

**TWENTY THIRD ANNUAL
"LABOURERS TOGETHER WITH GOD"
LECTURESHIP, 2015**

PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN LIVING

NORTHWEST FLORIDA SCHOOL OF BIBLICAL STUDIES
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THE HARVEST

"Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest."

(Luke 10:2)



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TWENTY THIRD ANNUAL
"LABOURERS TOGETHER WITH GOD"
LECTURESHIP

February 15-19, 2015

THEME:

**PRACTICAL
CHRISTIAN LIVING**

(A Study of the Book of James)

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FORWARD

The twenty-third annual Northwest Florida School of Biblical Studies lectureship is a development of and study of the book of James. This lectureship book contains the outlines of twenty eight lessons from this great New Testament book. The general theme of the 2015 lectureship is "Practical Christian Living Involves...." James has been referred to as the "Proverbs of the New Testament" because of the practical nature of the material.

When one begins to read this great book on daily Christian living, the number of subjects addressed in the book is found to be amazing. While there are some doctrinal matters addressed within the book, it provides inspired teaching on a variety of matters which are involved in the daily life of the child of God. We are living in a society that is selfish and self-centered. There is much less concern for others today than some years ago. The attitude of "no one can tell me how to live my life" is prevalent. Yet, for those who have a desire to be with God eternally, we must recognize that God has told us, within the pages of inspiration, of which James is a part, how we are to live our lives. The book of James is filled with information that we need if we desire to be with God eternally.

It is amazing how mankind reacts to sin. Some sins are considered awful and those who commit them are shunned. Other sins committed are ignored or are counted as insignificant. How we treat others, how we speak to or about others, whether or not one shows a degree of humility, and other such matters, are often considered "my business". Yet these are the kinds of things that James deals with in his great book. These kinds of things do matter.

As one looks over the table of contents for this volume, it will become evident that everyday living is a matter of concern for those who desire to please God. We believe this lectureship outline book, twenty eight lessons developed from the book of James, will be a profitable study for everyone. We encourage you to read carefully each lesson. We encourage elders to secure copies of this volume to use in Bible classes to aid students to become more what God would have them be in daily life.

Sidney White, Director
Northwest Florida School of Biblical Studies
February 2015

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction to the Book of JAMES	
<i>Wendell Fikes</i>	6
Being a Part of God's Family (Brethren, 1:2)	
<i>Charles Blair</i>	13
Joy (1:2)	
<i>Bill Davis (Pensacola)</i>	16
Temptation (1:2)	
<i>Ivie Powell</i>	22
Faith (1:3,6)	
<i>Jeff Bates</i>	26
Proper Regard for Self (1:9-10)	
<i>Ken Butterworth</i>	29
Awareness of Sin (1:13-16)	
<i>Wayne Cox</i>	33
Respect for the Word of God (Ladies only)	
<i>Tammi Stephenson</i>	36
Respect for the Word of God (1:18-25)	
<i>Lance Foster</i>	38
Proper Regard for God (1:17-19)	
<i>Kenneth Burleson</i>	40
An Imaginary Religion (1:26)	
<i>Victor Eskew</i>	43
A Life of Service (1:27)	
<i>David Wade</i>	47
Proper Regard for Others (2:1-9)	
<i>Barry O'Dell</i>	51
Law, Mercy and Judgment (2:10-13)	
<i>Tom Snyder</i>	54
Responsibility to Teach (Older/Younger) (Ladies only)	
<i>Irene Taylor</i>	58
Faith and Works (2:14-26)	
<i>Robert R. Taylor, Jr.</i>	60
Responsibility to Teach (3:1)	
<i>Brandon Baggett</i>	63
Attention to Our Speech (3:2-12)	
<i>Bill Davis (Jacksonville)</i>	68

The Use of True Wisdom (3:13-18)	
<i>Michael Roberts</i>	74
An Absence of Ungodly Strife (4:1-5)	
<i>Jared Knoll</i>	79
Humility, Solution of Ungodly Strife (4:6-10)	
<i>Dan Wheeler</i>	82
Resolve to Control our Speech (Ladies only)	
<i>Nina House</i>	85
Proper Speech Toward Brethren (4:11,12)	
<i>Jimmy Bates</i>	90
God is Our Planning (4:13-17)	
<i>Tom House</i>	94
Proper Regard for Material Things (5:1-5)	
<i>Ronnie Whittemore</i>	99
Patience (5:7-12)	
<i>Joel Wheeler</i>	102
Prayer (5:13a)	
<i>Edward White</i>	106
Support for One Another (5:16)	
<i>Ron Gilbert</i>	109
Restoring the Erring (5:19-20)	
<i>Garland Robinson</i>	112
A Religion that Makes a Difference	
<i>Larry Acuff</i>	114
A Journey	
<i>Sidney White</i>	116
Names and Addresses of Speakers	119

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF JAMES

Windell R. Fikes

- A. Author, Written to whom? Why written? Place written. Date. Genuineness. Canonicity. Key Words.
- B. Brief Outline. New Testament Christians appreciate and enjoy studying the book of James because it simply and plainly harmonizes *faith* and *obedience* by works that saves all ***"doers of the Word."*** ***"But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding (deceiving, KJV) your own selves."*** (1:22 ASV)
- C ***"Faith only"*** is mentioned one time in the New Testament. It occurs in the book of James preceded by these words, ***"not by."*** ***"Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only."*** (James 2:24 KJV)
- D. Martin Luther (1483-1546) said the following about the book of James. "Therefore St. James's Epistle is a right strawy epistle (*ein recht strohern Epistel*) compared with them (i.e., John's Gospel, Paul's Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, and First Peter)...." (Lenski, p 515) "Because of its (*book of James, wrf*) emphasis on 'works' Luther called the document 'an epistle of straw,' consigning it (*James, wrf*) to an appendix in his 1522 edition of the New Testament, thus leading the Protestant world into a heretical view of God's plan for human redemption, namely that salvation is by "faith alone.'" (Jackson, p515) Luther so cherished, taught, preached and wrote about his ***"faith only"*** doctrine, that **he added** to the Biblical Greek Text of Rom 3:28 the word ***"alone."*** ***"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."*** (Rom. 3:28 KJV, ASV) Luther's translation: "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith *alone* without the deeds of the law." (Romans 3:28, Luther's Translation) "Alone" is not in the Greek Text of Romans 3:28. (Lenski, p 271) RCH Lenski is a Lutheran and wrote a 12 volume Commentary on the books of the New Testament. Therefore, it would seem that Lenski would accurately state Martin Luther's convictions, his written comments and belief of ***"faith only."*** In this action, Luther, flaunts his biased theological addition of the word ***"alone"*** to the Greek text of the Scriptures against the plain truth taught in the Sacred Writings. Luther arrays himself against the Holy Spirit and the inspired text of Romans 3:28. He stands by himself with his addition of ***"alone"*** to Rom. 3:28 and without support of translators and commentators.

DISCUSSION:

I. WHO WROTE THE BOOK OF JAMES?

A. James. "*James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are of the Dispersion, greeting.*" (James 1:1, ASV)

1. James penned the book of James. (1:1)

2. There are four persons named James in the N.T.

a. James, son of Zebedee and Salome, brother of John

b. James, *the Less*

c. James the father of the apostle Judas Iscariot

d. James the Lord's brother (*half-brother*)

B. Which James mentioned in the NT Scriptures wrote the Epistle of James?

1. James, one of the twelve apostles, *son of Zebedee and Salome the brother of John*, (Matt. 4:21; 10:2; [*Salome, cf. 27:56*]; Mark 1:19; 5:37; 10:35; [*Salome, cf. 15:40*]; Luke 5:10; Acts 1:13).

a. James, one of the twelve apostles and brother of John was killed by Herod about 44 A.D. (Acts 12:1-2)

b. James, the apostle and brother of John was, *very likely* martyred before the book of James was written.

2. James the *Less* (Mk. 15:40)

a. James the *Less* was the son of Alphaeus and one of the twelve apostles. (Matt. 10:3; Mark 3:18; Mark 16:1; Luke 6:15; cf. John 19:25; Acts 1:13)

b. James the *Less* was the brother of *Joses*. (Mk. 15:40)

1) There's no indication James the *Less* wrote the book James.

3. James, the father of Judas, (...Judas the son of James..., (Luke 6:16 1901 ASV), (Lockyer, p 171)

a. Not... (Luke 6:16 KJV) Judas the brother of James..., as stated in the King James Version

b. Judas, son of James (Acts 1:13)

1) Judas called Thaddaeus (Mt 10:3; Mk 3:18, ASV)

2) Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus (Matt. 10:3, KJV)

4. James, the Lord's brother, (*half-brother*), in the flesh

a. James was a son Joseph and Mary born after Jesus.

1) "*Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joseph, and Simon, and Judas?*" (Mt 13:55, ASV)

2) "*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.*" (Mk 6:3, ASV)

3) "*Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and tarried with him fifteen days.*

¹⁹But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother." (Gal 1:18-19, ASV)

- 4) This James was identified as a part [kinship], of the Lord's fleshly family [brethren], (Mt 12:46-47; John 2:12; Acts 1:13-14; cf. John 7:3, 5, 10)
 - a) *"And Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house." (Mark 6:4 1901 ASV)*
 - b) James was not a believer in the Messiahship of Jesus until after His resurrection. (Jo 7:5) *"For even his brethren did not believe on him." (John 7:5 1901 ASV)*
 - c) *"It appears from Acts 1:13, 14, that it was this event (resurrection) which brought all the brothers of Jesus, in the flesh, to a recognition of His identity as the Son of God. It is there affirmed that 'his brethren', (the sons of Mary and Joseph, Mt 13:55,56), continued with the apostles and the others in the 'upper room' in the city of Jerusalem." (Woods, p. 15)*
- b. After His resurrection, Christ appeared to James his half-brother.
 - 1) *"...(Christ) appeared to Cephas" (1 Co 15:5)*
 - 2) *"Then he appeared to James; then to all the apostles (1 Co 15:5 1901 ASV)*
- c. James the Lord's half-brother became a pillar in the early church at Jerusalem. (Acts 12:16-17; 15:4, 13-34; 21:18-19; Gal 2:1-10)
- d. This James, traditionally, is referred to as "James the Just" by many prominent scholars and authors from Eusebius to present day writers and commentators.
 - 1) *"But James, the brother of the Lord, who, as there were many of this name, was surnamed the Just by all, from the days of our Lord until now..." (Eusebius, p 76)*
 - 2) James *"was in the habit of entering the temple alone, and was often found upon his bended knees and interceding for the forgiveness of the people; so that his knees became as hard as camel's, in consequence of his habitual supplication and kneeling before God." (Ibid, p 76)*
- e. James, according to secular history, was martyred between 62 A.D. and 68 A.D. Almost certainly before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.
 - 1) How and where his murder occurred is unknown.

