.

27 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which outwardly appear beautiful, but inwardly are full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.

Joh 7:3 His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judaea, that thy disciples also may behold thy works which thou doest.

4 For no man doeth anything in secret, and himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou doest these things, manifest thyself to the world.

5 For even his brethren did not believe on him.

6 Jesus therefore saith unto them, My time is not yet come; but your time is always ready.

7 The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of

it, that its works are evil.

8 Go ye up unto the feast: I go not up unto this feast; because my time is not yet fulfilled.

Php 2:12 So then, my beloved, even as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;

13 for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure.

Mt 23:25 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye cleanse the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full from extortion and excess.

26 Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first the inside of the cup and of the platter, that the outside thereof may become clean also.

Jas 4:4 Ye adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore would be a friend of the world maketh himself an enemy of God.

Jas 1:21 Wherefore putting away all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness, receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

vs. 1

2Co 5:7 for we walk by faith, not by sight.

1Jo 5:4 For whatsoever is begotten of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith.

5 And who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

Eph 2:8 for by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;
9 not of works, that no man should glory.

Ga 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. (KJV)

Col 1:23 if so be that ye continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel which ye heard, which was preached in all creation under heaven; whereof I Paul was made a minister.

1Ti 4:1 But the Spirit saith expressly, that in later times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons,

Jude 1:3 Beloved, while I was giving all diligence to write unto you of our common salvation, I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints.

James 1:25

liberty for all. In the Scriptures we have “*all things that pertain unto life and godliness*” (2Pe 1:3). The Bible truly is the **law of liberty** (2:12).

The word **looketh** means to stoop down and look closely (Joh 20:5, e.g. 1Pe 1:12)). This person reads the Bible with the intent to obey it (**continueth** = stay near cf. Joh 8:31). He regards it as God speaking to him (1Th 2:13). He is a **doer that worketh**, and as a result **this man shall be blessed in his doing**. He will become more like Christ and in the end, **be blessed** with glory from God (Ro 8:29, 30, Col 3:1-4).

IV. The Qualities of Pure Religion 1:26-4:17

A. The Qualities Stated 1:26-27

26 If any man thinketh himself to be religious, while he bridleth not his tongue but deceiveth his heart, this man's religion is vain.

27 Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world

Religion is the lifestyle expression of a person’s spiritual beliefs (Ac 26:5). For many it is meaningless ritual that does not honestly represent their spiritual condition. The Lord often spoke against the religious hypocrisy of His day (Mt 23:13, 15, 27). Before he was saved, James was guilty of this (Joh 7:3-8). Through the Spirit, God changes a believer on the inside, and enables him to live godly (Php 2:12, 13). This is **pure**, unhypocritical **religion**, which is God’s desire for His people in all dispensations (Mt 23:25, 26).

James gives three characteristics of **pure religion** which are illustrated in chapters 2-4. They are: impartial care for those in need—**to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction** (ch. 2), **bridling his tongue** (ch. 3), and **to keep oneself unspotted from the world** (ch. 4). A spot or stain occurs in a garment when through carelessness an unwanted substance is incorporated into the fabric and it becomes **defiled**. This is what happens when we incorporate the value system of the **world** (4:4) into our lives. The end in view of **pure, undefiled religion** is the salvation of our soul (vs. 21). These attributes of **pure religion** are the antidote to the characteristics of the world—“*the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vain glory of life*” (1Jo 2:16). Chapter five will deal with **religion that is vain** (empty).

B. The Qualities Illustrated 2:1-4:17

1. Impartial Care for Those in Need 2:1-26

a. Walking by Sight (by appearance) 2:1-13

James 2

1 My brethren, hold not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons.

Whereas the key word in chapter one was temptation or testing, the key word in this chapter is **faith**. The way to overcome temptation is to live by faith (2Co 5:7, 1Jo 5:4-5). Of the twelve times James mentions faith, nine of the occurrences are in this chapter. The word is used primarily in three ways in Scripture. It is the individual’s response to God’s offer of salvation (Eph 2:8, 9). It is also the principle that should govern the believer’s life (Ga 2:20).

A third use is that it refers to a body of truth—the Scriptures (Col 1:23, 1Ti 4:1, Jude 1:3). All of these are united in God’s purpose for us. A person is saved when he believes the gospel as re-corded in Scripture, and he is then to live his life by **faith**, applying

Cross Reference Verses

vs. 1

Ro 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

17 For therein is revealed a righteousness of God from faith unto faith: as it is written, But the righteous shall live by faith.

Joh 13:15 For I have given you an example, that ye also should do as I have done to you.

34 A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

1Pe 2:21 For hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow his steps.

1Jo 2:6 he that saith he abideth in him ought himself also to walk even as he walked.

Mt 22:16 And they send to him their disciples, with the Herodians, saying, Teacher, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, and carest not for any one: for thou regardest not the person of men.

Lu 15:1 Now all the publicans and sinners were drawing near unto him to hear him.

2 And both the Pharisees and the scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.

Ro 2:11 for there is no respect of persons with God.

Eph 6:9 And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, and forbear threatening: knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no respect of persons with him.

Php 2:3 doing nothing through faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself;

4 not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others.

5 Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.

Mr 8:34 And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

35 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it.

36 For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

37 Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? (KJV)

vs. 2-4

Lu 11:43 Woe unto you Pharisees! for ye love the chief seats in the synagogues, and the salutations in the marketplaces.

Jude 1:16 These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their lusts (and their mouth speaketh great swelling words), showing respect of persons for the sake of advantage.

Ps 50:12 If I were hungry, I would not tell thee; For the world is mine, and the fulness thereof.

1Co 1:26 For behold your calling, brethren, that not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: 27 but God chose the foolish things of the world, that he might put to shame them that are wise; and God chose the weak things of the

world, that he might put to shame the things that are strong; 28 and the base things of the world, and the things that are despised, did God choose, yea and the things that are not, that he might bring to nought the things that are: 29 that no flesh should glory before God.

Lu 16:14 And the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all these things; and they scoffed at him.

15 And he said unto them, Ye are they that justify yourselves in the sight of men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God.

Lu 20:46 Beware of the scribes, who desire to walk in long robes, and love salutations in the marketplaces, and chief seats in the synagogues, and chief places at feasts.

Ge 9:6 Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: For in the image of God made he man.

Pr 22:2 The rich and the poor meet together: Jehovah is the maker of them all.

vs. 5-7

De 7:7 Jehovah did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all peoples:

8 but because Jehovah loveth you, and because he would keep the oath which he swore unto your fathers, hath Jehovah brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

Ro 9:16 So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that hath mercy.

Ro 11:5 Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

Ro 2:11 for there is no respect of persons with God.

Ro 11:32 For God hath shut up all unto disobedience, that he might have mercy upon all.

Ro 10:13 for, Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Ro 8:16 The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God:

17 and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him.

2Co 8:9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich.

Ro 2:23 thou who gloriest in the law, through thy transgression of the law dishonorest thou God?

24 For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you, even as it is written.

1Co 8:12 And thus, sinning against the brethren, and wounding their conscience when it is weak, ye sin against Christ.

James 2:2

the faith (Scripture) to all of life's situations (Ro 1:16, 17).

To **hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ** is to emulate the life and teaching of Christ. He is our example (Joh 13:15, 34, 1Pe 2:21, 1Joh 2:6). To show **respect of persons** is to show preference to a person based on superficial qualities, which Christ did not do (Mt 22:16, Lu 15:1, 2, Ro 2:11, Eph 6:9). He is **Lord of glory** yet humbled Himself, being obedient to His Father, and we must have the same attitude (Php 2:3-5).

In the balance of the chapter, the word faith most often refers to a life principle. Living by faith produces godly works that result in the saving of our souls (Mr 8:34-37 KJV).

2 For if there come into your synagogue a man with a gold ring, in fine clothing, and there come in also a poor man in vile clothing;

3 and ye have regard to him that weareth the fine clothing, and say, Sit thou here in a good place; and ye say to the poor man, Stand thou there, or sit under my footstool;

4 Do ye not make distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?

In a **synagogue** there were chief seats where important people would sit (Lu 11:43). It is unclear whether these believers actually met in a synagogue or if James just uses this term to refer to the gathering itself. It is clear that some individuals in this assembly were discriminating against the poor and favoring the wealthy. This was not a case of showing hospitality but rather of currying favor of the rich hoping to benefit from their money or prestige (cf. Jude 16). It gives the impression that the rich are more favored by God or that He needs their money and power, which is certainly not true (vs. 5, Ps 50:12, 1Co 1:26-29). The Lord hated this kind of behavior (Lu, 16:14, 15; 20:46). The glory of man may be his fancy clothes, but man's true value is because he is made in the image of God (e.g. Ge 9:6, Pr 22:2). To regard a man's possessions above his soul is to dishonor God, and to **become judges with evil thoughts**.

5 Harken, my beloved brethren; did not God choose them that are poor as to the world to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he promised to them that love him?

6 But ye have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you, and themselves drag you before the judgment-seats?

7 Do not they blaspheme the honorable name by which ye are called?

Harken, my beloved brethren, is James verbally putting his arm around these believers to encourage them to change. He gives three reasons why showing partiality to the rich is wrong. First, God does not **choose** individuals based on their status in this life (1Co 1:26-29). Of course, this does not mean that God only chooses the poor or that He chooses them because they are poor. The Bible is clear that God's choosing is based on His sovereign love (Deut. 7:7, 8), mercy (Rom. 9:16), and grace (Rom. 11:5). He shows no partiality (Rom. 2:11) to rich or poor. In this life He shows "*mercy to all*" (Rom 11:32), and makes salvation available to all who will come to Him (Rom. 10:13). All who trust Christ are spiritually **rich** and **heirs of the kingdom** (Ro 8:16, 17, 2Co 8:9).

Secondly, James points out that these rich people because of their wealth and influence, **oppress** the believers (5:4). Now these Christians are doing the same to the poor in their assembly. They have **dishonored the poor man**, and in doing so have dishonored God, in whose image he is made (cf. Ro 2:23, 24, 1Co 8:12).

Thirdly, the people to whom they are pandering, are the very same who vilify the **name** of Christ. They ridicule the **name** Christian (cf.

Cross Reference Verses

vs. 8

1Pe 4:14 If ye are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are ye; because the Spirit of glory and the Spirit of God resteth upon you.

16 but if a man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name.

Jas 2:5 Hearken, my beloved brethren; did not God choose them that are poor as to the world to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he promised to them that love him?

1Ti 2:4 who would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth.

Joh 13:34 A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

1Jo 5:1 Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God: and whosoever loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.

2 Hereby we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and do his commandments.

3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

vs. 9

Mt 22:37 And he said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

38 This is the great and first commandment.

39 And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

40 On these two commandments the whole law hangeth, and the prophets.

Le 19:15 Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty; but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbor.

vs. 10,11

Hab 1:13 Thou that art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and that canst not look on perverseness.

Ps 51:3 For I know my transgressions; And my sin is ever before me.

4 Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, And done that which is evil in thy sight; That thou mayest be justified when thou speakest, And be clear when thou judgest.

Ex 21: 22 And if men strive together, and hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart, and yet no harm follow; he shall be surely fined, according as the woman's husband shall lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges determine.

23 But if any harm follow, then thou shalt give life for life,

24 eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

Col 2:16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast day or a new moon or a sabbath day:

17 which are a shadow of the things to come; but the body is Christ's.

vs. 12

Jas 1:25 But he that looketh into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and so continueth, being not a hearer that forgetteth but a doer that worketh, this man shall be blessed in his doing.

2Ti 3:16 Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness.

17 That the man of God may be complete, furnished completely

unto every good work.

Heb 2:2 For if the word spoken through angels proved stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward;

3 how shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation? which having at the first been spoken through the Lord, was confirmed unto us by them that heard.

De 10:17 For Jehovah your God, he is God of gods, and Lord of lords, the great God, the mighty, and the terrible, who regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward.

18 He doth execute justice for the fatherless and widow, and loveth the sojourner, in giving him food and raiment.

19 Love ye therefore the sojourner; for ye were sojourners in the land of Egypt.

James 2:8

1Pe 4:14, 16).

8 Howbeit if ye fulfill the royal law, according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well:

Here then is the **royal law** for those who are “*heirs of the kingdom*” (vs. 5). It is to treat all with love and respect, whether rich or poor. If all the seats are filled and a rich visitor comes in, give him your seat and let the poor keep his seat. God is not against the rich. He wants all to be saved (1Ti 2:4). Actually, the Lord Jesus set a higher standard for believers, and that is to love as He loved (Joh 13:34, cf. 1Jo 5:1-3).

9 but if ye have respect of persons, ye commit sin, being convicted by the law as transgressors.

The Lord divided the Ten Commandments into two groups—to love God and to love others (Mt 22:37-40). To make distinctions based on wealth or status is **sin** because it shows neither love for God nor love for others (Le 19:15). As a result the Law **convicts** this person as a **transgressor—ye commit sin**.

10 For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is become guilty of all.

11 For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou dost not commit adultery, but killest, thou art become a transgressor of the law.

Some of James’ readers might accuse him of being a little strong at this point. Certainly discriminating against the poor is not really a sin is it? It is interesting how we often divide sin into categories, some not so bad and some really bad. We tend to assess the seriousness of a sin based on its due penalty. This judgment is based on human reasoning, and ignores the absolute holiness of God (Hab 1:13a).