- 2) There are several conflicting narratives concerning his death [cf. Eusebius, p 77].
- f. It is this James, the fleshly *half-brother* of the Lord, who wrote the Epistle of James that bears his name. The authorship of the Epistle of James, by James, the Lord's brother, is the consensus of scholarly opinion.

II. TO WHOM WAS THE BOOK OF JAMES WRITTEN?

- A. James wrote his book to: *"the twelve tribes which are of the Dispersion, greeting"* (1:1 ASV)
- B. *"...To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting."* (1:1 KJV)
 1. Gr. *diaspora* (cf. 1 Pet 1:1), refers to spiritual Israel, the Lord's people "scattered" throughout the Grecian world. (Woods, p 16)
 2. Fleshly Jews: *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?* (Jo. 7:35 ASV) (Ibid, p 16)
- C. The epistle was written to Christians, mostly of Jewish descent.

III. WHY WAS THE BOOK OF JAMES WRITTEN?

- A. To instruct the Christians in the faith (1:2-7)
- B. To insulate the Christians from worldly temptation (1:12-27)
- C. To prepare Christians to endure persecution...
 - a. *"These to whom James wrote were in frequent contact with rich and arrogant countrymen who continually oppressed and persecuted them, and their trials were thus exceedingly burdensome and painful to bear...the Letter because of its eminently practical character has been quite properly styled 'the Gospel of Common Sense' ...the principles of Christ, properly applied and fully assimilated, will adequately meet the needs of every generation, whatever the period in history may be."* (Woods pp 17, 18)

IV. FROM WHERE WAS THE BOOK OF JAMES WRITTEN?

- A. The place of writing is not specifically stated by James. However, there are some internal allusions that may give good indication from where the author wrote. (Woods, p 19)
 1. Farming was practiced in the land – "laborers mowed your fields"; "husbandmen wait for the fruit". (5:4, 7)
 2. "Early and latter rain" (5:7)
 - a. Early rain, October to February, following fall sowing (Ibid, p 19)

- b. "Latter rain" came during March and April just before the grain ripened for harvest. (Ibid, p 19)
- 3. Springs produced "sweet water" others "bitter water". (3:11)
- 4. The land produced figs, olives, corn, grapes, (3:12, cf. 2 Kings 18:31-32; Matt 21:18-20; Mk 2:23; Matt 7:16)
- 5. It was a country located near the sea (1:6; 3:4)
- C. James was mentioned in connection with the church in Jerusalem (Acts 15:13-21)
- D. The evidence strongly points to Palestine; the place James lived and from whence he wrote the Epistle that bears his name.

V. DATE

- A. Conservative scholars and commentators date the book of James sometime between 44 A.D. and 65 A.D.
- B. Many of our scholarly brethren believe the book of James was written about 62 A.D. Yet some lean to an earlier date.
- C. The date is uncertain.
 - 1. The following statement from Guy N. Woods is noteworthy; *"...any effort to fix a definite date...is no more than a guess. Fortunately, the truth of the Epistle, and its value to us, are not dependant on the date when it was written, and it is therefore not necessary for us to determine it exactly."* (Woods, p 18-19)

VI. GENUINENESS.

- A. In books and articles the word *"genuineness"* is used to authenticate the writer of a piece. *"actually produced by or proceeding from the alleged source or author <the signature is genuine>"* (Webster Online)
- B. The Book of James is genuine. That means we know who wrote the book.
- C. James affirmed he wrote the book. *"James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ..."* (Jas 1:1)

VII. CANONICITY.

- A. "Canonicity" when referring to the Bible is: *"an authoritative list of books accepted as Holy Scripture"*. (Webster Online)
- B. "The English word *canon* goes back to the Greek word *kanon* and then to the Hebrew *qaneh*. Its basic meaning is *reed*, our English word *cane* being derived from it. Since a reed was something used as a measuring rod, the word *kanon* came to mean a standard or rule. It was also used to refer to a list or index, and when so applied to the Bible denotes the list of books which are received as Holy

Scriptures. Thus if one speaks of the canonical writings, he is speaking of those books which are regarded as having divine authority and which comprise our Bible." (Lightfoot, p 81)

- C. The canon of the Bible is the collection of books which comprise Scripture. (ibid, p 81)
- D. Genesis – Malachi, *39 books*, make-up the canon of the Old Testament.
- E. Matthew – Revelation, *27 books*, make up the canon of the New Testament.
- F. In 367A.D., Athanasius of Alexandria published a list of 27 New Testament books which were accepted in his time, and these are the same twenty-seven which are recognized today. (Ibid, p 85)
- G. The book of James was late to be placed permanently in the canon. "*The first authoritative insertion into the canon was decreed by the Council of Carthage in 397 A.D.*". (Lenski, p.513)
- H. The canonicity of the book of James stands undisturbed. (Ibid, p 516)
- I. Luther stands alone in his biased opinion, consigning *James*, to an appendix in his 1522 edition of the New Testament.
- J. James is accepted as *Scripture* that should be in the canon of the New Testament by the majority of scholars. (Lightfoot, p 85)

VIII. KEY WORDS.

- A. Persecution (chapter 1)
- B. Partiality (chapter 2)
- C. Pride (chapter 3)
- D. Piosity (chapter 4) "*the quality of being excessively or insincerely pious*" (Webster Online)
- E. Profaneness (chapter 5)

IX. BRIEF OUTLINE.

- A. Proving Faith (chapter 1)
- B. Faith and Obedience (chapter 2)
- C. The Unruly Tongue (chapter 3)
- D. The Curse of Worldliness (chapter 4)
- E. The Value of Holiness (chapter 5) – [Jackson, p 516]

CONCLUSION:

Someone has said, "*fifty-percent of everything you know; is where to find the other fifty-percent.*" Factual information, *as much as is reliable and available*, about the writer, his background, culture

and circumstances of the times he lived and wrote give readers much insight to his book.

The culture and circumstances of the people to whom the author is addressing is helpful in any study of a New Testament book. Such is the case in the exploration of the Epistle of James in this lectureship.

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BEING A PART OF GOD'S FAMILY

James 1:2

Charles Blair

1. There was a time in this country that if one saw the name church of Christ on a building they were fairly certain what would be involved in worship there.
2. Over the years the world as a whole has characterized all who believe in Jesus as part of the "Christian world."
3. Today, because of the influence of the Community Church ideal, the idea of who is a Christian has become so blurred because of the teachings of men.
4. We now return to the time of the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments and make observations about who are the "brethren."

DISCUSSION:

I. GOD ESTABLISHES THAT HE AND HE ALONE IS THE ONLY GOD.

- A. When the new generation that had grown up during the time of the wilderness wanderings were preparing to enter Canaan, here was the foundation for their lives.
 1. There were commands, statutes, and judgments taught by Moses to all Israel (Deut. 6:1).
 2. The result of these commands were to cause Israel to fear God and keep the commands, statutes and judgments (v.2).

3. The foundation was that Israel was to know that the Lord our God is one Lord (v.4).
4. It is a way of saying there is no other God.
- B. The opening of the ten commandments to Moses from Mount Sinai was to establish first of all the supremacy of God in their hearts. They were not to have any other gods before God; make any graven image or bow down and serve them (Exodus 20:3-5).
- C. God warns Israel to not live as those in Canaan lived. He was going to cast out those from Canaan and He would also cast out Israel if they acted the same way.
 1. God promises Israel the land of Canaan (Lev. 20:24).
 2. In that verse we have this declaration from God. "I am the Lord your God."

II. IN EACH PERIOD OF MAN UPON THIS EARTH, THERE HAS ALWAYS BEEN AN ELEMENT OF INDIVIDUALS WHO CHOSE TO FOLLOW GOD.

- A. There was a point in time when the world began to move away from God (Gen. 4:26).
 1. At that time, Seth had Enos and then men began to call upon the name of God.
 2. This signaled a time when individuals began to move as God would have them to be. These called upon God.
- B. Chapter 5 of Genesis is genealogy of Adam's family.
 1. Chapter 6 is the effect of righteous and unrighteous people merging together.
 2. In the midst of this, we find one man who found grace in the eyes of the Lord. That man was Noah (Gen. 6:8).
 3. At the time of the universal flood, only eight souls chose to follow God.
- C. Moses, through God, sent out 12 spies to search Canaan (Num. 13).
 1. Ten of the 12 spies lost faith in God and managed to turn the bulk of the nation from faith to fear.
 2. All those from 20 and above were not allowed to enter Canaan except for Joshua and Caleb (Num. 14:29).
- D. From these examples we conclude the actions we see that there were always those who chose to be faithful to God.

III. LISTEN TO THE WORDS FROM GOD AS HE SPEAKS ABOUT HIS CHILDREN BEING FAITHFUL TO HIM.

- A. The second time Moses came down from Sinai with the tablets of stone, we find God stating clearly what He requires.
 1. They were to fear God; walk in His ways; love and serve Him with all their heart (Deut. 10:12).

2. We find in these words a definition of faithfulness.
- B. The prophet Micah worked toward the ending of the kingdom of Judah. Here was one thing the prophet taught to bring Judah back. The Lord requires of you to *do justly, love mercy and walk humbly with God* (Micah 6:8).
- C. Solomon spoke of the whole duty or responsibility man has toward God. Man is to fear God and keep His commandments (Eccl. 12:13).
- D. In the New Testament, we find Jesus placing the same emphasis upon the requirements of men toward God.
 1. If we love God we will keep His commandments (John 14:15).
 2. Our prayers will be answered if we love God and keep His commandments (1 John 3:22).
- E. God's people have always been known by their faithfulness to God and His way.

IV. WHAT WOULD HAVE BEEN MEANT BY JAMES WHEN HE USES THE DESIGNATION OF "MY BRETHREN?"

- A. When the church began on the day of Pentecost the audience assembled and the ones who heard the truth on that occasion are identified.
 1. The audience was Jews and proselytes (Acts 2:10).
 2. Those who obeyed the truth on that day numbered about three thousand (Acts 2:41).
 3. The brethren would have been at that time, Jews and proselytes.
- B. Some years later the definition changed.
 1. Based on Philip's teaching and the response of people, Samaritans were baptized into Christ (Acts 8:12).
 2. The definition changed ever so lightly.
- C. In Acts 10 we find Peter, a Jew at the house of Cornelius, a Gentile.
 1. Those of Cornelius heard and obeyed the truth.
 2. Peter "commanded" them to be baptized (Acts 10:48).
 3. There must be a command for faith to operate.
 4. This made still yet another definition of brethren.
- D. The total revelation shows us the eternal purpose of God was always to bring into one body, both Jews and Gentiles. Eph. 3:5,6,11; Col. 1:23
- E. "Brethren" were Jews, Samaritans, Gentiles; people from all walks of life.
 1. It was not their nationality which made them accepted by God.
 2. It was obeying the truth which purified their souls (1 Peter 1:22).

V. THE CHURCH, THEN AND NOW, HAS ALWAYS BEEN PLAGUED BY THOSE WHO CLAIM TO BE CHRISTIANS AND YET ARE NOT.

- A. Paul and Barnabas fought against "false brethren" (Gal. 2:4,5).
- B. Peter warned about those who had left the faith and preached a false liberty (2 Peter 2:20,21).
- C. John said of some, they went from us but they were not of us (1 John 2:19).

VI. IN THE DAYS OF THE O.T., PEOPLE WERE CONCERNED ABOUT IF A PROPHET WAS FALSE OR REAL.

- A. Deut. 13:1-3; Deut. 18:21,22
- B. What about us today?
 - 1. The answer from Jesus is to observe their fruits, what they do with their lives (Matt. 7:20).
 - 2. What praise would we lift up for a congregation like Laodicea (Rev. 3)?
 - 3. What praise would we let fall from our lips for a Demas (2 Tim. 4:10)?

CONCLUSION:

- 1. There are not "three branches of the fellowship."
- 2. There are indeed some individuals who are growing slower than others, but no place for those who refuse to grow at all (Heb. 5:12-14; 2 Peter 1:5).
- 3. There is only one body and one fellowship. It is composed of those who choose to follow God by being faithful to His will, word and way (Eph. 4:4; 1 John 1:7).
- 4. Those who so act are my brethren.

JOY

James 1:2

Bill Davis (Pensacola)

- 1. The initial impression of James 1:2 to the casual reader of the Bible is that God expects us to enjoy trials or hardships. Of course such is not the case. James is not admonishing the Christian to enjoy trials and hardships. He is admonishing believers to take a proper attitude towards difficulties that arise.
- 2. It is obvious from the text that one must take the proper action, i.e. "Count it all joy." Unless one takes this proper attitude toward the trial, it's beneficial effects are null and void.

- a. There are just as many Christians who become bitter from the trials of life as there are those who grow in patience.
 - b. Unless the believer can see that the difficulties of life have the potential to produce beneficial results, he squanders his opportunities.
 - c. "Difficulties are going to come," James is saying, "now you must learn how to handle them."
 - d. As someone once said years ago, "It is not the whetstone that makes the difference in whether the blade is sharp or dull. It is the angle of the blade." This is what James is talking about; the angle of the blade to the stone, the attitude of the Christian towards the trial. Thus the command; "Count it all joy."
 - e. The word "count," according to Thayer, means to consider, deem, account, think.
3. The word "joy" in the New Testament means cheerfulness, that is, calm delight: – gladness.
 4. The words "joy" and "rejoicing" are found repeatedly in the word of God and sometimes they come from the same word meaning "calmly happy, or well off." (Ed Floyd)
 5. The Jews had much to say about joy. The Hebrew Encyclopedia records many points made by the Rabbis on this subject.
 - a. One Rabbi enumerates ten different terms for joy. He states, "...that no language possesses as many words for joy as does the Hebrew; which fact indicates the cheerful disposition of the Jewish people and the optimism predominant in Judaism." This illustrates the fullness of the meaning of the word 'joy' to the Hebrews. It reveals joy as having a major place in one's worship and service to God.
 - b. It has also been stated that, "The key-note of the old Hebrew (worship) was joy, because it was a communion of man with his God."
 - c. Even the Essenes, who were a very austere group, "declared that man at the Judgment Day will have to give account for every lawful enjoyment offered to him by Providence and refused by him." Once again this illustrates the importance the ancient Jews placed on joy.
 - d. "The Rabbis made joy, above all, the characteristic feature of the Sabbath and of the holy seasons of the year. The words 'call the Sabbath a delight' (Isa. 58:13) were so interpreted as to render the Sabbath the gem of days and the joy of the Jewish home...."
 - e. From these few statements, we see that the ancient Jew understood from scripture that joy was to be a part of his daily life, his worship and service to God. The Rabbis taught, "Happiness is to be found in the personal relation between man and his Maker: the closer this relation, the greater the

happiness. Blessed is the nation whose God is *Yhwh* (Psa. 33:12a)."

6. The joy that James speaks of will enable the Christian to find his proper focus in life. It will empower him with the knowledge he needs to face all the challenges of life. It is important to understand the joy that James speaks of. We must not confuse it with that which the world thrives on; flippancy, levity or frivolity. These things are temporary and ineffective in the face of calamity, hardship and difficulty. It is therefore important for us to identify this joy James is speaking about.

DISCUSSION:

I. THIS JOY HAS A SOURCE.

A. It is the Joy of the Lord.

1. Neh. 8:10, *"...Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your strength."*

a. The focus of this joy is the Lord Himself.

- 1) True Joy is based on spiritual values not physical or material.

- 2) This is Joy on a higher level.

- 3) The unregenerate man knows nothing of this Joy.

b. Another thing we notice from this passage is that this joy has a benefit — Strength.

- 1) A lack of joy in the church will lead to carelessness, lifelessness and apathy.

- 2) These are signs of spiritual weakness.

2. The Joy of the Lord is joy that comes from knowing the truth. John 15:11, *"These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."*

- a. This joy is not derived from some mystical spiritual experience.

- b. This joy is not derived from drummed up artificial excitement some people call worship.

- c. It comes from knowing the truth.

B. When people are genuinely saved there will be joy.

1. There is joy in a relationship with Christ. 1 Peter 1:8, *"Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."*

2. There is joy because Christ is good news. Acts 8:5,8, *"And Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and proclaimed unto them the Christ. ... ⁸And there was great joy in that city."*

3. There is joy because we have entered the kingdom. Rom. 14:17, *"for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."*
4. This is Joy that comes from being right with God: Psa. 16:11, *"Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."*
 - a. It's joy from putting faith in Christ.
 - b. It's joy from knowing the One true God.
 - c. It's joy from knowing the Creator of all things.
5. There is always joy in deliverance. Psa. 105:43, *"And he brought forth his people with joy, and his chosen with gladness."*

II. THIS JOY HAS AN APPLICATION. We see the application of this illustrated elsewhere in scripture.

- A. Early Christians rejoiced in their sufferings for Christ. Acts 5:41, *"And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name."*
- B. Their goal was always to magnify Christ. 2 Cor. 12:10, *"Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."*
- C. There is joy in service, in sacrificing for the kingdom.
 1. Phil. 2:17, *"Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all."*
 2. Heb. 10:34, *"For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance."*
- D. Peter saw suffering for Christ as a privilege. 1 Peter 4:13-14, *"But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. ¹⁴If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified."*

III. THIS JOY HAS A MANDATE (Joy is a command).

- A. In the Old Testament, God commanded Israel to rejoice. Deut. 12:12,18, *"And ye shall rejoice before the LORD your God, ye, and your sons, and your daughters, and your men-servants, and your maid-servants, and the Levite that is within your gates; forasmuch as he hath no part nor inheritance with you. ... ¹⁸But thou must eat them before the*

LORD thy God in the place which the LORD thy God shall choose, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite that is within thy gates: and thou shalt rejoice before the LORD thy God in all that thou puttest thine hands unto." (cf. Deut 16:11, 15; 26:11; 27:7)

1. There were certain rules for worship Israel had to follow when they came into the land God was giving them.
 2. Within those requirements, Israel was to give their gifts and make their sacrifices to the Lord with joy and gladness. They were to remember the goodness of the Lord and that they had an inheritance above all nations.
 3. This reminds us of the exhortation of Paul to the Corinthians concerning giving. 2 Cor. 9:7, *"Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver"*
- B. The New Testament commands us to rejoice.
1. Phil. 3:1, *"Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord."*
 2. Phil. 4:4, *"Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice."*
 3. 1 Thess 5:16 (ASV), "Rejoice always"

IV. THIS JOY HAS A RESPONSIBILITY (It must be maintained).

- A. Joy is a fruit of the Spirit. Gal. 5:22, *"But the fruit of the Spirit is...joy..."*
1. This fruit is realized in our lives through the application of the word of God; obedience to the word. However, like any other fruit of the Spirit, it can be lost.
 2. A lack of joy is one reason for indifferent, sad, discouraged Christians.
- B. Even David lost his joy. Psalms 51:12, *"Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free Spirit."*
- C. Israel lost their joy through disobedience.
- Psalms 137:1-4, *"By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. ²We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. ³For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. ⁴How shall we sing the LORD'S song in a strange land?"*
1. Israel went into Babylonian captivity because of disobedience.
 2. Consequently, they lost their song, their joy.
 3. Disobedience will result in a loss of joy.
 4. Joy is maintained by a right relationship with God.

V. THIS JOY HAS A MOTIVATION.

A. Jesus had the end in view. Heb. 12:1-2, *"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, ²Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."*

1. Jesus labored with the end in view.
2. Notice the key — "The joy set before Him..."
3. His joy was complete when He sat down at the right hand of the Father.
4. This is the completion of the goal.
5. Heaven is in view.

B. Abraham had the expectation of reaching the eternal city. Heb. 11:8-10

1. Abraham's motivation was something beyond this world, "He looked for a city..."
2. His joy was complete when he reached the eternal city of God.

C. The Christian must be motivated to finish the race.

1. The challenge is before us. Heb. 12:1
2. Christ is our example of endurance. Heb. 12:3
3. Paul's goal was to finish with joy. Acts 20:24, *"But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God."*
4. Paul spoke of the prize that awaits us. Col. 1:5, *"For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel."*
 - a. Our eternal home must be in view.
 - b. Our joy will be complete when we reach home!
 - c. The song writer said:
*"It will be worth it all when we see Jesus
 Life's trials will seem so small when we see Christ
 One glimpse of his dear face all sorrow will erase,
 So bravely run the race till we see Christ."*

CONCLUSION:

1. Kingdom joy, Bible joy, the Lord's joy, enables us to face difficulties, overcome obstacles; maintain relationships and bring glory to God.
2. This is why he says, "The Joy of the Lord is your strength!"
3. What can you accomplish for Christ without this joy?

TEMPTATIONS

James 1:2

Ivie Powell

1. The theme, "Christian Living Involves", gets to the very heart of living for Christ.
2. The little book of James contains 108 verses which exhorts and explores the very depths of one's being.
 - a. There is no book of scripture that deals with practical day-by-day living for Christ as does the book of James.
 - b. The reason for that, of course, is because it is inspired of God!
3. The book of James has often been referred to as the "Gospel of Common Sense," and rightly so.
4. If you do not want to see yourself as you really are in God's sight, then you do not want to study the book of James!
5. The one area that is most difficult for any and all is "change." The resounding theme of the Bible is we can change, hence the admonition, "*But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves*" (James 1:22)!
6. While liberalism and anti-ism has and continues to take its toll on the body of Christ, perhaps the one area that affects members as much as any, is every day living for Christ!
7. Our study centers around James 1:2. "*My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations.*"

DISCUSSION:

I. FIVE KEY WORDS FROM THE TEXT.

- A. "*Count*," Carefully consider, evaluate the "why" you are undergoing these trials as a Christian.
- B. "*Joy*"
 1. The announcement of the Messiah's birth brought great joy (Luke 2:10-11).
 2. There is great joy when one obeys the Gospel (Acts 8:39).
 3. Equally, there is joy when one suffers in behalf of Christ (1 Peter 4:12-13).
- C. "*When*"
 1. It is not a matter of "if" but "when" Christians fall into manifold trials and temptations!
 2. Faithful followers of Christ can expect manifold trials. Jesus warned the disciples, "*And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved*" (Matt.10:22).
 3. "*If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you*" (John 15:18).
- D. "*Fall*"
 1. *peripipto* — to fall among, to fall into; so as to be encompassed about or to be surrounded with.