In a criminal court there are two phases to a trial. The first phase determines guilt or innocence. The second phase determines the punishment. James is speaking here of the first phase.

God is the author of all the commandments, and so any one sin breaks His Law and renders the person **guilty** (Ps 51:3, 4). He is as **guilty** as a person who has broken **all** the commandments. For a murderer to argue his case based on his keeping all the laws except the one regarding killing would be ludicrous. His act of murder makes him a **transgressor of the law**.

To transgress means to cross a boundary, and there is no difference as far as **guilt** is concerned, between the person who is a foot across, and the one who has gone a mile across. They have both crossed the line and are **transgressors**. The conclusion is that prejudicial discrimination is breaking God’s Law and so it is sin.

This does not mean that the punishment for breaking different commandments was the same however. In the Old Testament as well as today, the punishment had to fit the crime (Ex 21:22-24 ff).

It should be noted that the **law** to which James refers, is the Ten Commandments, all of which are restated in the New Testament except the keeping of the Sabbath (cf. Col 2:16-17).

12 So speak ye, and so do, as men that are to be judged by a law of liberty.

The **law of liberty** is the Word of God (1:25). It is “*the faith*” embodied in the Scriptures, mentioned in verse one. The Bible is our sole authority for faith and practice (2Tim 3:16-17), and the standard by which Christ will judge our lives (Heb 2:2-3). If these individuals would **speak** and **do** according to the Scriptures (**law**) that they had (De 10:17-19), they would not be guilty of judging with “*evil thoughts*”.

Cross Reference Verses

vs. 13

Ro 2:11 for there is no respect of persons with God.

1Pe 1:17 And if ye call on him as Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to each man's work, pass the time of your sojourning in fear.

Ge 18:25 That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked, that so the righteous should be as the wicked; that be far from thee: shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?

Joh 5:30 I can of myself do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is righteous; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

1Co 4:5 Wherefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall each man have his praise from God.

2Ti 4:7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith:
8 henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing.

1Pe 4:17 For the time is come for judgment to begin at the house of God: and if it begin first at us, what shall be the end of them that obey not the gospel of God?

2Co 5:10 For we must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

2Jo 1:8 Look to yourselves, that ye lose not the things which we have wrought, but that ye receive a full reward.

vs. 14

1Co 15:32 If after the manner of men I fought with beasts at Ephesus, what doth it profit me? If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.

Heb 11:24 By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;
25 choosing rather to share ill treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;
26 accounting the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he looked unto the recompense of reward.

Ga 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ living in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me.

Heb 10:35 Cast not away therefore your boldness, which hath great recompense of reward.
36 For ye have need of patience, that, having done the will of God, ye may receive the promise.
37 For yet a very little while, He that cometh shall come, and shall not tarry.
38 But my righteous one shall live by faith: And if he shrink back, my soul hath no pleasure in him.
39 But we are not of them that shrink back unto perdition; but of them that have faith unto the saving of the soul.

2Ti 4:6 For I am already being offered, and the time of my departure is come.

7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith:

8 henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing.

Mr 8:35 For whosoever would save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's shall save it.

Ac 16:30 and brought them out and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house.

1Jo 5:13 These things have I written unto you, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, even unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God.

Ro 1: 16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

17 For therein is revealed a righteousness of God from faith unto faith: as it is written, But the righteous shall live by faith.

Ga 3:11 Now that no man is justified by the law before God, is evident: for, The righteous shall live by faith.

Heb 10:35 Cast not away therefore your boldness, which hath great recompense of reward.

36 For ye have need of patience, that, having done the will of God, ye may receive the promise.

37 For yet a very little while, He that cometh shall come, and shall not tarry.

38 But my righteous one shall live by faith: And if he shrink back, my soul hath no pleasure in him.

39 But we are not of them that shrink back unto perdition; but of them that have faith unto the saving of the soul.

vs. 15,16

1Jo 3:16 Hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

17 But whoso hath the world's goods, and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how doth the love of God abide in him?

18 My Little children, let us not love in word, neither with the tongue; but in deed and truth.

Lu 7:50 And he said unto the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.

Ga 6:10 So then, as we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith.

Php 1:9 And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all discernment;

2Th 3:6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which they received of us.

10 For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, If any will not work, neither let him eat.

James 2:13

13 For judgment is without mercy to him that hath showed no mercy: mercy glorieth against judgment.

This verse is pivotal for understanding the balance of this chapter. Whereas men are most often partial in their judgment, God cannot be (Ro 2:11, 1Pe 1:17). He must be righteous in all His judgments (Ge 18:25, Joh 5:30). The believer's evaluation at the Judgment Seat will be both righteous and impartial (1Co 4:5, 2Ti 4:7, 8).

If we show **mercy** toward others (vs. 15, 16) then the act of **mercy** now, will **glory against** (triumph over) **judgment** both in this life (1Pe 4:17), and at the Judgment Seat of Christ (2Co 5:10, 2Jo 1:8).

b. Walking by Faith 2:14-26

14 What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, but have not works? Can that faith save him?

The idea of **profit** here is directly linked to a life lived in anticipation of receiving a reward (1Co 15:32 cf. Heb 11:24-26). This is a life lived on the principle of **faith** (Ga 2:20). To **have faith** does not refer to a past experience of believing, but a pattern of life (Heb 10:35-39).

James asks a rhetorical question that expects a 'no' answer. The point is that if a believer does not engage in good works, Christ as the Righteous Judge cannot reward him (cf. 2Ti 4:6-8). This person saves his life for himself and ends up losing it. This faith that does not result in good works cannot **save him** (his life Mr 8:35).

It is important to emphasize that the **save** James speaks of here is not the initial act of believing by which a person is born again (Acts 16:31, 32). To conclude this, would base the assurance of one's salvation on works rather than the Scriptures (1Jo 5:13), and would lead to constant doubting. Often false religions and cults do good deeds, yet the members of the cults are not saved. James is not asking these people to question their salvation, but he wants to motivate them to live by **faith**, engaging in good works that will lead to eternal rewards.

Three times in the New Testament we find Habakkuk's quote, "*the righteous shall live by his faith*" (Hab 2:4). Romans 1:16, 17 speaks of the life of faith as encompassing the whole of the Christian life, from the point of salvation to the end of earthly life. In Galatians 3:11, Paul quotes Habakkuk again in regard to our initial salvation, which is by faith apart from works. The third quote is in Hebrews 10:38 where the context is rewards for faithful endurance, resulting in the "*saving of the soul*" (Heb 10:35-39). This is the **faith** James is speaking of here.

*15 If a brother or sister be naked and in lack of daily food,
16 and one of you say unto them, Go in peace, be ye warmed and filled;
and yet ye give them not the things needful to the body; what doth it profit?*

How does the life based on faith respond to the poor in the assembly? It does it by not only treating them with respect in the meeting, but also if possible, giving them **the things needful to the body** (1Jo 3:16-18). The phrase **go in peace** was a common farewell (Lu 7:50) much like we would say, "Have a nice day." If at the end of the church meeting we just wave goodbye when we have the means to help those in need, this is wrong. The emphasis here is not that insensitivity to the needs of the poor does not profit the poor, but that God will not reward mere words (**what doth it profit**), when action is required.

This verse does not speak to the issue of helping the unsaved poor. Our first responsibility is to our spiritual **brother or sister** (Ga 6:10), and the local church structure provides the needed accountability and safeguards for this (cf. Php 1:9, 2Th 3:6, 10).

Cross Reference Verses

vs. 17

Mt 5:14 Ye are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid.

15 Neither do men light a lamp, and put it under the bushel, but on the stand; and it shineth unto all that are in the house.

16 Even so let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

Mt 7:15 Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves.

16 By their fruits ye shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but the corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

20 Therefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven.

22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works?

23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

1Pe 2:11 Beloved, I beseech you as sojourners and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lust, which war against the soul;

12 having your behavior seemly among the Gentiles; that, wherein they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works, which they behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

15 For so is the will of God, that by well-doing ye should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.

Mt 7:20 Therefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

2Ti 2:19 Howbeit the firm foundation of God standeth, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his: and, Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness.

Mt 7:18 "A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. (NAS95)

Jas 2:20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith apart from works is barren?

1Co 4:5 Wherefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall each man have his praise from God.

Heb 4:13 And there is no creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

Mt 7:22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works?

23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

2Ti 4:8 henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his

appearing.

Re 19:8 And it was given unto her that she should array herself in fine linen, bright and pure: for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

1Co 4:3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self.

4 For I know nothing against myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord.

5 Wherefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall each man have his praise from God.

Ro 14:4 Who art thou that judgest the servant of another? to his own lord he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be made to stand; for the Lord hath power to make him stand.

Mt 7: 17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but the corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

Jas 2:20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith apart from works is barren?

26 For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, even so faith apart from works is dead.

Lu 13:7 And he said unto the vinedresser, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why doth it also cumber the ground?

Mt 7:22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works?

23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Mt 6:4 that thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father who seeth in secret shall recompense thee.

6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father who is in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret shall recompense thee.

Mt 23:28 Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but inwardly ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

Ga 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ living in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me.

James 2:17

17 Even so faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself.

In the same way that the farewell statement in verse 16 is good but profitless, without action, so faith, if it is not accompanied by good **works**, is dead. James will show in the balance of this chapter what he means by **faith that is dead in itself**.

Before continuing with the rest of this chapter it would be good to read Matthew 5:14-16; 7:15-23; 23:1-28).

There are two venues where good works are important. The first is in this world where believers are placed as the light. The good works of the believer are to be visible to the world as a testimony to lead people to Christ for salvation. For this assembly to favor the rich over the poor is to be like the world, rather than light to the world. Someone could rightly say to them, “You say that you are Christian but you are not living like it.” This is the issue James addresses in verses 18-20. If faith is the guiding principle in the believer’s life, he will manifest this by his good works and fulfill God’s purpose for him in the world (1Pe 2:11, 12, 15).

It is important to note the limitations of the Lord’s statement, “*Therefore by their fruits ye shall know them*” (Mt 7:20). We cannot see a person’s heart, so our evaluation is not definitive (2Ti 2:19). In fact, if someone believed that good works were the way to heaven and lived accordingly, it might be very hard to distinguish them from a true believer simply by their lifestyle.

In Matthew 7:18 the Lord uses the illustration of a fruit tree. A good tree can only produce good fruit and a bad tree, bad fruit, no matter how others might judge. For the believer there are only two states—bearing good fruit or barrenness (vs. 20).

The second venue where good works are important is before God. God judges our motives (1Co 4:5, Heb 4:13). In the instance given in Matthew 7:22-23, there was outward fruit as we would see it, but God knew the tree was bad. The Lord is the judge and His judgment is righteous (2Ti 4:8, cf. Re 19:8). Because of this, He is the only one that can declare our works as righteous, and it is on this basis that we will be rewarded (1Co 4:3-5). We will not be rewarded at the Judgment Seat of Christ based how others evaluate our lives (Ro 14:4). This is the point James makes in verses 21-26. We judge the tree by its fruit; God judges the fruit by the tree (Mt 7:17, 18).

The analogies that James uses in verses 20 and 26 are the key to understanding this section (18-26). In verse 20, faith without works is described as barrenness. It is like a fruit tree without fruit, which is useless (Lu 13:7). In verse 26, faith without works is likened to a body without the spirit. In both cases, works give evidence that the faith is alive and animating the individual. The difference is that fruit is visible to God and man, whereas the spirit (vs. 26) is only visible to God. The conclusion is that verses 18 -20 refer to works that are visible. These alone are not a basis for reward however (Mt 7:22, 23). Verses 21-26 emphasize to the aspects of good works that are known only to God (e.g, motives, cf. Mt 6:4,6), and these are the true basis for reward.

If the world does not see visible Christlike characteristics in the believer’s life, he is like a barren fruit tree (vs. 20). If his motives are not right, which only God can see, he is like a body without a spirit (vs. 26, Mt 23:28). In both cases his faith is **dead**. It is important to understand that the **faith** of which James is speaking is **faith** as a governing life principle (Ga 2:20).

18 Yea, a man will say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith apart from thy works, and I by my works will show thee my faith.

19 Thou believest that God is one; thou doest well: the demons also

Cross Reference Verses

vs. 18-20

Mt 5:14 Ye are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid.

16 Even so let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

Mt 23:27 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which outwardly appear beautiful, but inwardly are full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.

Joh 5:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life.

Ro 4:3 For what saith the scripture? And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness.

De 6:4 Hear, O Israel: Jehovah our God is one Jehovah.

Ac 16:14 And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple of the city of Thyatira, one that worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened to give heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul.

15 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.

Ac 19:1 And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper country came to Ephesus, and found certain disciples:

2 and he said unto them, Did ye receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed? And they said unto him, Nay, we did not so much as hear whether the Holy Spirit was given.

3 And he said, Into what then were ye baptized? And they said, Into John's baptism.

4 And Paul said, John baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on him that should come after him, that is, on Jesus.

5 And when they heard this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus.

Mt 8:29 And behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?

Mt 1:24 saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus thou Nazarene? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.

Heb 2:16 For verily not to angels doth he give help, but he giveth help to the seed of Abraham.

Mt 7: 18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

Mt 5:16 Even so let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

Eph 5:8 For ye were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord: walk as children of light

9 (for the fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth),

10 proving what is well-pleasing unto the Lord;

11 and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather even reprove them;

12 for the things which are done by them in secret it is a shame

even to speak of.