2. As pointed out by brother Guy N. woods, “the external character of the temptation; the suddenness with which it may entrap; and the inability of one to escape such.”
- E. “Temptations”
1. The word “temptation” is used in two different meanings in James chapter 1.
 - a. James 1:2 has reference to “outward trials.”
 - b. James 1:12-15 refers to “inner temptations.”
 2. Brother Guy Woods says of temptations, “While inner temptation is a form of trial, it is apparent from the context that it is a trial in which much suffering is experienced but for which the sufferer sustains no moral blame that is under contemplation here. James would not bid the brethren rejoice when being subjected to the enticements of sin, Satan and the world.”

II. TRIALS OF LIFE.

- A. Life itself is filled with trials and tribulations.
1. *“Man that is born of woman, is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: He fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not”* (Job 14:1-2).
 2. Trials of life vary: sickness, death, accidents, unexplained events, etc.
 3. We may never know the “Why” things happen. Job is an example of one not knowing “why” he suffered, but he remained true to God.
 4. The late E. H. Ijams said on his 87th birthday, “Hold to God’s unchanging hand!”
 5. As Wayne Jackson points out, “...all of our questions are not going to be answered *now!* As long as we are on this sphere of dust, we are not geared to understand the exalted purposes of deity. Faith in God does not mean that all riddles of life are solved. But we may be absolutely certain that unbelief answers nothing!”
 6. *“Trust in Jehovah with all thy heart, And lean not upon thine own understanding: In all thy ways acknowledge him, And he will direct thy paths”* (Prov.3:5-7).
- B. The uneven journey of life with its many trials and tribulations can easily be seen in the various stages or steps in the life cycle of a typical family. According to Dr. Bill Flatt, there are nine stages or steps in the life cycle of a typical family: 1) Leaving father and mother, 2) Marriage, 3) Birth of children, 4) Children going to school, 5) Children in adolescence, 6) Children leaving home, 7) Parents rediscovering each other, 8) Retirement and 9) Letting go.
- C. We are reminded that this world is not our eternal dwelling.

1. Speaking of Abraham, the Hebrew writer wrote, *"For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God"* (Heb. 11:10).
2. *"For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; 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"* (2 Cor. 4:16-18).
3. *"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven"* (2 Cor. 5:1-2).

III. TESTING OF OUR FAITH COMES THROUGH TRIALS.

- A. Old Testament example of such testing is when God commanded Abraham to offer his son Isaac (Gen. 22:1-2).
- B. Concerning Abraham's faith, in God's promise that he would be "a father of many nations, Paul wrote of Abraham's faith, *"He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able to perform"* (Rom. 5:20-21).
- C. Concerning the Christian's trials of faith Peter wrote, *"Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory"* (1 Peter 1:6-8).

IV. ENCOURAGEMENT FROM ANCIENT EXAMPLES OF FAITH.

- A. Hebrews chapter 11 is a listing of ancient heroes of faith.
 1. Notice they serve as witnesses (Heb.12:1) and encourage us to keep on serving God no matter the obstacles we face!
 2. We must lay aside every weight especially *"the sin which doth so easily beset us"* (Heb. 12:1) which is the sin of unbelief.
 3. It was this very sin that kept those of old from entering into His rest. *"And to whom sware he that they should*

not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief" (Heb. 3:18-19).

4. The writer of Hebrews then gives the following warning, *"Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest any of you should seem to come short of it"* (Heb. 4:1).
- B. As we live for Christ, we must constantly, adhere to the Hebrew writers inspired admonition, *"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God"* (Heb. 12:2).
 1. In Matthew 14, Peter requested to come to Jesus to which the Lord said "Come" (Matt. 14:29). As long as Peter kept his gaze upon Christ he literally walked on the water. However, when he took his eyes off of Christ and saw the raging storm he began to sink (Matt. 14:30).
 2. A lesson greatly needed today: Keep your eyes on Christ and not preachers, elders or any other mortal!

V. WHY IS THERE JOY IN TRIALS?

- A. Christians look at trials and tribulations through a different set of "glasses!" We believe and trust in God (Heb. 11:1,6); therefore we "walk by faith" (2 Cor. 5:7).
- B. Joy in knowing passing through the trials of life purges and builds Christian character (1 Peter 1:7).
- C. Great joy in suffering in behalf of Christ which glorifies God (1 Peter 1:7; 4:14-16).
- D. Joy in knowing others have gone through the trials of life and came forth victorious.
 1. Peter (1 Peter 4:12-16).
 2. The apostles (Acts 5:28-29, 41).
 3. Paul (Rom. 5:3).
- E. Encouraging to know we have a faithful high priest, Jesus the Christ who was tempted in all points as we yet without sin, and one that intercedes in our behalf (Heb. 4:14-16; 1 John 2:1-2).
- F. Joy in knowing God will never forsake us as long as we "walk in the light" (1 John 1:7). [Again we read,] *"...I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me"* (Heb. 13:5b-6).

VI. THE CHRISTIAN ARMOUR AND THE TRIALS OF LIFE.

- A. The one behind all of man's trials and tribulations is Satan, the arch enemy of our soul. His weapons consist of *"the lust*

of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life"
(1 John 2:16).

- B. As powerful as the devil is, he can be resisted (1 Pet. 5:8-9).
 - 1. Peter reminds us that the Lord *"hath given unto all things that pertain unto life and godliness"* (2 Pet. 1:3).
 - 2. To combat Satan, the Lord tells us to *"Put on the whole armour of God, that Ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil"* (Eph. 6:11). He then proceeds to describe the armour that we are to daily wear!
 - 3. Paul reminds us of the powerful weapons the Lord has given to His children. *"For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ"* (2 Cor. 10:4-5).
- C. *Si vis pacem, para bellum* — "If you want peace prepare for war!"

CONCLUSION:

- 1. Our trials prepare us for life's many battles. When David killed the lion and the bear to protect himself and the flock, he was getting training for facing and defeating Goliath.
- 2. When the apostles were carrying out the limited commission they were receiving training preparing them for the great commission.
- 3. Heaven, as correctly stated, is a prepared place for a prepared people!
- 4. Jesus reminds us "few" will enter into heaven (Matt. 7:13-14).
- 5. By keeping our gaze upon Christ (Heb. 12:2a); trusting God (Prov. 3:5-7), and "Fight the good fight of faith" (1 Tim. 6:12) we will one day hear the welcome words of our Lord, Saviour and Master Jesus Christ, *"...Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world"* (Matt. 25:34).

FAITH

James 1:3,6

Jeff Bates

- 1. Faith is an important principle taught in the book of James.
 - a. There are religious people who reject James as a writer inspired of God, because they believe his writing concerning "faith" contradicts those of the other New Testament writers.

- b. Some have gone so far as to rip the book of James from their Bibles.
 - c. The spiritual principles taught by James and the other New Testament writers, including the principle of “faith”, are in complete harmony.
 - d. James and the other New Testament writers contradict false teachings concerning “faith” presented by many religious teachers.
2. From this lesson, may we learn Biblical principles which, when we put them to practice in our daily lives, will strengthen the Christian’s faith.

DISCUSSION:

I. WHAT IS BIBLICAL “FAITH”?

- A. Faith is primarily, “firm persuasion,” a conviction based upon hearing (“to persuade”), is used in the New Testament always of “faith in God or Christ, or things spiritual.” (*Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*)
- B. Many religious people understand “faith” as simply acknowledging the existence of God, and acknowledging Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God.
 1. This is how they define “faith” in passages such as Romans 3:28 and Galatians 3:26, and they believe that salvation is by faith, or belief, alone.
 2. They believe that one is saved from sins at the point of “faith”, or “belief”, or at the point of acknowledging God and Jesus as the Christ.
 3. Some psalms, hymns, or spiritual songs teach this doctrine. For example, the song “Amazing Grace”, in some song books, verse 2 reads, “how precious did that grace appear, the hour I first believed.” (John Newton, the author of the song, was an Anglican priest in the Church of England.)
- C. One cannot be saved without believing in the existence of God, and believing Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of God. Heb. 11:6; John 8:24
 1. Biblical faith certainly begins with mentally acknowledging God’s existence and the deity of Jesus the Christ.
 2. But, the Bible teaches that faith involves much more than simple “belief.”
- D. Salvation from sins is “not by faith only.” James 2:24
 1. The devils believed and trembled before Jesus Christ, but they were not saved from their sins, because belief alone is not enough. James 2:19; Mark 1:24; Luke 4:34
 2. Some among the chief rulers of the Jews believed Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of God, but they were not saved

from their sins, because belief alone is not enough. John 12:42-43

- E. "The main elements in 'faith' in its relation to the invisible God" are: (*Vine's*)
 - 1. "A firm conviction, producing a full acknowledgment of God's revelation or truth." 2 Thess. 2:11-12
 - 2. "A personal surrender to Him." John 1:12
 - 3. "A conduct inspired by such surrender." 2 Cor. 5:7
- F. True Biblical faith is a belief based upon evidence that leads one to obey God's will faithfully.
- G. Another lesson in this series of lectures, "Faith and Works", will further emphasize this principle of Biblical faith.

II. THE CHRISTIAN'S FAITH WILL BE "TRIED". JAMES 1:3

- A. The Christian's faith is tried by selfish desires.
 - 1. I cannot/will not follow Christ until I have "taken up my cross," which means "putting myself to death" in a figurative way. Luke 9:23
 - 2. I must completely submit my will to the will of God.
 - 3. The Christian's faith is tried by God when selfish will conflicts with God's will for my life.
- B. The Christian's faith is tried by all the difficulties of daily living; financial, health, death of loved ones, etc. 2 Cor. 8:2
- C. The Christian's faith is tried by the persecutions from those of the world. 2 Tim. 3:12; Heb. 11:36; 1 Peter 4:12-13
- D. The Christian's faith is tried by the temptations of Satan. James 1:12; 1 Peter 5:8-9; Rev. 3:10

III. HOW DOES THE CHRISTIAN ENDURE THESE TRIALS, AND KEEP HIS FAITH IN GOD FROM WAVERING? JAMES 1:6

- A. If the Christian's faith is not increased daily, then it will waver, and become non-existent. Luke 17:5; 2 Thess. 1:3
- B. The Christian's faith is strengthened by reading and studying the Bible daily. Rom. 10:17
- C. The Christian's faith is strengthened by attending and participating in Bible studies and worship services as often as possible, including attending special occasions, such as Gospel meetings at other congregations. Heb. 10:24-25
- D. The Christian's faith is strengthened by being involved in as many works of the local congregation as possible. 1 Cor. 15:58
- E. The Christian's faith is strengthened by "abstaining from all appearance of evil." 1 Thess. 5:22

CONCLUSION:

1. Salvation from sins comes by the grace of God through one's own Biblical faith. Eph. 2:8; 1 Peter 1:9
2. The faith that saves is an unfeigned, or un-pretended faith. 1 Tim. 1:5
3. The faith that saves is one that is steadfast, unwavering. Col. 2:5

PROPER REGARD FOR SELF

James 1:9-10

Ken Butterworth

1. *"Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted: But the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away."* James is simply saying that those who are *poor* in material things should be glad that God thinks so highly of them and the *rich* should be glad when God humbles them because riches will disappear like wild flowers.
2. The text is dealing with a proper regard for self that is predicated for a respect for God and His manifold blessings. Sadly, some are in Christ, but Christ is not in them (Gal. 4:19).
3. Proper regard for self involves having a respect for self. This is part of the Christian's growth (2 Pet. 3:18).
4. The rich and poor alike should develop the proper attitude and gratitude. The beatitudes found in Matthew 5:1-12 deal with this subject.
5. The summation of James 1:9-10 is threefold: God is no respecter of persons, riches do not equate to contentment and happiness, and all those in Christ have true wealth and should rejoice. The Christian is exalted in Christ and and no one should be called worthless for whom Christ died.
6. There are many members, but one body and every Christian has a function and part in the body (church). All Christians are rich in Christ. It is wrong for one Christian to demand and expect other Christians to do the same thing as he (Rom. 12:1-8; 1 Cor. 12:12 - 31). I am not talking about doctrinal matters, but demanding and expecting all do the same thing and forgetting each one has a function or part. Example: I start a school for animals and outline a curriculum of subjects. In order for the fish, bird, rabbit and squirrel to graduate, each must swim like a fish, climb trees like a squirrel, fly like a bird, and burrow like a rabbit. Guess what? Not a single one graduated because they all failed to do what each of the others could do.

DISCUSSION:**I. THE FINANCIAL STATUS OF A PERSON DOES NOT NEGATE THE JUDGMENT OF GOD.**

- A. To be saved, one must obey the Gospel, serve the Lord, and prepare for Eternity (Acts 2:37-47; Rev. 2:10).
 - 1. At the foot of the cross, there is equality and each soul is worth more than all the world (Mark 8:36). Satan approached a man and offered him wealth, fame, and fortune if he would worship him and forfeit his soul to hell. The man asked, "What is the catch?"
 - 2. James 1:9-10 is a guide on how to deal with trials. The rich and poor have their trials in life and both have a common ground in the testing of their faith, but God is always fair and just (Lev. 5:6, 7,11).
- B. Material things are temporary and hell is a lesson learned too late.
 - 1. Regardless of circumstances in life, the faithful will find opportunity and reason to be happy and be content. Being poor is not a guarantee one is saved, nor being rich a guarantee one is lost.
 - 2. The rich man's only hope is found in Christ; when he had wealth and when he had lost it all (as the text indicates).
 - 3. The poor man's only hope is found in Christ; when he is in poverty and if he becomes prosperous.
 - 4. The great white throne of judgment (Rev. 20:11-15) will convince everyone that material things are as uncertain as the grass that fades (1 John 2:15-17; 2 Pet. 3:8-13). Man's last robes are without pockets.
 - 5. This truth will be fully known and realized one second after death.
 - 6. The only thing that really and truly matters is to die in the Lord.

II. GREAT TRUTHS CONCERNING PROPER REGARD FOR SELF.

- A. Ten great truths from having a proper regard for self.
 - 1. Christians must become one in Christ (Rom. 12:1-5).
 - 2. Silver and gold will not save in the day of God's wrath (Zeph. 1:18).
 - 3. Being one in Christ will cause all the demons in hell to shake.
 - 4. When we teach unity and fail to practice it, we are like the Pharisees.
 - 5. Being rich or poor is not an excuse to serve or reject God. An excuse is a lie wrapped up in the skin of a reason.

6. Tomorrow is in the womb of time, yesterday in the tomb of time, and today is all we really have. Tomorrow is a day on the fool's calendar.
 7. God may delay, but He will not deny His faithful.
 8. Compared to the majority of the world, we are the rich.
 9. If God can take a slug and turn it into a beautiful butterfly, just think what he can do with the person who has proper regard for self.
 10. The church needs honest and mutual acceptance of one another.
- B. Denying God as the creator is not a proper regard for self (Gen. 1:1,27).
1. Without God and the blood stained cross, nothing in life makes any sense. God does exist (Gen. 1:1; Psa. 14:1; Isa. 41:21; Dan. 2:28).
 2. Quotes from unbelievers: W. C. Fields, "I am reading the Bible trying to find loopholes." Churchill, "What a fool I have been." Hobbes, "If I had the world, I would give it for one more day, I'm leaping into the dark." Gambetta, "I am lost and there is no use to deny it." Thomas Paine asked God to send a child to play with him. Gibbon, "All is lost, dark and doubtful."

III. PRIDE DESTROYS PROPER REGARD FOR SELF AND ALLOWS SELFISHNESS TO REIGN.

- A. Selfish pride is a spiritual cancer of the rich and poor alike.
1. No one should think more highly of self than he ought (Rom. 12:3).
 2. Some folks really think they are somebody (Acts 5:36).
 3. With many, it is all about me, me and more me (Dan. 4:28-33; Luke 12:13-31; Gal. 2:6). This is wrong and not a proper regard of self.
 4. Selfishness destroys marriages, homes, churches, nations, and souls.
 5. The poor should not be full of self pity and deem himself worthless.
- B. Everyone (including preachers) should develop proper regard for self.
1. Preachers are guilty of the mindset of self importance. Some strut around town thinking everybody owes them something and act like they have been hit in the head with a rock. God cannot use a preacher who is full of himself.
 2. Satan used the ploy of lust of the flesh, lust of the eye and the pride of life in the garden of Eden, at the temptation of Christ and he is still using it today (1 John 2:15-17). Satan wants Christians to distrust, mistrust,

over-trust and doubt God's promise to provide (Matt. 6:33). Satan loses when a person lives a Christian life, is happy, stands for truth, and wins a soul for Christ.

3. Whether rich or poor, contentment and joy is ours in Christ. Job lost it all, but he refused to have self-pity and give up. He lost 10 children, 11,000 animals, had oozing boiling sores all over his body, worms (maggots) tortured him, scraped his body with pottery while sitting in ashes and wearing sackcloth, his wife encouraged him to curse God and die, and the three friends accused him of being a sinner's sinner. Job declared that if God took his life, he would still maintain his ways before Him (Job 13:15).

IV. PLEASING GOD MEANS HAVING A PROPER REGARD FOR BODY, SOUL, AND ETERNITY.

- A. The importance of the body and soul (Luke 16:19-31).
 1. One must allow God's word to control his thinking and habits.
 2. One should love and respect himself (Eph. 5:28-29). This does not mean a selfish kind of love for self (Phil. 2:21; 2 Tim. 3:3).
 3. One should take care of his body (3 John 2; 1 Cor. 10:31; 6:19-20).
 4. Every Christian should remember that he is God's mirror, mouth, messenger, minister, magnifier, and his body is to be a sacrifice to God (Rom. 12:1-2).
 5. Abusing the body with drugs, alcohol, tobacco, fornication and food is sin. Self-control is the key.
- B. An unprepared soul is an eternal tragedy.
 1. The soul must be healthy and prepared for eternity (Amos 4:12; Matt. 10:28). The lost are really lost (Matt. 25:41,46).
 2. James calls on the rich and poor to remember the goodness of God, God is in control of it all, and God will not exempt one from trials and suffering. God promises to see him through these times and the Christian must remember there is a God in heaven, He is able to deliver and He rules in the kingdom men (Dan. 2:28; 3:17; 4:25).
 3. The Christian's service, worship, and relationship to God must not be altered or affected by material things of this world (Mark 4:19).
 4. Yes, there is a heaven and there is a hell.

V. PROPER REGARD FOR SELF IS RECOGNIZED BY OUR HEAVENLY FATHER (ISA. 49:16).

- A. God promises to provide, protect and shelter His faithful.
- B. God will never forsake nor fail us (Heb. 13:5).

1. James is reminding the rich and poor brethren of God's promise that He remembers His own and writes their names in the palms of His hands (Isa. 49:16). What a soul searching and comforting promise from our heavenly father. The faithful should rejoice!
2. Our "night songs" should cause one to reflect on God's mercy, love and goodness (Psa. 42:8).
3. Without God, all of life is vanity. If heaven smiles upon us, nothing else really matters. Proper regard for self will produce the fruits of self respect, integrity, a holy character, and the hope of heaven.

CONCLUSION:

1. Proper regard for self begins with a fear of God and a respect for His word. The faithful have learned by experience that God has blessed them (Gen. 30:27). This involves believing what God has said.
 2. John describes the end result of having proper regard for self (Rev. 7:13-14; 19:6-7).
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AWARENESS OF SIN

James 1:13-16

Wayne Cox

1. Our assignment should be of vital interest to everyone as it concerns the universal problem of sin (Rom. 3:23).
 - a. Many make the mistake of either denying sin's existence (1 John 1:8,10) or minimizing its consequences.
 - b. To be effective in dealing with sin we must consider its source — Satan — and its solution — the grace of God, the sacrifice of Christ, and our faithful, obedient response.
2. A definition of terms:
 - a. "Awareness" — having knowledge, cognizant, alert, informed.
 - b. "Sin" in Bible times was an archery term basically meaning "to miss the mark." Our target is the holiness of God; countless times we miss our target, and when we do, we sin.
3. How crucial then are the words of James in our text for us to understand, meditate upon, and then apply.

DISCUSSION:

- I. A PROPER AWARENESS OF SIN DOES NOT BLAME GOD FOR SIN (James 1:13a).
 - A. "Let no man say"

1. We are often guilty of sins of speech, as emphasized elsewhere in James and in the course of this lectureship.
2. As we will give account for every "idle" or careless word (Matt. 12:36), we should exercise extreme caution when speaking of what God does and does not do.
- B. "When he is tempted"
 1. "When" does not indicate likelihood, possibility, or probability — but certainty.
 2. There is "testing" and there is "tempting" — both are not necessarily the same.
- C. "I am tempted of God"
 1. In essence, this is what Calvinism says. Instead of "the devil made me do it," false doctrine says "God made me do it. I did not have a choice in the matter."
 2. While God may allow temptation, He is not the cause of it.
 3. Scripture assigns the "tempter" label to Satan (Matt. 4:3; 1 Thess. 3:5).
- D. It is therefore sin to attribute the cause of sin to God.
 1. This is at times overlooked, but this was another of the sins of Adam.
 2. With his mouth he blamed Eve for giving him the fruit and God for giving him Eve (Gen. 3:12). "God, if you had never given me Eve, she would never have given me the fruit, and I would never have sinned."