13 But all things when they are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for everything that is made manifest is light.

14 Wherefore he saith, Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee.

Vs. 21-23

Ro 4:1 What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, hath found according to the flesh?

2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not toward God.

3 For what saith the scripture? And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness.

4 Now to him that worketh, the reward is not reckoned as of grace, but as of debt.

5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness.

Ec 12:13 This is the end of the matter; all hath been heard: fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man.

14 For God will bring every work into judgment, with every hidden thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

1Co 4:3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self.

4 For I know nothing against myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord.

5 Wherefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall each man have his praise from God.

Heb 4:13 And there is no creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

Ne 9:7 Thou art Jehovah the God, who didst choose Abram, and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name of Abraham,

8 and foundest his heart faithful before thee, and madest a covenant with him to give the land of the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Amorite, and the Perizzite, and the Jebusite, and the Girgashite, to give it unto his seed, and hast performed thy words; for thou art righteous.

Heb 11:8 By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed to go out unto a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

Ga 3:6 Even as Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness.

James 2:19

believe, and shudder.

20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith apart from works is barren?

The key phrase in these verses is “**show me**”. In God’s plan, believers are the light of the world (Mt 5:14). For this to be effective, the world must see the light (Mt 5:16). Since only God can see our heart, the only way to **show faith** to others is by doing good works. This is the point of verse eighteen. When the individual is challenged to show **faith apart from works**, he cannot do so. It isn’t that his faith is not genuine, but that it cannot be visible to others **apart from works**. Of course, when genuine **faith** is accompanied by godly **works**, it is easily seen by the world—“**I by my works will show thee my faith**”. Good **works** in themselves do not prove that a person is born again however, which the Pharisees demonstrated (Mt. 23:27).

Salvation in all dispensations is through believing the revelation given by God (Joh 5:24, Ro 4:3). For a Jewish person to **believe that God is one** (De 6:4), meant that he believed God’s revelation and so was genuinely saved—**thou doest well**. This statement by James is evidence of an early date for this book. The only Scripture available was the Old Testament. The early years of the church age was a time of transition, and not all genuine believers had an immediate understanding of the substitutionary aspect of the death of Christ. When this revelation was given to them however, they would accept it (Ac 16:14, 15; 19:1-5).

The point that James is making is that God expects all who are saved to engage in good works, and so let their light shine before the world. Even **demons** show belief in God. The evidence of this is that they **shudder**, knowing their eventual doom (Mt 8:29). Though their faith is genuine and orthodox (Mk 1:24), there is no redemption for demons (Heb 2:16), and they continue to oppose God.

James accuses the fruitless believer of barrenness. **Faith**, (the good tree Mt 7:18), **apart from works is barren**. If saving faith is not accompanied by good works, then it is useless as far as producing the light that God wants this world to see (Mt 5:16, Eph 5:8-14).

21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works, in that he offered up Isaac his son upon the altar?

22 Thou seest that faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect;

23 and the scripture was fulfilled which saith, And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness; and he was called the friend of God.

The key word in this section is **justified** which means not to make righteous, but to declare righteous. The word is primarily used with regard to salvation from eternal judgment, in which case it is by faith alone apart from **works** (Ro 4:1-5). The point James makes here is that when a saved person lives his life on the principle of **faith**, the resulting good **works** are declared as **righteousness** by God, and the individual is **justified by works**, which only God can do (Ec 12:13, 14, 1Co 4:3-5, Heb 4:13).

“Let us rejoice and be exceeding glad, and let us give the glory unto him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And it was given unto her that she should array herself in fine linen, bright and pure: for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.” (Revelation 19:7-8 ASV)

Abraham’s life of **faith** began while he was living in Ur of the Chaldees (Ne 9:7, 8, Heb 11:8). It was at this point that he believed God and was eternally saved by God’s grace through faith (cf. Ga 3:6). Three other times it is recorded that **Abraham believed God, and it**

Cross Reference Verses

Vs. 21-23

Ge 15:6 And he believed in Jehovah; and he reckoned it to him for righteousness.

Ro 4:18 Who in hope believed against hope, to the end that he might become a father of many nations, according to that which had been spoken, So shall thy seed be.

19 And without being weakened in faith he considered his own body now as good as dead (he being about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb;

20 yet, looking unto the promise of God, he wavered not through unbelief, but waxed strong through faith, giving glory to God,

21 and being fully assured that what he had promised, he was able also to perform.

22 Wherefore also it was reckoned unto him for righteousness.

Jas 2:23 and the scripture was fulfilled which saith, And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness; and he was called the friend of God.

Heb 11:17 By faith Abraham, being tried, offered up Isaac: yea, he that had gladly received the promises was offering up his only begotten son;

18 even he to whom it was said, In Isaac shall thy seed be called:

19 accounting that God is able to raise up, even from the dead; from whence he did also in a figure receive him back.

Joh 4:34 Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to accomplish his work.

Ge 6:8 But Noah found favor in the eyes of Jehovah.

9 These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, and perfect in his generations: Noah walked with God.

Ge 7:1 And Jehovah said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation.

Heb 11:7 By faith Noah, being warned of God concerning things not seen as yet, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; through which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

Tit 2:11 For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men,

12 instructing us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world

1Pe 4:1 Forasmuch then as Christ suffered in the flesh, arm ye yourselves also with the same mind; for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;

2 that ye no longer should live the rest of your time in flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

Joh 15:14 Ye are my friends, if ye do the things which I command you.

Jas 4:4 Ye adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore would be a friend of the world maketh himself an enemy of God.

vs. 24

Tit 3:8 Faithful is the saying, and concerning these things I desire that thou affirm confidently, to the end that they who have believed God may be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.

Mt 25:21 His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

2Th 1:4 so that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions which ye endure;

5 which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God; to the end that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer.

2Ti 4:7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith:

8 henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing.

Ps 106:28 They joined themselves also unto Baal-peor, And ate the sacrifices of the dead.

29 Thus they provoked him to anger with their doings; And the plague brake in upon them.

30 Then stood up Phinehas, and executed judgment; And so the plague was stayed.

31 And that was reckoned unto him for righteousness, Unto all generations for evermore.

Nu 25:7 And when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose up from the midst of the congregation, and took a spear in his hand;

8 and he went after the man of Israel into the pavilion, and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her body. So the plague was stayed from the children of Israel.

vs. 25

Jos 2:6 But she had brought them up to the roof, and hid them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order upon the roof.

8 And before they were laid down, she came up unto them upon the roof;

9 and she said unto the men, I know that Jehovah hath given you the land, and that the fear of you is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land melt away before you.

12 Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by Jehovah, since I have dealt kindly with you, that ye also will deal kindly with my father's house, and give me a true token;

13 and that ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, and will deliver our lives from death.

Jos 2:9 and she said unto the men, I know that Jehovah hath given you the land, and that the fear of you is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land melt away before you.

10 For we have heard how Jehovah dried up the water of the Red Sea before you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were beyond the Jordan, unto Sihon and to Og, whom ye utterly destroyed.

11 And as soon as we had heard it, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more spirit in any man, because of you: for Jehovah your God, he is God in heaven above, and on earth beneath.

Ro 1:19 because that which is known of God is manifest in them; for God manifested it unto them.

20 For the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity; that they may be without excuse:

James 2:24

was reckoned unto him for righteousness (Ge 15:6, Ro 4:20-22, Jas 2:23). He was not more saved after these events, rather he believed and obeyed God because he was living by faith (Heb 11:17-19). The end result was that **faith wrought with his works**. The phrase, **and by works was faith made perfect**, does not mean that without works he wouldn't have been saved, but that in his works, his faith accomplished God's intended goal (cf. Joh 4:34). Noah is another example of a person who was saved by grace, and subsequently was declared righteous (**justified**) by God based on his works (Ge 6:8, 9; 7:1, Heb 11:7).

Abraham is an example of saving **faith** that leads to the obedience of **faith** that God intends for every believer in this life (Tit 2:11,12, 1Pe 4:1,2). The gospel is not just how to get to heaven, but "*therein is revealed a righteousness of God from faith unto faith: as it is written, But the righteous shall live by faith*" (Ro 1:17). As a result of his obedience Abraham was **called the friend of God** (cf. Joh 15:14). James will say later, "*Whosoever therefore would be a friend of the world maketh himself an enemy of God*" (4:4).

24 Ye see that by works a man is justified, and not only by faith.

With regard to rewards then, the believer is not **justified** because at some point he trusted Christ as his Savior, but because he lives by **faith**, doing good works (Tit 3:8). Of course he must be saved for his works to be good. It is vital however, that we understand the point James is making. It is, that Christ is the righteous judge, and in His Kingdom He will not reward us arbitrarily just because we are saved, but meritoriously because we are faithful (Mt 25:21, 2Th 1:4,5, 2Ti 4:7,8).

Phinehas is another Old Testament example of an individual doing something that God put to his account as righteousness (Ps 106:28-31). In his case he was justified for killing two immoral people, and God rewarded him for this act of righteousness (Nu 25:7-13). It is not that he was saved as a result of his actions, but his actions demonstrated his faith.

25 And in like manner was not also Rahab the harlot justified by works, in that she received the messengers, and sent them out another way?

Rahab's act of faith was hiding the spies and then staying behind in Jericho instead of escaping with them, which she could have done (Jos 2:6-8,9, 12-13). She believed that God could spare not only her but her family. Of Course, God was faithful, and the walls of Jericho came down except for the section on which Rahab's house sat.

In many ways Abraham and Rahab were very different, but with regard to the events mentioned here, there are significant similarities. Both individuals were saved prior to the events mentioned. It is interesting to note that Abraham was saved by special revelation—God spoke to him. Rahab was saved through general revelation (Jos 2:9-11, cf. Ro 1:19, 20), as she saw God's power revealed in Israel's victories.

The important similarity between these events is that they are not illustrations of a believer's testimony to others (cf. 18-20). If this was the point, James, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, would have used a better example such as Daniel and his friends or Joseph in Egypt. God only spoke to Abraham; even Isaac didn't know where the sacrifice was. Abraham left the servants behind because they would have prevented him from obeying God, thinking he was suffering from dementia. If Rahab had told the truth, when questioned by the city leaders, she would have been executed as a traitor. In both cases they were justified by God because of their obedience. It is the relationship between the individual and God that is in view. "*Pure religion*" is

Cross Reference Verses

vs. 25

Jas 1:27 Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

1Co 4:3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self.

5 Wherefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall each man have his praise from God.

2Co 5: 7 (for we walk by faith, not by sight);

9 Wherefore also we make it our aim, whether at home or absent, to be well-pleasing unto him.

14 For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that one died for all, therefore all died;

15 and he died for all, that they that live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him who for their sakes died and rose again.

Heb 11:5 By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and he was not found, because God translated him: for he hath had witness borne to him that before his translation he had been well-pleasing unto God:

6 And without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him.

Ge 22:15 And the angel of Jehovah called unto Abraham a second time out of heaven,

16 and said, By myself have I sworn, saith Jehovah, because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son,

17 that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is upon the seashore. And thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies.

vs. 26

1Co 13:3 And if I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing.

Eph 5:8 For ye were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord: walk as children of light

9 (for the fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth),

10 proving what is well-pleasing unto the Lord.

Gal 6:7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

8 For he that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life.

9 And let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

10 So then, as we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith.

1Jo 3:17 But whoso hath the world's goods, and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how doth the love of God abide in him?

18 My Little children, let us not love in word, neither with the tongue; but in deed and truth.

vs. 1

Jas 4:17 To him therefore that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

Joh 15:22 If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no excuse for their sin.

Ro 2:1 19 and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them that are in darkness,

20 a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having in the law the form of knowledge and of the truth;

21 thou therefore that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?

22 thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou rob temples?

23 thou who gloriest in the law, through thy transgression of the law dishonorest thou God?

24 For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you, even as it is written.

Mt 23:6 and love the chief place at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues,

7 and the salutations in the marketplaces, and to be called of men, Rabbi.

8 But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your teacher, and all ye are brethren.

Gal 4:17 They zealously seek you in no good way; nay, they desire to shut you out, that ye may seek them.

Mt 23:1 Then spake Jesus to the multitudes and to his disciples, 2 saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses seat:

3 all things therefore whatsoever they bid you, these do and observe: but do not ye after their works; for they say, and do not.

1Co 9:26 I therefore so run, as not uncertainly; so fight I, as not beating the air:

27 but I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage: lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected.

Heb 5:12 For when by reason of the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need again that some one teach you the rudiments of the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of solid food.

Ezr 7:10 For Ezra had set his heart to seek the law of Jehovah, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and ordinances.

Ac 1:1 The former treatise I made, O Theophilus, concerning all that Jesus began both to do and to teach,

Jas 1:26 If any man thinketh himself to be religious, while he bridleth not his tongue but deceiveth his heart, this man's religion is vain.

vs. 2

Mt 26:74 Then Peter began to curse and to swear, I know not the man. And straightway the cock crew.

Ps 39: I said, I will take heed to my ways, That I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, While the wicked is before me.

2 I was dumb with silence, I held my peace

Pr 15:23 A man hath joy in the answer of his mouth; And a word in due season, how good is it!

Pr 25:11 A word fitly spoken Is like apples of gold in network of silver.