II. A PROPER AWARENESS OF SIN RECOGNIZES THE HOLINESS OF GOD (James 1:13b).

- A. "God cannot be tempted with evil"
 1. In the minds of some, this produces a quandary:
 - a. If God cannot be tempted with evil, why was Christ tempted?
 - b. He was God, and yet repeatedly was tempted with evil — thankfully resisting every time.
 2. A response to the seeming contradiction: Jesus becoming flesh (Phil. 2:4-8) made things possible that were not possible of God in His divine nature.
 - a. While God cannot die, Jesus, in the flesh, did.
 - b. While God cannot be tempted with evil, Jesus, in the flesh, was.
 3. God is so far removed from sin, He cannot tolerate the sight of it (Hab. 1:13).
- B. "Neither tempteth he any man"
 1. God "tempted" Abraham (Gen. 22:1). He put him to a supreme test of his faith.
 2. But God never tempted any man, including Abraham, to do evil.

III. A PROPER AWARENESS OF SIN UNDERSTANDS THE SIN PROCESS (James 1:14-15).

- A. "But every man is tempted"
 - 1. This included Christ.
 - 2. This included inspired apostles.
 - a. Peter sinned (Gal. 2:11).
 - b. John sinned (1 John 1:9).
 - c. Regarding the apostles, inspiration made their oral and written proclamations of God's Word perfect, but not their lives.
 - 3. This includes all of us. Paul reminds us that temptation is "common to man" (1 Cor. 10:13).
- B. "When he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed"
 - 1. Temptation is a pull after and a pull on certain desires or weaknesses we have.
 - 2. James speaks of our "own lust," our desires or longings.
 - 3. "Enticed" is a fishing term, meaning to dangle the bait of allurement.
- C. "Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin"
 - 1. The words "bringeth forth" in this statement speaks of a pregnant woman.
 - 2. When we yield to temptation, it gives birth to sin in our life.
- D. "And sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death"
 - 1. James not only describes a fishing hook, but also a fatal hook.
 - 2. May God help us see the long-term consequences of sin. It always leads to spiritual death, or separation from God, and, at times, even to physical death.

IV. A PROPER AWARENESS OF SIN HEEDS GOD'S WARNINGS AGAINST SIN (James 1:16).

- A. "Do not err"
 - 1. That is, do not be deceived (1 Cor. 6:9; 15:33; Gal. 6:7).
 - 2. If I blame God for the sins in my life, I have been duped by the devil!
- B. "My beloved brethren"
 - 1. With the warning, James gently reminds his readers of his love for them.
 - 2. He did not condemn, pronounce sentence, bang the gavel, and leave.
 - 3. May we remember that even as Christians, we are still sinners, we are all in the family, and we need to have a deep concern for the eternal welfare of one another.

CONCLUSION:

1. May having a proper awareness of sin help us, by the grace of God, deal more effectively in our fight against sin and in our support of one another.

RESPECT FOR GOD'S WORD

(Ladies Only)

Tammie Stephenson

DISCUSSION:

I. WE SHOULD SHOW PROPER RESPECT FOR GOD'S WORD.

- A. Psa. 86:9-11, *"All nations whom You have made Shall come and worship before You, O Lord, And shall glorify Your name. ¹⁰For You are great, and do wondrous things; You alone are God. ¹¹Teach me Your way, O LORD; I will walk in Your truth; Unite my heart to fear Your name."*
- B. Prov. 30:5-6, *"Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him. 6 Do not add to His words, Lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar."*
- C. 2 Peter 1:19-21, *"And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; ²⁰knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, ²¹for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."*
- D. 1 John 3:4, *"Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness."*
- E. Psa. 119:105, *"Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path."*

II. GOD'S WORD IS INSPIRED.

- A. 2 Tim. 3:16-17, *"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."*
- B. John 1:1, *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."*

III. WHAT GOD'S WORD BRINGS TO OUR LIVES.

- A. Respect for authority. Matt. 28:18, *"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."*

- B. Church Leadership. Heb. 13:17, *"Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you."*
- C. Civil Authority. Rom. 13:1, *"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God."*
- D. Guidance in all things. James 1:22-25, *"But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. ²³For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: ²⁴For he beholds himself, and goes his way, and straightway forgets what manner of man he was. ²⁵But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does."*
- E. Comfort (to us and to others). Rom. 15:4, *"For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope."* cf. Psalm 23
- F. Knowledge of His love for us. John 3:16, *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."*
- G. Knowledge of Salvation. Heb. 5:9,25 *"And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him. ... ²⁵Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them."*
- H. Knowledge of Disobedience. James 1:14-15, *"But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. ¹⁵Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death."*

II. GOD'S WORD TO WOMEN (SPECIFICALLY).

- A. Titus 2:3-5, *"The older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things ⁴that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, ⁵to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed."*
- B. 1 Tim. 2:9-13, *"In like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, ¹⁰but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works. ¹¹Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. ¹²And I do not permit a woman to teach or to*

have authority over a man, but to be in silence. ¹³For Adam was formed first, then Eve."

- C. Eph. 5:22-23, *"Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body."*

CONCLUSION:

1. Through respect for God's Word, our lives can be happy, fulfilling, and with purpose.
2. Through His Word, we can make our calling and election sure (2 Peter 1:10, *"Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble)."*
3. Respect for God's Word is essential in the Christian's life.
4. Let us show our respect for God's Word to our family, our friends, and anyone we contact in our daily lives.

RESPECT FOR THE WORD OF GOD

James 1:18-25

Lance Foster

1. Reading the Bible can change the life of the reader.
2. The Bible has been attacked repeatedly through the ages, lessening respect for the word.

DISCUSSION:

- I. **RESPECT FOR GOD'S WORD STARTS WITH RESPECT FOR ITS AUTHOR. (James 1:18 "Of His own will begat")**
 - A. God Is the Author of the Word. James 1:18
 1. "Of His own will begat He us with the Word of truth..."
 2. Many passages confirm the Word is from God. (Psalm 119:11,89)
 - B. God used the Holy Spirit to guide selected men to write his Word. 2 Peter 1:20-21
 - C. The author makes a difference.
- II. **RESPECT FOR GOD'S WORD IS TO RESPECT THE AUTHORITY OF THE WORD OF GOD. James 1:18**
 - A. The author gives credence to the authority of the word.
 1. Matt. 21:23, "...by what authority doest thou these things? And who gave thee this authority?"
 2. God is the authority behind the Word of God.
 - B. God has authority. Eph. 4:6; Jude 25

1. Jesus recognized the authority of God. Luke 22:42
- C. God has revealed his authority in the written word. 1 Cor. 14:37; Gal. 1:12
- D. These things and people are not the authority of God.
 1. The *majority* is not the authority of God. Matt. 7:13,14; Gen. 6:4-6
 2. One's *relatives* are not the authority of God. 1 Kings 16:25,30
 3. *Self* is not the authority of God. Jer. 10:23; Prov. 14:12
 4. The *commandments of men* are not the authority of God. Matt. 15:8,9
 5. *Preachers* are not the authority of God. Jer. 5:31

III. RESPECT FOR GOD'S WORD IS TO RESPECT THE ASCERTAINED PRECEPTS OF THE WORD OF GOD. James 1:18,25

- A. What is the meaning of the word "ascertained?"
 1. To make certain; definite, precise. (Webster's)
- B. God's Word is truth.
 1. Psa. 119:128, "Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right...I hate every false way."
 2. Heb. 8:5, Moses understood the accuracy of God's Word for He made "all things according to the pattern shewed" him in the mount.

IV. RESPECT FOR GOD'S WORD IS TO RESPECT THE ATTAINABILITY OF THE WORD. James 1:21,22

- A. What is the meaning of "attainable?"
 1. Attainability means to succeed in a directed effort, process or progression. (Webster's)
 2. God's word is attainable by all who desire to know the truth. John 7:17
- B. Mankind can hear, receive and understand the word of God.
 1. Jesus said, "... he that hears the word and understands it" is the good soil in the parable of the sower. Matt.13:23
 2. Paul wrote that the Ephesians could read and understand the truth he wrote by the holy spirit. Eph. 3:4

V. RESPECT FOR GOD'S WORD IS TO RESPECT THE ABILITY OF GOD'S WORD. James 1:21,25

- A. There is power in God's Word.
 1. There is power in the seed, the Word of God. Luke 8:15
 2. There is power in the Gospel, the dynamo of God. Rom. 1:16
 3. There is power in the Word of God for it is energetic. Heb. 4:12

4. There is power in a hammer, fire, bread and water. Jer. 23:29; Matt. 4:4; John 4:10
- B. It is the "engrafted" Word that will produce fruit.
 1. The Word must be "received with meekness."
 2. A mirror is useless except it lead the looker to improvement.

CONCLUSION:

1. We must teach and exhort all men to respect the Word of God.
 2. Without respect, men will not obey its commandments.
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PROPER REGARD FOR GOD

James 1:17-19

Kenneth Burleson

1. The Book of James is a wonderful study, excellent on Christian living.
2. It is often referred to as the proverbs of the New Testament, because it covers so many subjects.
3. The "proper regard for God" is a part of this study.
4. He is the all merciful, almighty, compassionate and loving God.
5. The Gentiles had no regard for Him. Rom. 1:21
 - a. They changed the truth of God into a lie. Rom. 1:25
 - b. They did not like to retain God in their knowledge. Rom. 1:28
 - c. They changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four footed beasts, and creeping things. Rom. 1:23
 - d. They worshipped and served the creature more than the creator. Rom. 1:25
6. The Jews practiced the same thing. Rom. 2:1,3
 - a. The Jews would not escape the judgment of God. Rom. 1:3
 - b. God had been rich in goodness, forbearance and longsuffering toward the Jews.
 - c. The good things God did for them did not lead them to repentance, they despised it and had become more sinful.
7. The same is true of the majority of people today.
 - a. False doctrines contrary to God's will.
 - b. People do not want to think about God.
 - c. More thought is given to men, today, than to God.
 - d. Men often pay more respect and attention to God's creation, rather than to God.
 - e. The worship of nature (2 Cor. 4:18). However, material things do not remain but the things we do not see remain and are eternal.

DISCUSSION:**I. GOD IS THE GIVER OF ALL GOOD AND PERFECT GIFTS. James 1:17**

- A. God is the source of all gifts. He is the author of all good. The devil is the author of all bad.
- B. The word "good" carries the idea that all giving is good. This is the art of giving.
- C. The word "perfect" declares the completeness, the fullness of the gift given. The gift is the result of giving.
- D. One must conclude that the gift is complete, because of the goodness of the giver.
- E. These gifts are from above, where God dwells, heaven. v.17
- F. "Cometh down from the Father of lights." v.17
 - 1. "Father" in the sense of creator, Job. 38:24,28; Eph. 1:17; 2 Cor. 1:3.
 - 2. God is the creator of lights and light.
 - a. The heavenly bodies; sun, moon, stars (Gen. 1:3,14-19). These were good gifts alone with many others. The physical lights alone do not reach the depth of the lesson in this verse.
 - b. God is the source of spiritual light (John 8:12). As He is the origin and creator of the heavenly bodies, so He also originates the perfect gifts for His children. Every blessing must be traced to Him. All spiritual blessings are in Christ (Eph. 1:3). Following are some blessings we enjoy as His children: We have a Savior (Luke 19:10), Redemption (Eph. 1:7), forgiveness (Eph. 1:7), the privilege of prayer (1 Thess. 5:17), the privilege of worshiping in truth (John 4:23,24), the honor of being called sons of God (1 John 3:1), and many more.
- G. "With whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (1:17).
- H. No doubt, as the source of light, there is a resemblance.
 - 1. But in the sin there are changes. Seasons.
 - 2. So in this respect God is not like the sun.
 - 3. God is always the same. No change in His character.

II. IT IS GOD'S WILL THAT WE BECOME HIS CHILDREN.

- A. God gave a plan that, according to His will, we can be His children (v.18).
 - 1. This shows a contrast between this verse and verses 13,14,15.
 - a. God is not the tempter.
 - b. He desires to give life by His truth (John 1:11-13).
 - 2. This does not mean that only a predetermined number will be saved.

- a. God wants all to be saved (2 Peter 3:9; 1 Tim. 2:4).
 - b. It is for all (John 3:16).
 - c. God invites all to come to Him (Matt. 11:28-30; Rev. 22:17).
 - d. The Gospel is applicable to all today (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15,16; Luke 24:45-49).
- B. "Became he us" (v.18).
- 1. We are begotten when we believe (1 John 5:1; 1 Cor. 4:16).
 - 2. Birth is completed when we are baptized into Christ (John 3:3-5).
 - 3. We owe the beginning of our spiritual life to God . He made it available to us.
- C. "With the Word of Truth" (v.18).
- 1. It was by the truth as the seed or germ (Luke 8:11).
 - 2. Truth is the instrument (John 8:32).
 - 3. The word was preached (1 Peter 1:22,23,25).
- D. "That we should be a kind of first fruits of His creatures" (v.18).
- 1. The figure is that of the Old Testament, of the first fruits of harvest (Lev. 23:10; Deut. 26:2).
 - 2. First fruits were a token of more to come.
 - 3. 1 Cor. 16:15, Stephanos.
 - 4. John makes mention of such in Rev. 14:4.
 - 5. Jesus was spoken of after His resurrection of being "the first fruits of them that are asleep" (1 Cor. 15:20).

III. "SWIFT TO HEAR, SLOW TO SPEAK, SLOW TO WRATH" (v.19).

- A. "Swift to hear." This means a fast and attentive mind, ready to listen (v.19).
- 1. This passage reminds me of the common motto, "think twice before you speak."
 - 2. If all of us would do this, no doubt there would be less speaking and more happiness and unity in the world (Prov. 21:23).
 - 3. There is a time to listen (Hab. 2:20).
- B. "Slow to speak" (v.19).
- 1. This means we are to be slow in beginning to speak, not slow while speaking.
 - 2. We must use our tongues properly (Prov. 13:3; 17:27; Eccl. 5:2; James 1:26; 3:1-18; 4:11).
 - 3. We often speak and wish we had not.
 - 4. We should talk little and work much.
 - 5. Someone has said "speech is silver and silence is golden. Two ears and one mouth."

C. "Slow to wrath."

1. Wrath does not produce peace and harmony.
2. It is not right to be quick to anger.
3. Some even brag about being easy to "fly off the handle." When an ax flies off the handle someone usually gets hurt.
4. Wrath is an evil thing (Prov. 27:3). Slow to wrath is the opposite (Prov. 14:29).
5. We are to control our temper (Prov. 16:32).
6. Wrath is the result of uncontrolled temper. With this mind-set one is not capable of receiving God's word.
7. The person who holds hatred, malice, bitterness and a grudge in his heart, will not listen to God's word.

CONCLUSION:

1. Since God is not the tempter, but is willing to beget us with the word of truth, so we can become His children, we ought to stand ready to listen to what He has to say to us through His word, the Bible.
2. The history of mankind has proven over and over again that men will not listen.
3. One of the reasons men will not listen is because of the failure to properly regard God.
4. People do not want to accept God and His word as the standard and final authority.
5. Those who accept God and His word are the ones who have proper regard for God. They accept Him for who He is.
6. Heaven or hell is the result of the decision we make in this life.
7. Accept the only way to heaven (John 14:6; Matt. 7:13-14).

AN IMAGINARY RELIGION

James 1:26

Victor M. Eskew

1. James 1:26, *"If any man among you seemeth to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain."*
2. James is a book that teaches what some refer to as "practical Christianity."
 - a. It speaks to the everyday life of the Christian.
 - b. It involves the harmony of the heart and hand, the head and actions.
 - c. Mastering the principles in the book of James will cause one to become more like Jesus Christ.

3. As we examine James 1:26, we will be studying the subject: "An Imaginary Religion." We give the verse this title due to three phrases found in the verse.
 - a. Seem to be religious.
 - b. Deceiveth his own heart.
 - c. This man's religion is vain.

DISCUSSION:

I. A RELIGIOUS PERSON.

- A. *"If any man among you seem to be religious..."*
- B. Two definitions:
 1. Seem to be
 - a. Strong (1380): to seem (truthfully or uncertainly)
 - b. Thayer: to seem, to be accounted, reported
 2. The word "religious" is simply defined as fearful of God, pious, or ceremonious in worship.
- C. All men should desire to seem to be religious.
 1. We definitely want our display to be that of a person who fears God.
 2. We want to have the reputation of being an individual who worships and serves God.
 3. The key: We want whatever appears to be true to be real and genuine.
 4. Example: Timothy (Phil. 2:20-22) *"For I have no man likeminded who will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's. But ye know the proof of him, that as a son with a father, he hath served me in the gospel."*
- D. It is possible, however, for a man to appear to be pious and not really be pious at all.
 1. This is what we refer to as an "imaginary religion."
 2. We could list many examples found in the Bible of those who had a facade of religion.
 - a. One of the first was Cain, a son of Adam and Eve.
 - 1) He brought an offering to the Lord (Gen. 4:3). *"And in the process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord."*
 - 2) His offering was not authorized by God (Heb. 11:7; Rom. 10:17).
 - 3) Thus, God rejected him (Gen. 4:5a). *"But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect."*
 - b. Numerous examples of an "imaginary religion" are found in the religious leaders of Jesus' day.
 - 1) The parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:31-33).
 - 2) The publican and Pharisee (Luke 18:10-11).

- 3) Jesus' condemnation of the Pharisees by Jesus (Matt. 23:1-4).
- 4) NOTE: These men definitely wanted to "seem" religious to others (Matt. 6:2, 5, 7, 16).
- c. Judas appeared to be religious, but Satan entered into him (John 6:70; 13:2).
- d. Ananias and Sapphira seemed to be religious (Acts 5:1-11).
- e. Diotrefes seem to be religious (3 John 9-10).
- f. Some of the churches of Asia seemed to be religious (Ex., Ephesus, Rev. 2:1-5).

II. THE UNBRIDLED TONGUE.

- A. James gives us a specific example of imaginary religion. A person can seem to be religious, but fail to bridle his tongue.
 - 1. Religion involves the proper control of one's tongue, speech, and language.
 - a. Psalm 34:13, *"Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile."*
 - b. Prov. 13:3, *"He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction."*
 - c. Eph. 4:29, *"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."*
 - d. James 3:9-10, *"Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be."*
 - 2. Not all religious people bridle their tongue.
 - a. They gossip (Lev. 19:16; Prov. 18:8).
 - b. They lie (Prov. 6:17; Eph. 4:25).
 - c. They curse (Psa. 109:17-18).
 - d. They give false witness (Prov. 6:19).
 - e. They teach error (2 Pet. 2:18).
 - f. They flatter (Prov. 12:3).
 - g. They backbite (Prov. 25:23; Rom. 1:30).
 - h. They boast (Ps. 94:4).
 - i. They speak too much (Eccl. 5:2-3).
 - j. They complain and murmur (1 Cor. 10:10; Phil. 2:14).
- B. This is just one illustration of many that could have been given about appearing to be religious.
 - 1. We appear to be religious, but we do not practice purity.
 - 2. We appear to be religious, but we will not use our talents.

3. We appear to be religious, but we do not put the kingdom first.
4. We appear to be religious, but our homes are not built on God's Word.
5. We appear to be religious, but we do not preach the truth of the Gospel.

III. THE DECEIVED HEART.

- A. Those who seem to be religious, yet do not practice their Christianity possess a deceived heart.
- B. The words "delude" and "cheat" are given as the definitions of the word "deceive."
 1. These individuals have misled their minds.
 2. These individuals cheat themselves in this life and in the world to come.
 3. They are practicing what some refer to as "a religion of self-deception."
 - a. They think they are saved, but they are not.
 - b. They think they are faithful, but they are unfaithful.
 - c. They think God is pleased with them, but He is not.
 4. They think they are heaven bound, but they are traveling the broad way to destruction.
- C. The prophet's words in Jeremiah 17:9 are most applicable. *"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"*
- D. We must seek to keep ourselves from self-deception.
 1. We must rid ourselves of all excuses, rationalizations, and justifications.
 2. We must open the Word of God and study (2 Tim. 2:15).
 3. We must honestly examine our lives in light of the Word (2 Cor. 13:5; James 1:22-25).
 4. We must repent of sins and confess them when we find we are not living a life in harmony with truth (Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9).

IV. A VAIN RELIGION.

- A. If our lives are not lived in harmony with God's will, even though we seem to be religious, our religion is vain.
 1. It is empty.
 2. It is useless.
 3. It will not generate what is needed to save our souls.
- B. Matt. 7:21-23, *"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy*

name done many wonderful works: And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you, ye that work iniquity."