James 2:26

“before our God” (1:27) when it comes to being justified by works (1Co 4:3-5). It is love for God and the desire to please Him that is the primary motivation for living by faith (2Co 5:7, 9, 14, 15, Heb 11:5, 6). In this case both Abraham and Rahab were declared righteous not by the world around them, but by God. We know this in Rahab’s case because she and her family were rescued. In Abraham’s case, God spoke His approval from heaven (Ge 22:15-17). Both Abraham’s and Rahab’s works demonstrated that their heart was right. They were walking by faith (2Co 5:7, 9).

26 For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, even so faith apart from works is dead.

In this analogy, James links the **body** with **faith**, and the human **spirit** with good **works**. He is emphasizing the attitude of the individual’s heart which is visible only to God. If our heart is not right then the works that we do will not be rewarded (1Co 13:3), since our **faith** as a life principle is lifeless.

Before we leave this passage, let’s apply these truths to the situation in this assembly. There are two issues here. If the Christians in this assembly show preference to the rich over the poor, they are not living as children of light (Eph 5:8-10). They will have no testimony for God in this dark world. On the other hand, if they put on a good front when at church but are unwilling to help those in need (vs. 15, 16), God will not declare their **works** as righteous (Ga 6:7-10, 1Jo 3:17, 18). They will not be justified by their works and will lose their potential reward.

2. Bridling the Tongue 3:1-18

a. Behavior of the Tongue Must be Controlled 3:1-12

James 3

1 Be not many of you teachers, my brethren, knowing that we shall receive heavier judgment.

Having reminded these believers that knowing the truth is not sufficient but that they must also do the truth (cf. 4:17, cf. Joh 15:22), James now warns them against being too quick to take the role of the teacher because as such, they will be held accountable (Ro 2:19-24). Also, teachers are often held in honor so we must be careful that we do not seek this position out of pride (vs. 14, cf. Mt 23:6-8, Ga 4:17).

It is important to note however, that the disobedient life of a teacher does not invalidate his teaching if it is biblical, nor does it lessen the hearers’ responsibility to obey (Mt 23:1-3). The truth is that all honest teachers of the Bible will acknowledge that they are preaching to themselves as well as their audience (1Co 9:26, 27).

Although this verse speaks primarily to teachers in the public arena, it is also true that all believers are teachers on some level (Heb 5:12). As such, we are cautioned that our life must be consistent with our teaching (cf. Ezr 7:10, Ac 1:1). Also, controlling the tongue is a quality of pure religion (1:26), which is God’s will for all believers.

2 For in many things we all stumble. If any stumbleth not in word, the same is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body also.

The word **stumble** means to sin (2:10), and James acknowledges that it is the experience of **all** in this life. Certainly in times of difficulty and testing we are most prone to sin with our tongue (Mt 26:74). David realized this and was determined to **bridle** his tongue in the presence of an enemy (Ps 39:1, 2). His solution was to be slow to speak (1:19). An uncontrolled tongue is destructive, but a controlled tongue can be a powerful force for good (Pr 15:23; 25:11).

Cross Reference Verses

vs.2

Mt 12:34 Ye offspring of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

35 The good man out of his good treasure bringeth forth good things: and the evil man out of his evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.

36 And I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

37 For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

Ga 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

23 meekness, self-control; against such there is no law.

vs. 3,4

Tit 1:11 whose mouths must be stopped; men who overthrow whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.

vs. 6

Mr 6:25 And she came in straightway with haste unto the king, and asked, saying, I will that thou forthwith give me on a platter the head of John the Baptist.

26 And the king was exceeding sorry; but for the sake of his oaths, and of them that sat at meat, he would not reject her.

27 And straightway the king sent forth a soldier of his guard, and commanded to bring his head: and he went and beheaded him in the prison,

Ro 6:13 neither present your members unto sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves unto God, as alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

Mt 15:17 Perceive ye not, that whatsoever goeth into the mouth passeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught?

18 But the things which proceed out of the mouth come forth out of the heart; and they defile the man.

19 For out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, railings:

20 these are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not the man.

Mt 12:36 And I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

37 For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

Jas 1:14 but each man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed.

Pr 12:18 There is that speaketh rashly like the piercings of a sword; But the tongue of the wise is health.

Pr 16:27 A worthless man deviseth mischief; And in his lips there is as a scorching fire.

Pr 21:23 Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue Keepeth his soul from troubles.

vs. 7,8

Ps 139:4 For there is not a word in my tongue, But, lo, O Jehovah, thou knowest it altogether.

Ps 141:3 Set a watch, O Jehovah, before my mouth; Keep the door of my lips.

vs. 7,8

Ps 19:14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in thy sight, O Jehovah, my rock, and my redeemer.

Ps 39:1 I said, I will take heed to my ways, That I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, While the wicked is before me.

Eph 4:29 Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth, but such as is good for edifying as the need may be, that it may give grace to them that hear.

James 3:3

It is a convenient and powerful weapon that over time, reveals the condition of the heart (Mt 12:34-37). A person who **stumbleth not in word** shows spiritual maturity (Ga 5:22, 23 Appendix A).

3 Now if we put the horses' bridles into their mouths that they may obey us, we turn about their whole body also.

4 Behold, the ships also, though they are so great and are driven by rough winds, are yet turned about by a very small rudder, whither the impulse of the steersman willeth.

Here are two examples of forces beyond the power of a man that can be controlled by the proper use of a very small tool. Without a bit and bridle it is virtually impossible for a rider to stop a runaway horse. Yet with the bit he is able to bring the horse to a halt so it will **obey** him and head it in the right direction. Runaway mouths must be stopped or they will do untold damage (Tit 1:11).

For a sailing ship, wind is necessary, but without a rudder it is at best useless, and at worst destructive. With the proper use of a **very small rudder** however, the **steersman** can use the wind, which he cannot control, to guide his ship in the desired direction.

5 So the tongue also is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how much wood is kindled by how small a fire!

Like the bit and rudder, the tongue is a very small part of our body, but it can do horrendous damage if not controlled. Huge forest fires generally start from very small and sometimes careless fires. History is filled with examples of the tongue's power for good and evil.

6 And the tongue is a fire: the world of iniquity among our members is the tongue, which defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the wheel of nature, and is set on fire by hell.

The **tongue** is like **fire** in that once started, it is very difficult to control. It is **the world of iniquity among our members** in that it can end up inciting a person to further evil. In this case **the wheel of nature**, that natural reluctance for a person to retreat from what they have said, is set in motion and results in worse sin (e.g. Mr 6: 25-27). Paul reminds us that as believers, we are to use the **members** of our bodies as instruments of righteousness (Ro 6:13). The Lord pointed out that it is not what we put in our mouths that **defile** our **bodies** but what comes out (Mt 15:17-20), and He warned about consequences of careless speaking (Mt 12:36, 37). Satan knows of this natural bent of the **tongue** and he is quick to **set it on fire** to his advantage (1:14, Pr 12:18; 16:27, cf. Pr 21:23). This is why we must be "*quick to hear and slow to speak*" (1:19).

7 For every kind of beasts and birds, of creeping things and things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed by mankind.

8 But the tongue can no man tame; it is a restless evil, it is full of deadly poison.

Man has been able to tame all kinds of creatures. The characteristic of a **tamed** animal is that it often acts against its nature. The lion tamer can put his head into the lion's mouth with confidence that it will not be bitten off. The **tongue** is different, it can never be trusted. There is always the danger of it responding in its natural sinful way. It is by nature a **restless evil** (unruly), in a moment of anger it is likely to spit out words of **deadly poison**.

The good news is that God can control our tongue through the Holy Spirit. He knows our thoughts before they are spoken (Ps 139:4), and He is ready to help us (Ps 141:3). As a result, both our thoughts and words can be pleasing to Him (Ps 19:14; cf. Ps 39:1, Eph 4:29).

Cross Reference Verses

vs. 9,10

Heb 10:32 But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were enlightened, ye endured a great conflict of sufferings; 33 partly, being made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, becoming partakers with them that were so used. 34 For ye both had compassion on them that were in bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of you possessions, knowing that ye have for yourselves a better possession and an abiding one.

Lu 6:28 bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you.

Mt 25:41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels.

Ge 1:26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. 27 And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

Ge 9:6 Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: For in the image of God made he man.

Mt 6:26 Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye of much more value then they?

Jas 2:3 and ye have regard to him that weareth the fine clothing, and say, Sit thou here in a good place; and ye say to the poor man, Stand thou there, or sit under my footstool.

vs. 11,12

Pr 25:11 A word fitly spoken Is like apples of gold in network of silver.

Col 4:5 Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.

6 Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer each one.

1Pe 3:8 Finally, be ye all likeminded, compassionate, loving as brethren, tenderhearted, humbleminded:

9 not rendering evil for evil, or reviling for reviling; but contrariwise blessing; for hereunto were ye called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

10 For, He that would love life, And see good days, Let him refrain his tongue from evil, And his lips that they speak no guile:

11 And let him turn away from evil, and do good; Let him seek peace, and pursue it.

12 For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, And his ears unto their supplication: But the face of the Lord is upon them that do evil.

Mt 12:34 Ye offspring of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

35 The good man out of his good treasure bringeth forth good things: and the evil man out of his evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.

36 And I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

37 For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

vs. 13

Ezr 7:10 For Ezra had set his heart to seek the law of Jehovah, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and ordinances.

Ac 1:1 The former treatise I made, O Theophilus, concerning all that Jesus began both to do and to teach,

1Pe 5:1 The elders among you I exhort, who am a fellow-elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, who am also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:

2 Tend the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly, according to the will of God; nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

3 neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you, but making yourselves ensamples to the flock.

Mt 23:1 Then spake Jesus to the multitudes and to his disciples, 2 saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses seat:

3 all things therefore whatsoever they bid you, these do and observe: but do not ye after their works; for they say, and do not.

Jas 1:21 Wherefore putting away all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness, receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

vs. 14-16

Ac 13:45 But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with jealousy, and contradicted the things which were spoken by Paul, and blasphemed.

James 3:9

9 Therewith bless we the Lord and Father; and therewith curse we men, who are made after the likeness of God:

10 out of the same mouth cometh forth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.

Being Christian Jews in a pagan Gentile society, these believers would often face persecution and prejudice (cf. Heb 10:32-34). The natural response is to **curse** those who **curse** you. Our Lord's instruction is to do the opposite (Lu 6:28). When it comes to cursing, that is the Lord's responsibility, and He will do it at the proper time (Mt 25:41). In all of creation only mankind is made **after the likeness of God** (Ge 1:26, 27). It is what gives us unique value (Ge 9:6, Mt 6:26).

To make grandiose statements of praise to God and then **curse** our enemy or speak disparagingly of the poor as inferior (2:3) is not only inconsistent, it is sin. James appeals to his fellow Christian, "**My brethren, these things ought not so to be.**" See notes on 4:11, 12.

11 Doth the fountain send forth from the same opening sweet water and bitter?

12 Can a fig tree, my brethren, yield olives, or a vine figs? Neither can salt water yield sweet.

One of the fundamental qualities of creation is consistency. If the laws of nature were fickle, the universe would be in chaos. The man who has a **sweet water** spring can go to it day after day knowing the water will never be **bitter**. Speech that is consistent and loving is a very powerful tool for good (Pr 25:11, Col 4:5, 6, 1Pe 3:8-12).

The lesson here is that sinful words suggest a sinful source (**opening**). The teacher who preaches a great sermon and then speaks evil of others gives a mixed message. One wonders which message is the true measure of the person (Mt 12:34-37).

b. Behavior of the Teacher Must be Good 3:13-18

13 Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by his good life his works in meekness of wisdom.

James' question is, "**Who** is qualified to be the teacher **among you**? Certainly he should be **wise and understanding**. He focuses our attention not on the individual's academic credentials however, but his lifestyle. A godly teacher teaches not only by words but also by example (Ezra 7:10, Ac 1:1, 1Pe 5:1-3, cf. Mt 23:1-3). Wisdom is more than the accumulation of knowledge. It is the application of knowledge in **wise** choices.

Whereas 1:21 spoke of how we are to receive the word of God with **meekness**, here the teacher is to teach with **meekness**. This is a humble spirit that acknowledges his need along with that of his students.

14 But if ye have bitter jealousy and faction in your heart, glory not and lie not against the truth.

15 This wisdom is not a wisdom that cometh down from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.

16 For where jealousy and faction are, there is confusion and every vile deed.

Probably the besetting sin of teachers is **jealousy**. This is especially true in the church. Someone else's congregation is bigger so the teacher feels the need to point out their flaws and speaks against them (cf. Ac 13:45). This attitude can also exist between teachers in the same assembly. To have **faction in your heart** is to have an attitude of strife and contention. Paul warned Timothy of this, while

Cross Reference Verses

vs. 14-16

2Ti 2:24 And the Lord's servant must not strive, but be gentle towards all, apt to teach, forbearing,
25 in meekness correcting them that oppose themselves; if peradventure God may give them repentance unto the knowledge of the truth.

Php 1: 15 Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will:

16 the one do it of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel;

17 but the other proclaim Christ of faction, not sincerely, thinking to raise up affliction for me in my bonds.

18 What then? only that in every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and therein I rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.

Php 2:3 doing nothing through faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself.

Joh 2:17 His disciples remembered that it was written, Zeal for thy house shall eat me up.

2Co 11:2 For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy: for I espoused you to one husband, that I might present you as a pure virgin to Christ.

Mt 23:6 and love the chief place at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues,
7 and the salutations in the marketplaces, and to be called of men, Rabbi.

Ga 4:17 They zealously seek you in no good way; nay, they desire to shut you out, that ye may seek them.

1Th 2:5 For neither at any time were we found using words of flattery, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness, God is witness;
6 nor seeking glory of men, neither from you nor from others, when we might have claimed authority as apostles of Christ.

Joh 5:44 How can ye believe, who receive glory one of another, and the glory that cometh from the only God ye seek not?

1Ti 6:3 If any man teacheth a different doctrine, and consenteth not to sound words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness;
4 he is puffed up, knowing nothing, but doting about questionings and disputes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings,
5 wranglings of men corrupted in mind and bereft of the truth, supposing that godliness is a way of gain.

2Ti 4:3 For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine; but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts.

1Ti 4:1 But the Spirit saith expressly, that in later times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons.

Joh 3:30 He must increase, but I must decrease.

Re 3:17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and have gotten riches, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art the wretched one and miserable and poor and blind and naked:
20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him,

and he with me.

1Co 3:3 for ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you jealousy and strife, are ye not carnal, and do ye not walk after the manner of men?

1Co 5:1 It is actually reported that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not even among the Gentiles, that one of you hath his father's wife.

vs. 17,18

1Pe 1:15 but like as he who called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living.

2Ti 2:21 If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, meet for the master's use, prepared unto every good work.

Ga 5:13 For ye, brethren, were called for freedom; only use not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh, but through love be servants one to another.

1Co 14:33 for God is not a God of confusion, but of peace. As in all the churches of the saints.

Mt 10:34 Think not that I came to send peace on the earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.

35 For I came to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.

Mt 19:14 But Jesus said, Suffer the little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for to such belongeth the kingdom of heaven.

2Ti 2:24 And the Lord's servant must not strive, but be gentle towards all, apt to teach, forbearing,
25 in meekness correcting them that oppose themselves; if peradventure God may give them repentance unto the knowledge of the truth,

Mt 9:36 But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and scattered, as sheep not having a shepherd.

Lu 20:21 And they asked him, saying, Teacher, we know that thou sayest and teachest rightly, and acceptest not the person of any, but of a truth teachest the way of God.

1Co 12:31 But desire earnestly the greater gifts. And moreover a most excellent way show I unto you.

vs. 1

1Jo 1:6 If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in the darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

1Co 1:9 God is faithful, through whom ye were called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Ro 5:1 Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Ro 7:22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:
23 but I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity under the law of sin which is in my members.

James 3:17

demonstrating a good example in his own life (2Ti 2:24, 25, Php 1:15-18; 2:3).

Whether or not **jealousy** is wrong depends on the situation. Jealousness regarding something good is godly (Joh 2:17, 2Co 11:2). **Bitter jealousy** is an angry, envious, attitude that results in sinful behavior. The person who lies **against the truth** is one who uses exaggeration and deceit to bring glory to himself rather than to God (Mt 23:6, 7, Ga 4:17, cf. 1Th 2:5, 6).

Teaching that is characterized by **bitter jealousy and faction** is not from God, but is **earthly, sensual, and devilish**. It is **earthly** because it promotes earthly, rather than heavenly values (Joh 5:44). It is **sensual** in that it appeals to fleshly desires (1Ti 6:3-5, 2Ti 4:3), and is **devilish** (1Ti 4:1). Godly teaching glorifies God (Joh 3:30). A preacher consumed with self-promotion may have a large church, but Christ will be on the outside (Re 3:17, 20). An assembly where there is **jealousy and faction** is a breeding ground for **confusion and every vile deed**. The church at Corinth was an example of this (1Co 3:3; 5:1)

17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without variance, without hypocrisy.

18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for them that make peace.

Here are the qualities of godly **wisdom**. It is **first** in order of importance, **pure**. God is holy and wants us to live holy lives (1Pe 1:15, 2Ti 2:21). Any teaching that excuses sin is not from God (Ga 5:13). **Peaceable** is the opposite of confusion and disorder and is the characteristic of God (1Co 14:33). We should note however that this is not peace at the expense of doctrine (Mt 10:34, 35). James is not promoting ecumenicalism. A godly teacher will be **gentle** and approachable just as Jesus was (1:5, Mt 19:13, 14, 2Ti 2:24, 25). He will be compassionate (Mt 9: 36), without **variance** (partiality), and genuinely sincere (cf. Lu 20:21).

As this teacher teaches the word of God it is like seed **sown in peace**, and by God's power, it will yield **the fruit of righteousness**. This passage speaks of how the word of God is to be taught. It is the companion to 1:21 which speaks of how the word is to be received.

In conclusion then, we must not be quick to assume the role of the teacher. It is a primary gift that the local church should desire (1Co 12:31), but we need to consider its responsibility and espouse the qualities that God desires. At the same time, these are qualities that God wants in every believer.

3. Keeping Unspotted from the World 4:1-17

a. Pray, Don't Fight 4:1-3

James 4

1 Whence come wars and whence come fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your pleasures that war in your members?

The third quality of pure religion is to "*keep oneself unspotted from the world*" (1:27). The purpose for this is not only to be the light to the world (2:18), but . to walk in fellowship with God (1Jo 1:6). Mankind was created in God's image and likeness (Ge 1:27) to fellowship with Him. The advent of sin broke this fellowship, and the message of the Bible is how God is restoring it (1Co 1:9).

Why does James couch this teaching in the context of warfare? Because, although salvation brings a person into a relation of peace with God (Ro 5:1), it initiates a war within himself (Ro 7:22-23). This battle is internal to every believer. His spirit has been made alive to

Cross Reference Verses

vs. 1

Mt 26:41 Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

Ro 6:13 neither present your members unto sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves unto God, as alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

Ro 8:3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:
4 that the ordinance of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

1Jo 2:16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. (KJV)

vs. 2

Mr 10:18 And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good save one, even God.

Mt 6:11 Give us this day our daily bread.

Mt 7:7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

Col 3:5 Put to death therefore your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

vs. 3

Joh 14:13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

14 If ye shall ask anything in my name, that will I do.

Joh 15:16 Ye did not choose me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that ye should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

1Pe 4:1 Forasmuch then as Christ suffered in the flesh, arm ye yourselves also with the same mind; for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;

2 that ye no longer should live the rest of your time in flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

3 For the time past may suffice to have wrought the desire of the Gentiles, and to have walked in lasciviousness, lusts, winebibbings, revellings, carousings, and abominable idolatries.

4 wherein they think strange that ye run not with them into the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you.

vs. 4

2Co 11:2 For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy: for I espoused you to one husband, that I might present you as a pure virgin to Christ.

Eph 5:27 that he might present the church to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

Mt 1:18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.

19 And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily.

Re 17:1 And there came one of the seven angels that had the seven bowls, and spake with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the judgment of the great harlot that sitteth upon many waters;
2 with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and they that dwell in the earth were made drunken with the wine of her fornication.

Php 3:18 For many walk, of whom I told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:
19 whose end is perdition, whose god is the belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.

2Ti 4:10 for Demas forsook me, having loved this present world.

Eze 6:9 And those of you that escape shall remember me among the nations whither they shall be carried captive, how that I have been broken with their lewd heart, which hath departed from me, and with their eyes, which play the harlot after their idols: and they shall loathe themselves in their own sight for the evils which they have committed in all their abominations.

Joh 17:15 I pray not that thou shouldest take them from the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil one.

16 They are not of the world even as I am not of the world.

1Jo 2:15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vain glory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

Pr 6:27 Can a man take fire in his bosom, And his clothes not be burned?

1Pe 2:11 Beloved, I beseech you as sojourners and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lust, which war against the soul.

Ro 12:2 And be not fashioned according to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, and ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Eph 5: 8 For ye were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord: walk as children of light

11 and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather even reprove them.

1Pe 4:1 Forasmuch then as Christ suffered in the flesh, arm ye yourselves also with the same mind; for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;

2 that ye no longer should live the rest of your time in flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

3 For the time past may suffice to have wrought the desire of the Gentiles, and to have walked in lasciviousness, lusts, winebibbings, revellings, carousings, and abominable idolatries:

4 wherein they think strange that ye run not with them into the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you.

James 4:2

God through the Holy Spirit, but there is **war in his members** since he is still plagued by his weak flesh (Mt 26:41). There is victory in this war for those who walk according to the Spirit, yielding the **members** of their body as instruments of righteousness (Ro 6:13; 8:3, 4).

Pleasures, is the word from which we get “hedonism”. It is living according to the lust of the eyes (vs. 2, 3), the lust of the flesh (vs. 4, 5), and pride (vs. 6). See 1Jo 2:16.

2 Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and covet, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war; ye have not, because ye ask not.

Put two toddlers in a room full of toys and soon they will be fighting over one of them. This is the sinfulness of human nature. In their sinless state, Adam and Eve had all they needed in the garden, but they **coveted** what God had lovingly withheld. They sinned and murder was not far behind. Only God is morally good (Mr 10:18).

God wants us to **ask** for our legitimate needs (Mt 6:11; 7:7), but often the source of our requests is **lust and coveting**. Rather than **fight and war** with each other to satisfy these desires, we should **kill** the desires (Col 3:5).

3 Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may spend it in your pleasures.

To **ask amiss** is to ask with evil motives. God’s answer to our prayers can be yes, no, or wait, but whatever the answer, it comes from His love for us (1:17). He is willing to give us anything that we need to bear fruit for His glory (Joh 14:13, 14; 15:16), but He will not give us things simply to satisfy hedonistic **pleasures** (cf. 1Pe 4:1-3).

b. Love God, not the World 4:4-6

4 Ye adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore would be a friend of the world maketh himself an enemy of God.

God chose the church to be the bride for His Son, and as such He wants us to be faithful and pure (2Co 11:2, Eph 5:27). In New Testament culture, for a betrothed woman to be found unfaithful, was the equivalent of adultery (Mt 1:18, 19). The **world** here is not the people, whom God loves, but the sinful values of the world (1Jo 2:16). To actively seek the **friendship of the world**, by conforming to its values, is the equivalent of spiritual **adultery** (Rev 17:1, 2). This is the same value system that rejected and crucified our Lord. The person who takes this path puts himself in the position of an **enemy of God** (cf. Php 3:18, 19, 2Ti 4:10a). As adulterous behavior breaks the heart of the innocent spouse, in a greater way, spiritual adultery breaks the heart of God (Eze 6:9).

James is not advocating a monastic lifestyle, but a rejection of the world’s value system in order to be pure for the Lord (Joh 17:15, 16, 1Jo 2:15, 16). A believer cannot feed on the things of the world without being badly influenced (Pr 6:27, 1Pe 2:11). We must not conform to the world if we are to be light to the world, (Ro 12:2, Eph 5:8, 11, 1Pe 4:1-4).

5 Or think ye that the scripture speaketh in vain? Doth the spirit which he made to dwell in us long unto envying?

5 Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: "He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us"? (NAS95)

The sentence structure of this verse varies dramatically between translations. The interpretation however, must be consistent with the plain teaching of other Scripture. In context, James is saying that the

Cross Reference Verses

vs. 5

1Co 1:9 God is faithful, through whom ye were called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

1Jo 1:3 that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also, that ye also may have fellowship with us: yea, and our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

Zec 12:1 The burden of the word of Jehovah concerning Israel. Thus saith Jehovah, who stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him.

Ex 34:14 for thou shalt worship no other god: for Jehovah, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.

Eph 2:1 And you did he make alive, when ye were dead through your trespasses and sins,
2 wherein ye once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the powers of the air, of the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience;
3 among whom we also all once lived in the lust of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

Eph 1:13 in whom ye also, having heard the word of the truth, the gospel of your salvation,-- in whom, having also believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.

Eph 2:22 in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit.

Ga 5:16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary the one to the other; that ye may not do the things that ye would.

vs. 6

Heb 4:16 Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in time of need.

Pr 3:34 Though He scoffs at the scoffers, Yet He gives grace to the afflicted.

2Co 12: 7 And because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me--to keep me from exalting myself!

8 Concerning this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.

9 And he hath said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my power is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

10 Wherefore I take pleasure in weaknesses, in injuries, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

2Ch 7:14 if my people, who are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face...

vs. 7

Php 2:12 So then, my beloved, even as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

13 for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to work, for

his good pleasure.

Heb 4:16 Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in time of need.

Ro 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service.

Lu 9:23 And he said unto all, If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

Mt 4:4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Jude 1:9 But Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing judgment, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.

Re 20:2 And he laid hold on the dragon, the old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years.

2Ti 2:22 But flee youthful lusts, and follow after righteousness, faith, love, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

vs. 8

Ex 30:17 And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying,

18 Thou shalt also make a laver of brass, and the base thereof of brass, wherewith to wash. And thou shalt put it between the tent of meeting and the altar, and thou shalt put water therein.

19 And Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat:

20 when they go into the tent of meeting, they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn an offering made by fire unto Jehovah.

21 So they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not: and it shall be a statute for ever to them, even to him and to his seed throughout their generations.

Isa 59:1 Behold, Jehovah's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear:

2 but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, so that he will not hear.

3 For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue muttereth wickedness.

1Jo 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1Ti 2:8 I desire therefore that the men pray in every place, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and disputing.

James 4:6

clear message of **Scripture** is that God wants to restore the fellowship with man that was lost when sin entered the world. This happens when people by faith, receive Christ as Savior, and rejecting the world's values, live by faith in fellowship with Him (1Co 1:9, 1Jo 1:3).

The **spirit which he made to dwell in us** could be the human spirit that God created in us (Zec 12:1). This is that part of us whose purpose it is to worship God (Ex 34:14). When sin entered, this spirit died and a sin nature took control (Eph 2:1-3). Since God put this spirit in us to enable us to fellowship with Him, it would be right for Him to jealously desire that relationship to be restored.

The **spirit** could also refer to the Holy Spirit. At the point of conversion, God seals us permanently with the indwelling **Spirit** (Eph 1:13; 2:22). The **Scripture** is clear that the Holy **Spirit** would never cause us to crave evil things (Ga 5:16, 17).

6 But he giveth more grace. Wherefore the scripture saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.

What God does in trials, is give us the **grace** to bear them (Heb 4:16), and when they increase He **giveth more grace**. To be **humble** is to willingly place oneself under the control of God. All who do this find that His grace is an all-sufficient resource in a time of need. God opposes the **proud** person but gives **grace to the humble** (Pr 3:34). Paul is a good example of this principle. He asked God to remove his trial, but God said no because it would keep Paul from *exalting* himself. He accepted this and found God's **grace** sufficient (2Co 12:7-10). Humble people pray, the proud do not (2Ch 7:14).

c. Submit to God; Resist the Devil 4:7-10

7 Be subject therefore unto God; but resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

James now gives us some of the "precious and exceeding great promises" God has given to us by which we "may become partakers of the divine nature" and escape "from the corruption that is in that world by lust." (2Pe 1:4). These are proactive things that we can do to keep "unspotted from the world." God's gracious response is to give us help for what we cannot do in our strength alone (Php 2:12, 13, Heb 4:16).

The key to this process is to submit to God and His word. This is a conscious presentation of our bodies and life to Him. It is both an initial lifetime commitment (Ro 12:1), and a daily one (Lu 9:23). To **resist the devil** means to stand against him, not yielding to his temptations. The Lord demonstrated that God's Word is essential in this process (Mt 4:4).

Note, we cannot in any way attack or bind Satan. This is God's domain (Jude 9, cf. Re 20:2). If we will flee from his things and run after the things of God (2Ti 2:22), he will **flee from** us.

8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye doubleminded.

The symbolism in this verse would be clear to these Jewish believers. Before the Old Testament priest could **draw nigh to God** it was necessary that he cleanse his hands at the laver (Ex 30:17-21, cf. Isa 59:1-3). In the church all believers are priests. To serve God we must have clean hands and a pure heart. Of course James is not talking about physically washing our hands, but confessing our sin. When we do, God will forgive and **cleanse** us (1Jo 1:9, cf. 1Ti 2:8).

To have a pure heart is to have single-minded devotedness to

Cross Reference Verses

vs. 8

Mt 6:22 The lamp of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

Lu 16:13 No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

1Jo 3:2 Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is.

3 And every one that hath this hope set on him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

2Pe 1:8 For if these things are yours and abound, they make you to be not idle nor unfruitful unto the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

9 For he that lacketh these things is blind, seeing only what is near, having forgotten the cleansing from his old sins.

vs. 9

Mr 8:36 For what doth it profit a man, to gain the whole world, and forfeit his life?

37 For what should a man give in exchange for his life?

1Co 3:15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as through fire.

2Co 7:10 For godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation, a repentance which bringeth no regret: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

Joh 16:20 Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.

21 A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but when she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for the joy that a man is born into the world.

22 And ye therefore now have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no one taketh away from you.

Ps 16:11 Thou wilt show me the path of life: In thy presence is fulness of joy; In thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

Heb 11:24 By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;

25 choosing rather to share ill treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

26 accounting the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he looked unto the recompense of reward.

vs. 10

1Pe 5:6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.

2Co 4:17 For our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory.

vs. 11,12

Le 19:16 Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people: neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbor: I am Jehovah.

1Ti 5:13 And withal they learn also to be idle, going about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.

Ro 14:1 But him that is weak in faith receive ye, yet not for decision of scruples.

2 One man hath faith to eat all things: but he that is weak eateth herbs.

3 Let not him that eateth set at nought him that eateth not; and let not him that eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him.

4 Who art thou that judgest the servant of another? to his own lord he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be made to stand; for the Lord hath power to make him stand.

5 One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let each man be fully assured in his own mind.

10 But thou, why dost thou judge thy brother? or thou again, why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of God.

Ro 14:10 But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.

Pr 21:2 Every way of a man is right in his own eyes; But Jehovah weigheth the hearts.

1Co 4:5 Wherefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall each man have his praise from God.

Isa 5:20 Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; Who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!

Mt 7:1 Judge not, that ye be not judged.

2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you.

3 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me cast out the mote out of thine eye; and lo, the beam is in thine own eye?

5 Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

Ro 2:1 Therefore you have no excuse, everyone of you who passes judgment, for in that which you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things.

2 And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things.

3 But do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment on those who practice such things and do the same yourself, that you will escape the judgment of God?

Mt 18:15 And if thy brother sin against thee, go, show him his fault between thee and him alone: if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.

16 But if he hear thee not, take with thee one or two more, that at the mouth of two witnesses or three every word may be established.

17 And if he refuse to hear them, tell it unto the church: and if he refuse to hear the church also, let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican.

1Co 5:12 For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within the church?

13 But those who are outside, God judges.

James 4:9

God (Mt 6:22). A **doubleminded** person is one who wants God's blessings and the friendship of the world, which is impossible (Lu 16:13). We must keep our focus on Christ and His coming (1Jo 3:2, 3). To be otherwise, is to be short-sighted (2Pe 1:8, 9).

9 Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.

Sometimes when believers do not walk with the Lord they still prosper in this life. There is present **laughter** and **joy** but the end will be regret because of a life wasted in light of eternity (Mr 8:36, 37, 1Co 3:15). The **mourning** and **heaviness** which James is commanding, characterize true repentance (2Co 7:10). If the individual responds, it will lead to future eternal joy (Joh 16:20-22, Ps 16:11). This person needs to follow the example of Moses, choosing fellowship with God and His people over the passing pleasures of sin (Heb 11:24-26).

10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall exalt you.

The carnal Christian (vs. 9), does not want to give control of his life to the Lord. The present glitter of this world is too great a temptation. The wise move for him would be to submit to God (vs. 7) and seek His praise. God will **exalt** the faithful believer at the right time (1Pe 5:6). Temporary, earthly pleasure is a poor substitute for eternal glory from God (2Co 4:17).

d. Let God Be Judge 4:11-12

11 Speak not one against another, brethren. He that speaketh against a brother, or judgeth his brother, speaketh against the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judgest the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.

12 One only is the lawgiver and judge, even he who is able to save and to destroy: but who art thou that judgest thy neighbor?

One of the areas where believers struggle most to be different from the world is in casual conversation. Even a cursory examination will reveal that it is most often about other people, and usually derogatory. God hates gossip, and speaks against it throughout the Bible (Le 19:16, 1Ti 5:13).

The issues in view here are those where God gives us freedom of choice (Ro 14:1-5). When we **speak against** one another, we set ourselves up as **judge**, taking the place that belongs only to God (Ro 14:10). We are to love our **neighbor** rather than judge him. We also cannot judge a person's motives (Pr 21:2, 1Co 4:5).

These verses do not teach that we should ignore sin in others (Isa 5:20). If that were true, James would be going against his own teaching. We must first judge our own lives however (Mt 7:1-5, cf. Ro 2:1-3), then we will have clear vision to judge others rightly (Mt 18:15-17, cf. 1Co 5:12, 13).

e. Live for God's Will 4:13-17

13 Come now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go into this city, and spend a year there, and trade, and get gain:

14 whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. What is your life? For ye are a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

15 For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall both live, and do this or that.

One of Satan's greatest weapons is procrastination. He says,

Cross Reference Verses

vs. 13-15

Lu 12:19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry.

20 But God said unto him, Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee; and the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be?

Ro 8:16 The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God:

17 and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him.

18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward.

2Ti 4:6 For I am already being offered, and the time of my departure is come.

7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith:

8 henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing.

Pr 3:5 Trust in Jehovah with all thy heart, And lean not upon thine own understanding:

6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, And he will direct thy paths.

Lu 16:8 And his lord commended the unrighteous steward because he had done wisely: for the sons of this world are for their own generation wiser than the sons of the light.

9 And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when it shall fail, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles.

Lu 12:15 And he said unto them, Take heed, and keep yourselves from all covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

32 Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

33 Sell that which ye have, and give alms; make for yourselves purses which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief draweth near, neither moth destroyeth.

34 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Ac 20:35 In all things I gave you an example, that so laboring ye ought to help the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

1Ti 6:17 Charge them that are rich in this present world, that they be not highminded, nor have their hope set on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

18 that they do good, that they be rich in good works, that they be ready to distribute, willing to communicate.

vs. 16

Jas 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning.

1Co 4:7 For who maketh thee to differ? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? but if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?

De 8:16 who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy

fathers knew not; that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end:

17 and lest thou say in thy heart, My power and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth.

18 But thou shalt remember Jehovah thy God, for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth; that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as at this day..

Ec 3:13 And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy good in all his labor, is the gift of God.

Col 3:17 And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

vs. 17

1Pe 3:10 For, He that would love life, And see good days, Let him refrain his tongue from evil, And his lips that they speak no guile:

11 And let him turn away from evil, and do good; Let him seek peace, and pursue it.

Joh 15:22 If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no excuse for their sin.

Php 2:12 So then, my beloved, even as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;

13 for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure.

Eph 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them.

Php 3:12 Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect: but I press on, if so be that I may lay hold on that for which also I was laid hold on by Christ Jesus.

13 Brethren, I could not myself yet to have laid hold: but one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before,

14 I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

1Ti 4:14 Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.

15 Be diligent in these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy progress may be manifest unto all.

vs. 1

Jas 1:26 If any man thinketh himself to be religious, while he bridleth not his tongue but deceiveth his heart, this man's religion is vain.

Zec 1:2 Jehovah was sore displeased with your fathers.

15 And I am very sore displeased with the nations that are at ease; for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction.

Jas 1:10 and the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away.

Ac 12:21 And upon a set day Herod arrayed himself in royal apparel, and sat on the throne, and made an oration unto them.

22 And the people shouted, saying, The voice of a god, and not of a man.

23 And immediately an angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms...

James 4:16

“Don’t live for the Lord just yet. You’ll have plenty of time for that after you make your fortune.” The carnal Christian makes his plans without considering God’s **will**. His goals are earthly and presumptuous. What he ignores is that his very next breath is in God’s control (Lu 12:19, 20). Our time on this earth is miniscule when compared to eternity, yet it is eternally significant when lived in the **Lord’s will** (Ro 8:16-18, 2Ti 4:6-8).

It is important to note that James is not speaking against making plans in this life. God expects us to make plans, seeking His guidance in the process (Pr 3:5, 6, Lu 16:8, 9). If in God’s providence we become rich, we must remember the words of the Lord (Lu 12:15, 32-34, cf. Acts 20:35, 1Ti 6:17, 18).

16 But now ye glory in your vauntings: all such glorying is evil.

For a person to brag about their accomplishments is **evil**, since all that we have of time, abilities, and possessions are a gift from God (1:17, 1Co 4:7, De 8:16-18). We know that God often chooses the ordinary person to do His extraordinary work (cf. 1Co 1:26-29).

This raises the question, is it wrong for a Christian to feel a sense of satisfaction at a job well-done? God created us with the desire to accomplish things and to do them well (Ec 3:13). Our motivation however, should be love for God and His glory (cf. Joh 5:44, Col 3:17).

17 To him therefore that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

The conclusion then is that “*pure and undefiled religion*” (1:27) consists not only of refraining from evil but doing good (1Pe 3:10, 11). Knowledge brings responsibility (Joh 15:22), but it also brings tremendous opportunity for reward. God will always give us the ability to do the **good** that He asks of us (Php 2: 12, 13). It is true however, that sins of omission are still sins.

Of course, this verse must be taken in the context of God’s guidance for each individual. No one person can do all the good that he **knows** needs to be done. Rather we are to concentrate on God’s specific plan for us (Eph 2:10, Php 3:12-14, 1Ti 4:14, 15).

V. Dealing with Vain Religion 5:1-20

A. Warning to the Sinner 5:1-6

James 5

1 Come now, ye rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you.

Just as there is pure religion, there is also vain (empty) religion (1:26), which is the subject of this chapter. James first speaks of the judgment of God against the wealthy who have amassed their fortunes in an unethical way (vs. 4). God may have used their sinful behavior to refine some believers (vs. 6), but He will also judge them for their actions (cf. Zec 1:2, 15). The pleasure and power that their wealth brings will be short lived, to be replaced by the judgment of God.

It is probable that the **rich** here is an unbeliever. It is not the same as 1:10 which speaks of a believer loosing his wealth in this life through some change in circumstances. The **miseries** (calamity) that are coming are not because the person is rich, but due to the sinful way in which the wealth was accumulated (e.g. Acts 12:21-23).

2 Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten.

3 Your gold and your silver are rusted; and their rust shall be for a testimony against you, and shall eat your flesh as fire. Ye have laid up

Cross Reference Verses

vs. 2,3

Mt 6:19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break through and steal

Eph 2:2 wherein ye once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the powers of the air, of the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience.

1Jo 2:16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vain glory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

Ec 2:18 And I hated all my labor wherein I labored under the sun, seeing that I must leave it unto the man that shall be after me.

Ec 5:13 There is a grievous evil which I have seen under the sun, namely, riches kept by the owner thereof to his hurt.

2Pe 3:11 Seeing that these things are thus all to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy living and godliness, 12 looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God, by reason of which the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

vs. 4

De 24:14 Thou shalt not oppress a hired servant that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren, or of thy sojourners that are in thy land within thy gates:

15 in 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 Jehovah, and it be sin unto thee.

Ge 4:9 And Jehovah said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: am I my brother's keeper?

10 And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.

Eph 6:9 And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, and forbear threatening: knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no respect of persons with him.

Heb 4:13 And there is no creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

vs. 5

Lu 12:19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry.

20 But God said unto him, Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee; and the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be?

21 So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

vs. 6

Jas 2:6 But ye have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you, and themselves drag you before the judgment-seats?

Isa 59:4 None sueth in righteousness, and none pleadeth in truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity.

1Ki 21:19 And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith Jehovah, Hast thou killed and also taken possession? And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith Jehovah, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine.

Lu 18:1 And he spake a parable unto them to the end that they ought always to pray, and not to faint;

2 saying, There was in a city a judge, who feared not God, and regarded not man:

3 and there was a widow in that city; and she came oft unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary.

4 And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man;

5 yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest she wear me out by her continual coming.

6 And the Lord said, Hear what the unrighteous judge saith.

7 And shall not God avenge his elect, that cry to him day and night, and yet he is longsuffering over them?

8 I say unto you, that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

Jas 2:2 For if there come into your synagogue a man with a gold ring, in fine clothing, and there come in also a poor man in vile clothing

vs. 7,8

1Pe 1:13 Wherefore girding up the loins of your mind, be sober and set your hope perfectly on the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

1Co 15:58 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not vain in the Lord.

Ga 6:9 And let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

Lu 18:1 And he spake a parable unto them to the end that they ought always to pray, and not to faint

2Pe 1:12 Wherefore I shall be ready always to put you in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and are established in the truth which is with you.

James 5:4

your treasure in the last days.

Here James cites the end of all earthly treasure (Mt 6:19). Even gold and silver are subject to decay either through tarnish or inflation. The ill-gotten wealth of this person is evidence (**testimony**) that he has lived according the wrong value system (Ep 2:2, 1Jo 2:16-17). The **last days** refer to the end of his life on earth. The fact that he must leave his treasure behind, **eats** at his **flesh** like **fire** (Ec 2:18). Acts of philanthropy at this point cannot erase past sin. The words of Solomon have come to pass (Ec 5:13).

The phrase **the last days**, is also used in Scripture to speak of the time of the Lord's return which is imminent. This truth should govern how we live (2Pe 3:11, 12).

4 Behold, the hire of the laborers who mowed your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth out: and the cries of them that reaped have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.

The picture here is of a day-laborer who was to be paid at the end of the work day so he can buy food for his family (De 24:14, 15). The owner puts him off and ends up not paying him. He thinks he got away with it but God knows (e.g. Ge 4:9, 10). The reapers' **cries** for help are heard by the **Lord of Sabaoth** (Lord of hosts), and the owner will have to answer to Him (Eph 6:9, Heb 4:13).

5 Ye have lived delicately on the earth, and taken your pleasure; ye have nourished your hearts in a day of slaughter.

This individual is likened to cattle in the feedlot. They eat all they want not realizing that they are being fattened for slaughter. His only concern is his own desires, but soon he will meet his end (Lu 12:19,21).

6 Ye have condemned, ye have killed the righteous one; he doth not resist you.

On earth, money is power. Because of his wealth, this man is able to run roughshod over the innocent worker and get away with it (2:6). He has the best lawyers money can buy, and he is not above killing to get his way (e.g. Isa 59:4, 1Ki 21:19). Humanly speaking the laborer is powerless to resist this action, but he should know that he has a greater power on his side as James will show (c.f. Lu 18:1-8).

We might wonder at this point if there were people like this in this assembly (cf. 2:2). It is possible, and James will show how they should be dealt with in verses 14-20. In any case, verses 7-13 will be an encouragement to those in the assembly who are being treated this way by ungodly landowners.

B. Encouragement to the Suffering 5:7-13

7 Be patient therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient over it, until it receive the early and latter rain.

8 Be ye also patient; establish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

James gives five exhortations to the suffering individual: vs. 8 be patient, vs. 9 don't murmur, vs. 10 look at biblical examples for instruction and encouragement, vs. 12 don't swear, and vs. 13 pray.

The exhortation to **be patient** is to have a hopeful endurance, which is focused on the **coming of the Lord** (1Pe 1:13). James encourages them to **establish** their **hearts**; to remain steadfast in their commitment to the Lord's work (1Co 15:58, Ga 6:9). To do this we must be faithful in prayer and Bible study (Lu 18:1, 2Pe 1:12,

Cross Reference Verses

vs. 7,8

Isa 26:3 Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee.

Ro 8:18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward.

De 11:13 And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love Jehovah your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul,

14 that I will give the rain of your land in its season, the former rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy grain, and thy new wine, and thine oil.

Mt 25:21 His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

2Pe 1:11 for thus shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

vs. 9

Mr 7:34 and looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened.

Ro 8:23 And not only so, but ourselves also, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

Jas 1:12 Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he hath been approved, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord promised to them that love him.

Mt 18:15 And if thy brother sin against thee, go, show him his fault between thee and him alone: if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.

16 But if he hear thee not, take with thee one or two more, that at the mouth of two witnesses or three every word may be established.

17 And if he refuse to hear them, tell it unto the church: and if he refuse to hear the church also, let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican.

2Ti 1:12 For which cause I suffer also these things: yet I am not ashamed; for I know him whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to guard that which I have committed unto him against that day.

Ro 12:18 If it be possible, as much as in you lieth, be at peace with all men.

19 Avenge not yourselves, beloved, but give place unto the wrath of God: for it is written, Vengeance belongeth unto me; I will recompense, saith the Lord.

20 But if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him to drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head.

21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

vs. 10,11

Mt 5:10 Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you.

Jas 1:4 And let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be

perfect and entire, lacking in nothing.

12 Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he hath been approved, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord promised to them that love him.

Jas 1:2 Count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into manifold temptations.

La 3:33 For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.

1Pe 1:6 Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, ye have been put to grief in manifold trials,

7 that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold that perisheth though it is proved by fire, may be found unto praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Job 42:10 And Jehovah turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: and Jehovah gave Job twice as much as he had before.

2Co 4:17 For our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory

vs. 12

Lu 9:54 And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we bid fire to come down from heaven, and consume them?

Heb 3:11 As I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.

Heb 6:16 For men swear by the greater: and in every dispute of theirs the oath is final for confirmation.

17 Wherein God, being minded to show more abundantly unto the heirs of the promise the immutability of his counsel, interposed with an oath.

Mt 5: 33 Again, ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:

34 but I say unto you, swear not at all; neither by the heaven, for it is the throne of God;

35 nor by the earth, for it is the footstool of his feet; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.

36 Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, for thou canst not make one hair white or black.

37 But let your speech be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: and whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one.

Mt 28:18 And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth.

James 5:9

cf. Isa 26:3).

As an example, he cites the farmer who needs the **early** rain so the seed will germinate and the **latter rain** so the crop will fill out. If he harvests too soon the crop will be lost, but if he is **patient** he will receive an abundance (Ro 8:18). This illustration would have been especially meaningful to these Jewish believers (De 11:13, 14). Spiritually the **precious fruit of the earth** is the reward for faithfulness that will be given at the Lord's return (Mt 25:21).

The **coming of the Lord** includes the rapture and Christ's second coming to rule and reign on earth. He wants all believers to have an abundant entrance into His kingdom (2Pe 1:11).

9 Murmur not, brethren, one against another, that ye be not judged: behold, the judge standeth before the doors.

To **murmur** is to sigh or groan and it is part of this life (Mr 7:34, Ro 8:23) as we wait for our new bodies. We must not hold a grudge against others however, even if they are wrong (vs. 4). God allows difficulties in our life for our ultimate good (1:12). This does not preclude a believer taking the biblical course of action (Mt 18:15-17), but exhorts us lest we commit sin and incur judgment. The righteous Judge **standeth before the doors** in that He sees everything, and will soon make the proper judgment (Lu 18:7, 8, 2Ti 1:12). In the meantime, we must strive for peace (Ro 12:18-21).

10 Take, brethren, for an example of suffering and of patience, the prophets who spake in the name of the Lord.

11 Behold, we call them blessed that endured: ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, how that the Lord is full of pity, and merciful.

The present suffering of believers links them with godly individuals in the Old Testament and as such brings both instruction and encouragement. The prophets are **an example** (pattern) for us, and we agree with God and **call them blessed that endured** (Mt 5:10-12).

We benefit from the biblical record of Job because we see how his experience ended. **The end of the Lord** refers to the definite goal and purpose of God in the trials of this life (1:4, 12). All of God's dealings with us are for our ultimate good, and for this reason we can consider it all joy, when we encounter various trials (1:2). God is full of compassion and does not discipline needlessly (La 3:33, 1Pe 1:6, 7).

God's subsequent doubling of all of Job's possessions (Job 42:10), symbolizes the abundant, future reward that awaits all who faithfully endure in this life (2Co 4:17).

12 But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by the heaven, nor by the earth, nor by any other oath: but let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay; that ye fall not under judgment.

The swearing mentioned here are not expletives uttered in anger, but swearing in the sense of stating an oath that calls for divine judgment on an individual (Lu 9:54). To swear is not sin since God does it both in judgment (Heb 3:11) and for good (Heb 6:16, 17). The injunction here is against making oaths that claim authority in areas where we have no authority—**neither by the heaven, nor by the earth** (Mt 5:33-37; 28:18).

This verse may relate to verse 6 (see also note on 2:6). When these believers are taken to court unjustly the only oath they are to make is to be honest—**your yea be yea and your nay, nay**. The word **judgment** in this verse is translated as hypocrisy every other time it is used in the New Testament. The thought may be that to

Cross Reference Verses

vs. 12

1Pe 2:21 For hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow his steps:
22 who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:
23 who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:

Ro 12:14 Bless them that persecute you; bless, and curse not.

vs. 13

3Jo 1:2 Beloved, I pray that in all things thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.

Jas 1:5 But if any of you lacketh wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

Jas 4:6 But he giveth more grace. Wherefore the scripture saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.

1Ti 6:17 Charge them that are rich in this present world, that they be not highminded, nor have their hope set on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

vs. 14,15

1Co 11:30 For this cause many among you are weak and sickly, and not a few sleep.

31 But if we discerned ourselves, we should not be judged.

32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.

Lu 10:34 and came to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring on them oil and wine; and he set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

Mr 6:13 And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them.

Mt 18:17 And if he refuse to hear them, tell it unto the church: and if he refuse to hear the church also, let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican.

1Co 5:4 in the name of our Lord Jesus, ye being gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus,

5 to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

12 For what have I to do with judging them that are without? Do not ye judge them that are within?

13 But them that are without God judgeth. Put away the wicked man from among yourselves.

1Co 5:5 to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

1Ti 1:20 of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I delivered unto Satan, that they might be taught not to blaspheme.

James 5:13

make spurious oaths that do not come to pass, will result in our being judged as frauds. Our example is Christ (1Pe 2:21-23, cf. Ro 12:14).

13 Is any among you suffering? Let him pray. Is any cheerful? Let him sing praise.

Here is the conclusion to verses 7-12. **Suffering** is any kind of hardship, and if this is our present situation, we should **pray**. Our prayer should be for healing if God will (3Jo 1:2), wisdom (1:5) and grace (4:6). If things are going well—**cheerful**, we should **praise** God (1Ti 6:17).

C. Instructions to the Assembly 5:14-20

14 Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

15 and the prayer of faith shall save him that is sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, it shall be forgiven him.

Until this section, James has been speaking of trials that believers encounter that are not the result of a specific sin. He now deals with the scenario of God's discipline of believers because of their sinful behavior (e.g. 1Co 11:30-32).

The sickness here is broader than physical disease and may include such things as depression. That the **elders of the church** are called indicates that this is a unique situation related to church life. It is not the normal healing done by the apostles or others with the gift of healing; otherwise it would assume that all elders have the gift of healing, which cannot be supported biblically. Also, this instruction is not the norm for all sickness or no one would ever die.

The elders are to do two things, to **pray over** the person and **anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord**. Oil was used in combination with wine to aid in the healing of wounds (Lu 10:34). The word **anoint** used here however, is not used in this way in the New Testament. If the intended meaning here were medical, then anyone could have done this including the individual himself. The imperative call for **the elders** would not fit. The anointing is symbolic and indicates that it is the Lord who heals the person—**in the name of the Lord**. (Mr 6:13). This same reasoning is used for the command to **pray over him**. Elder's prayers have no more access to God than do those of other believers.

The situation to which James is referring is the case where the sickness is an act of divine discipline as the result of a specific sin. If the individual is a member of the assembly and is unwilling to repent and make things right, then he should be excommunicated from the local church (Mt 18:17ff, 1Co 5:4-5, 12-13). This action places the individual in Satan's realm of influence where God uses Satan to bring physical distress (1Co 5:5, 1Ti 1:20). When he is repentant the individual calls for the elders, confesses his sin, and is healed. This interpretation is supported by the example of Elijah that follows.

16 Confess therefore your sins one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working.

Confession of sin must also be made to the offended person—**one to another**. This is not group confession of general sins, but specific confession to those directly involved in the situation. Here again confession, prayer and healing are connected adding weight to the interpretation above. The condition for answered prayer is that the

Cross Reference Verses

vs. 16

Isa 59:2 but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, so that he will not hear.

Ps 66:18 If I regard iniquity in my heart, The Lord will not hear.

1Ti 2:8 I desire therefore that the men pray in every place, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and disputing.

1Jo 3:22 And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

1Jo 5:14 And this is the boldness which we have toward him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us:

15 and if we know that he heareth us whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions which we have asked of him.

vs. 17,18

1Ki 17:21 And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto Jehovah, and said, O Jehovah my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again.

22 And Jehovah hearkened unto the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived.

De 11:

14 that I will give the rain of your land in its season, the former rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy grain, and thy new wine, and thine oil.

15 And I will give grass in thy fields for thy cattle, and thou shalt eat and be full.

16 Take heed to yourselves, lest your heart be deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them;

17 and the anger of Jehovah be kindled against you, and he shut up the heavens, so that there shall be no rain, and the land shall not yield its fruit; and ye perish quickly from off the good land which Jehovah giveth you.

1Ki 16:31 And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him.

32 And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria.

1Ki 17:1 And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the sojourners of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As Jehovah, the God of Israel, liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

1Ki 18:37 Hear me, O Jehovah, hear me, that this people may know that thou, Jehovah, art God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again.

38 Then the fire of Jehovah fell, and consumed the burnt-offering, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.

39 And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, Jehovah, he is God; Jehovah, he is God.

1Ki 18:42 So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he bowed himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees.

45 And it came to pass in a little while, that the heavens grew black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel.

2Ch 7:13 If I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or if I command the locust to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people;

14 if my people, who are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

1Co 5:12 For what have I to do with judging them that are without? Do not ye judge them that are within?

13 But them that are without God judgeth. Put away the wicked man from among yourselves.

Heb 13:17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit to them: for they watch in behalf of your souls, as they that shall give account; that they may do this with joy, and not with grief: for this were unprofitable for you.

Mt 18:18 Verily I say unto you, what things soever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and what things soever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

19 Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father who is in heaven.

20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

1Jo 5:16 If any man see his brother sinning a sin not unto death, he shall ask, and God will give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: not concerning this do I say that he should make request.

Jer 1:15 Then the lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin: and the sin, when it is fullgrown, bringeth forth death.

1Co 11:30 For this cause many among you are weak and sickly, and not a few sleep.

Jer 1:21 Wherefore putting away all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness, receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

Mt 16:23 But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art a stumbling-block unto me: for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men.

vs. 19,20

1Co 5:5 to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

Ga 6:1 Brethren, even if a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; looking to thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

1Co 3:7 So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

1Co 9:22 To the weak I became weak, that I might gain the weak: I am become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some.

23 And I do all things for the gospel's sake, that I may be a joint partaker thereof.

Lu 9:24 For whosoever would save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.

James 5:17

elders, who are praying, not harbor unconfessed sin in their lives (cf. Isa 59:2, Ps 66:18, 1Ti 2:8). Prayer, in God's will, by a **righteous** person accomplishes **much in its working** (1Jo 3:22; 5:14-15).

17 Elijah was a man of like passions with us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth for three years and six months.

18 And he prayed again; and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

This illustration that James uses is key to understanding verses 14-16. If this passage is only to teach the power of prayer, James could have used any number of Old Testament illustrations. Also, if his point is the healing of a normal case of illness, he would have used a better example from Elijah's experience. During the drought, Elijah prayed and God brought the widow's son back to life (1Ki 17:21, 22). It is certain then that the Spirit specifically directed James to use this action of Elijah (1Ki 17, 18), as an illustration of the truth he is teaching in this section.

When Israel came out of Egypt and into the promised land, God told them that He would give them rain or withhold it based on their faithfulness (De 11:14-17). Israel's king Ahab provoked God by promoting the worship of Baal (1Ki 16:31-32). Elijah's response was to pray to God, asking that He discipline Israel by withholding the rain, according to His word. God confirmed to Elijah that He would do as he had prayed, and Elijah gave this message to Ahab (1Ki 17:1).

At the end of three years, the word came from God that He was going to end the drought but first He would give the people an opportunity to repent (1Ki 18:37-39). Once this was accomplished and they made a public confession (1Ki 18:39), Elijah prayed and God sent the rain and healed the land (1Ki 18:42, 45, cf. 2Ch 7:13, 14).

In the church, discipline is the responsibility of the elders (1Co 5:12, 13, Heb 13:17). When there is public, unrepentant sin, and the elders take action, God will respond (Mt 18:18-20). If a sickness results, the believers are not to pray for healing, until the individual repents (1Jo 5:16). When he does repent, then he should call for the elders in order to confess and be healed (vs. 14). If the individual does not repent, the sickness would probably lead to death (1:15, cf. 1Co 11:30). All elders should take courage in this work since **Elijah was a man of like passions with us** (cf. 1Ki 19:3, 10).

This passage demonstrates that the salvation of our soul (1:21) is a vital issue with God. He is much more concerned with our spiritual condition than our physical ease. Our prayers for one another should reflect God's interests over man's (cf. Mt 16:23).

19 My brethren, if any among you err from the truth, and one convert him;

20 let him know, that he who converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins.

James closes his letter with the encouragement to seek repentance and restoration, which is the purpose for discipline (1Co 5:5, Ga 6:1). Of course only God can bring about a change of heart in an individual (1Co 3:7), yet He uses us in the process (cf. 1Co 9:22, 23). To **convert** is to turn from one's sinful **way**, back to walking with the Lord.

Again, James reminds us that the theme of his letter is the salvation of the soul. This is not salvation from the eternal penalty of sin, but the saving of this life in faithful service to the Lord, and for our reward (Lu 9:24). In 1:21 it is seen as the individual believer's responsibility. Here it is seen that the local church has part in this as well.

When the sinner is converted from the **error of his way**, he is

Cross Reference Verses

vs. 19,20

1Co 10:5 Howbeit with most of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

1Co 11:30 For this cause many among you are weak and sickly, and not a few sleep.

Jas 1:15 Then the lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin: and the sin, when it is fullgrown, bringeth forth death.

1Jo 5:16 If any man see his brother sinning a sin not unto death, he shall ask, and God will give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: not concerning this do I say that he should make request.

17 All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.

1Jo 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Mt 6:14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

2Co 2:6 Sufficient to such a one is this punishment which was inflicted by the many;

7 so that contrariwise ye should rather forgive him and comfort him, lest by any means such a one should be swallowed up with his overmuch sorrow.

8 Wherefore I beseech you to confirm your love toward him.

9 For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye are obedient in all things.

10 But to whom ye forgive anything, I forgive also: for what I also have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, for your sakes have I forgiven it in the presence of Christ;

11 that no advantage may be gained over us by Satan: for we are not ignorant of his devices.

1Pe 4:8 above all things being fervent in your love among yourselves; for love covereth a multitude of sins.

saved from an untimely death (1Co 10:5; 11:30, cf. 1:15, 1Jo 5:16,17), and his confessed sins are **covered**—forgiven and forgotten by God (1Jo 1:9) and also by the believers (Mt. 6:14,15, 2Co 2:6-11, 1Pe 4:8).

Appendix A

Psalms and Proverbs References to the Tongue

Ps 15:3 He that slandereth not with his tongue, Nor doeth evil to his friend, Nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor;
Ps 34:13 Keep thy tongue from evil, And thy lips from speaking guile.
Ps 37:30 The mouth of the righteous talketh of wisdom, And his tongue speaketh justice.
Ps 39:1 <<For the Chief Musician, Jeduthun. A Psalm of David.>> I said, I will take heed to my ways, That I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, While the wicked is before me.
Ps 39:3 My heart was hot within me; While I was musing the fire burned: Then spake I with my tongue:
Ps 52:4 Thou lovest all devouring words, thou deceitful tongue.
Ps 57:4 My soul is among lions; I lie among them that are set on fire, Even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, And their tongue a sharp sword.
Ps 71:24 My tongue also shall talk of thy righteousness all the day long; For they are put to shame, for they are confounded, that seek my hurt.
Ps 73:9 They have set their mouth in the heavens, And their tongue walketh through the earth.
Ps 119:172 Let my tongue sing of thy word; For all thy commandments are righteousness.
Ps 120:2 Deliver my soul, O Jehovah, from lying lips, And from a deceitful tongue.
Ps 120:3 What shall be given unto thee, and what shall be done more unto thee, Thou deceitful tongue?
Ps 139:4 For there is not a word in my tongue, But, lo, O Jehovah, thou knowest it altogether.
Ps 140:3 They have sharpened their tongue like a serpent; Adders' poison is under their lips. Selah

Pr 6:16, 17 There are six things which Jehovah hateth; Yea, seven which are an abomination unto him: Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, And hands that shed innocent blood;
Pr 10:20 The tongue of the righteous is as choice silver: The heart of the wicked is little worth.
Pr 10:31 The mouth of the righteous bringeth forth wisdom; But the perverse tongue shall be cut off.
Pr 12:18 There is that speaketh rashly like the piercings of a sword; But the tongue of the wise is health.
Pr 12:19 The lip of truth shall be established for ever; But a lying tongue is but for a moment.
Pr 15:2 The tongue of the wise uttereth knowledge aright; But the mouth of fools poureth out folly.
Pr 15:4 A gentle tongue is a tree of life; But perverseness therein is a breaking of the spirit.
Pr 16:1 The plans of the heart belong to man; But the answer of the tongue is from Jehovah.
Pr 17:4 An evil-doer giveth heed to wicked lips; And a liar giveth ear to a mischievous tongue.
Pr 17:20 He that hath a wayward heart findeth no good; And he that hath a perverse tongue falleth into mischief.
Pr 18:21 Death and life are in the power of the tongue; And they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.
Pr 21:6 The getting of treasures by a lying tongue Is a vapor driven to and fro by them that seek death.
Pr 21:23 Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue Keepeth his soul from troubles.
Pr 25:15 By long forbearing is a ruler persuaded, And a soft tongue breaketh the bone.
Pr 25:23 The north wind bringeth forth rain: So doth a backbiting tongue an angry countenance.
Pr 26:28 A lying tongue hateth those whom it hath wounded; And a flattering mouth worketh ruin.
Pr 28:23 He that rebuketh a man shall afterward find more favor Than he that flattereth with the tongue.
Pr 31:26 She openeth her mouth with wisdom; And the law of kindness is on her tongue.

(ASV)

Appendix B

Some Repeated Words in James

Brethren

Jas 1:2 Count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into manifold temptations;

Jas 1:16 Be not deceived, my beloved brethren.

Jas 1:19 Ye know this, my beloved brethren. But let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:

Jas 2:1 My brethren, hold not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons.

Jas 2:5 Hearken, my beloved brethren; did not God choose them that are poor as to the world to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he promised to them that love him?

Jas 2:14 What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, but have not works? can that faith save him?

Jas 3:1 Be not many of you teachers, my brethren, knowing that we shall receive heavier judgment.

Jas 3:10 out of the same mouth cometh forth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.

Jas 3:12 Can a fig tree, my brethren, yield olives, or a vine figs? Neither can salt water yield sweet.

Jas 4:11 Speak not one against another, brethren. He that speaketh against a brother, or judgeth his brother, speaketh against the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judgest the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.

Jas 5:7 Be patient therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient over it, until it receive the early and latter rain.

Jas 5:9 Murmur not, brethren, one against another, that ye be not judged: behold, the judge standeth before the doors.

Jas 5:10 Take, brethren, for an example of suffering and of patience, the prophets who spake in the name of the Lord.

Jas 5:12 But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by the heaven, nor by the earth, nor by any other oath: but let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay; that ye fall not under judgment.

Jas 5:19 My brethren, if any among you err from the truth, and one convert him;

Faith

Jas 1:3 Knowing that the proving of your faith worketh patience.

Jas 1:6 But let him ask in faith, nothing doubting: for he that doubteth is like the surge of the sea driven by the wind and tossed.

Jas 2:1 My brethren, hold not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons.

Jas 2:5 Hearken, my beloved brethren; did not God choose them that are poor as to the world to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he promised to them that love him?

Jas 2:14 What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, but have not works? can that faith save him?

Jas 2:17 Even so faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself.

Jas 2:18 Yea, a man will say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith apart from thy works, and I by my works will show thee my faith.

Jas 2:20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith apart from works is barren?

Jas 2:22 Thou seest that faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect;

Jas 2:24 Ye see that by works a man is justified, and not only by faith.

Jas 2:26 For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, even so faith apart from works is dead.

Jas 5:15 and the prayer of faith shall save him that is sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, it shall be forgiven him.

Know

Jas 1:19 Ye know this, my beloved brethren. But let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:

Jas 2:20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith apart from works is barren?

Jas 4:4 Ye adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore would be a friend of the world maketh himself an enemy of God.

Jas 4:14 whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. What is your life? For ye are a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

Jas 5:20 let him know, that he who converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins.

Patience

Jas 1:3 Knowing that the proving of your faith worketh patience.

Jas 1:4 And let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking in nothing.

Jas 5:10 Take, brethren, for an example of suffering and of patience, the prophets who spake in the name of the Lord.

Jas 5:11 Behold, we call them blessed that endured: ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, how that the Lord is full of pity, and merciful.