- C. The Pharisees, again, are a prime example (Matt. 15:7-9). *"Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, this people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."*

CONCLUSION:

1. The practice of religion must involve the whole man.
 - a. "Pure religion is designed to bring the whole men under control, and to subdue every faculty of the body and mind to its demands" (Barnes, e-sword).
 - b. Eccl. 12:13, *"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."*
 - c. Paul understood this and exercised great control in living the Christian life (1 Cor. 9:27). *"But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."*
2. My friend, are you practicing an imaginary religion?
 - a. It seems to be religious.
 - b. Really, it is vain.
3. Please do not leave tonight with a deceived heart.

A LIFE OF SERVICE

James 1:27

David Wade

1. God always shows His special love and concern for those who are the most vulnerable to the hardships and uncertainties of life.
2. The hallmark of our Christian service, as individual Christians, and collectively, as the church, is how we respond to God's concern for the fatherless and widows (James 1:27).
3. We shall survey the record of God's special care for the helpless and ascertain what our responsibility is to them.

DISCUSSION:

I. GOD'S CONCERN IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

- A. For the Stranger, the Fatherless and the Widow (Rom. 15:4)

1. *"He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger in giving him food and raiment"* (Deut. 10:18).
 2. *"A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation"* (Psalm 68:5).
 3. *"The Lord preserveth the strangers, he relieveth the fatherless and widow, but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down"* (Psalm 146:9).
- B. God's instructions to Israel (Rom. 15:4)
1. *"Ye shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child"* (Ex. 22:22-24).
 2. *"Thou shalt not pervert the judgment of the stranger, nor of the fatherless; nor take a widow's raiment to pledge"* (Deut. 24:17)
 3. The corners of their fields, the forgotten sheaf, and the remnant of olives and grapes were to be left for the poor (Lev. 23:22; Deut. 24:18-22).
 4. *"Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings. Cease to do evil; Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow"* (Isa. 1:16-17).

II. GOD'S CONCERN IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

- A. As Demonstrated in the Ministry of Christ (1 Pet. 2:21).
1. He commended the poor widow who gave all. (Mark 12:41-44; Luke 21:1-40)
 2. He taught an important lesson on prayer with the parable of the persistent widow. (Luke 18:1-8)
 3. He raised from the dead the only son of a widow in Nain. (Luke 7:11-17)
 4. He illustrated his rejection at Nazareth with the widow of Sarepta in Elijah's day. (Luke 4:24-30)
 5. He condemned the Scribes, Pharisees and hypocrites who devoured widows' houses. (Matt. 23:14; Mark 12:40; Luke 20:47).
 6. Jesus describes the judgment scene in terms of one's response to the needs of the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick, and those in prison. (Matt. 25:31-46)
- B. As Demonstrated in the Life of the church.
1. The apostles organized relief for the neglected Grecian widows. (Acts 6:1-7)
 2. Dorcas, who made coats and garments for saints and widows, was raised to life by the apostle Peter. (Acts 9:36-42)

3. In view of the present distress, Paul advised the unmarried and widows that it was good to remain unmarried. (1 Cor. 7:8, 26)
4. Paul gives instructions to the church how to "*Honour widows that are widows indeed.*" (1 Tim. 5:3-16)
5. "*Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.*" (James 1:27)

VI. OBSERVATIONS ABOUT RELIEF FOR THE FATHERLESS AND WIDOWS.

- A. While several New Testament passages that relate to the care of widows, James 1:27 is the only New Testament passage that addresses the care for the fatherless.
 1. The anti-benevolence view teaches that the church from its treasury cannot give aid to any needy person, orphan or widow, who is not a member of the church. The Bible teaches otherwise. (Gal. 6:10; 2 Cor. 9:13; Heb. 13:2; 3 John 1:5)
 2. The anti-benevolence argument made on James 1:27 is that the singular pronoun, "himself" (*heauton*), demands individual participation only, and excludes the church. However, when partaking of the Lord's Supper, the command, "let a man examine himself" (*heauton*), the same singular pronoun, does not exclude the church. (1 Cor. 11:28; cf. Acts 20:7)
 3. Based on their narrow interpretation of "himself", by what rationale is the church included in the Supper, but the church is excluded from giving aid from its treasury to the fatherless and widows?
- B. We should note that both the fatherless and widows are mentioned in James 1:27.
 1. If the church is commanded to help either one of these, it is under the same obligation to help the other. (Acts 6:1-7; 1 Tim. 5:3, 16)
 2. The insurmountable inconsistency of the anti-benevolence "saints only" position has to do with the dependents not yet old enough to obey the Gospel. Some maintain that dependents of saints are included. Thus, the "saints only" position is inconsistent.
 3. Upon examination, the "saints only" doctrine is not biblical and should be rejected. We, as individuals and collectively as the church are under obligation to help those who are God's special concern.

IV. FULFILLING OUR OBLIGATION TO THE FATHERLESS AND WIDOWS.

- A. *"For ye have the poor with you always."* (Mark 14:7)
1. The needs are endless and opportunities are limitless! (Eccl. 1:15)
 2. Opportunities abound for us to give help. (Gal. 6:10)
 3. *"I am only one, but I am one. I can't do everything, but I can do something. The something I ought to do, I can do. And by the grace of God, I will."* Edward Everett Hale
- B. How shall the church and the individual Christian fulfill their role?
1. God has not specified the details how we are to do benevolence. He has left the details to us.
 2. The definition of the word, "visit" (*episkeptomai*) gives insight: "to look upon or after, to inspect, examine with the eyes in order to benefit, have the care for, provide for." Thayer, p. 242
 3. We must remember that words without action demonstrate dead faith. *"If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say to them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone."* (James 2:15-17)
 4. We must remember that the intended goal of benevolence is spiritual and should bring glory to God. (2 Cor. 9:6-15)
 5. Each must use wisdom to reach the right decisions about relieving the needs of others. (James 1:5-8; 3:17-18)

CONCLUSION:

1. The theme of this study, "A Life of Service", is nothing more than words unless we put the word of God into action in our daily lives. (James 1:22-27)
 2. Practicing pure religion and keeping ourselves unspotted from the world are not optional matters for the Christian or the church. Pure religion demands we "visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction."
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PROPER REGARD FOR OTHERS

James 2:1-9

Barry O'Dell

1. Brother Guy N. Woods wrote of James, "The Letter, because of its eminently practical character, has been quite properly styled 'the Gospel of Common Sense.' It is a wonderful demonstration of the fact that the principles of Christ, properly applied and fully assimilated, will adequately meet the needs of every generation, whatever the period in history may be."
2. In only 5 chapters, containing 108 verses, James instructs his readers in the very fundamentals of the Christian faith.
 - a. The Gospel of Christ is relevant for all times, places, and people!
 - b. As Paul wrote, "It is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth" (Rom. 1:16).
 - c. If we want to change the world around us we must be guided by the instructions found only in the word of God.
 - d. The world is not going to be changed in a positive way by Congress and legislation!
 - e. Biblical history shows that societies do not improve morally and spiritually over time. In fact, the Bible shows that societies digress over time and depart from moral and spiritual restraints.
 - f. James 2:1-9 addresses an issue that still impacts our world today — the Christian's regard for his fellow man.

DISCUSSION:

- I. **LIVING BY THE FAITH OF JESUS CHRIST (2:1-4).**
 - A. The Christian is forbidden to "have THE faith" and, at the same time, have partiality.
 - B. The student of the Bible understands that God is no respecter of persons.
 1. When Israel was searching for a King, God said, "*Look not on his countenance or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart*" (1 Sam. 16:7).
 2. We know that there is no respect of persons with God (Rom. 2:11).
 - C. To what does "THE faith" refer?
 1. It is often the case that context will determine what the word faith means.
 2. At times it refers to the trust or confidence one has in God (2 Cor. 5:7).

3. In Romans 14 the term faith is used in reference to one's personal opinion on certain matters based on their understanding of Scripture (Rom. 14:20-23).
4. At other times, as is the case in James 2:1, the term faith is preceded by the definite article "the" and it is referring to the Gospel.
5. Another example of this usage is in Acts 6:7. "*And the word of God increased; and the number of disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.*"
- D. James is informing us that we should not claim to be followers of New Testament Christianity, i.e. the gospel, and have respect of persons!
- E. While I do not recommend the following versions, consider how they render James 2:2.
 1. "For if a person comes into your congregation whose hands are adorned with gold rings and who is wearing splendid apparel, and also a poor man in shabby clothes comes in." (*New Testament Amplified*)
 2. "Suppose a rich person wearing fancy clothes and a gold ring comes to one of your meetings. And suppose a person dressed in worn-out clothes also comes." (*Contemporary English Version*)
 3. The fact of the matter is that we do not have to "suppose" that this kind of thing occurs!
 4. What is our reaction to such an event (vs.3-4)?
 5. Do we allow the outward appearance of an individual to determine our reaction?
 6. Are we afraid to sit next to someone in worship who has walked in off the street?
 7. If so, we have become partial and judge others with evil thoughts!

II. THOSE RICH IN FAITH (2:5-7).

- A. Men are not saved because they are physically poor. If they were, that would make God a respecter of persons.
 1. The immediate context is teaching that the poor, who the church was mistreating, will trust in God more because of their poverty.
 2. The Christians to whom James was writing were showing favor to certain people because they had money!
 3. God displayed a special concern for the needs of the poor under the Law of Moses (Ex. 22:22-27; Deut. 24:17-22).
 4. That same concern for the needy comes to the church through the teachings of Christ and the apostles (Acts 20:35; Gal. 6:9-10; James 1:27).

- B. Jesus teaches that *"where your treasure is, there will your heart be also"* (Matt. 6:21).
- C. Paul wrote, *"Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate"* (1 Tim. 6:17-18).
- D. The people to whom James was writing were doing the exact opposite!
 - 1. Seemingly, those early Christians were more concerned about "social status" and "connections" than they were about the souls of men.
 - 2. The ones to whom they were showing favor were:
 - a. Oppressing (causing hardship, vexing, tyrannizing) the church through the courts.
 - b. Blaspheming the very name of Christ!
 - c. Money and influence can make people do some crazy things!
 - 3. We are called Christians by God Himself (Isa. 62:2; Acts 11:26).
 - 4. The point made in James 2:7 reaffirms the point made in verse 1. Don't claim to be a Christian and show favor to those who despise and abuse Christians!

III. FULFILLING THE ROYAL LAW (2:8-9).

- A. Everything the Christian does is to be tempered by love.
 - 1. Jesus said, *"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the Law and the Prophets"* (Matt. 7:12).
 - 2. He told the apostles that the world would recognize them by the love they had for each other (John 13:34-35).
 - 3. Paul wrote, *"Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved"* (1 Cor. 10:33).
 - 4. He also wrote, *"For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love"* (Gal. 5:6).
- B. The Christian is to seek the well-being of all men, rich or poor.
 - 1. The sad reality is that James 2 is talking about specific attitudes and actions that were present in the assembly of the church!
 - 2. God is not the God of the rich or the God of the poor; He is the God of all men!
 - 3. God has made from one blood all nations of men (Acts 17:26).
- C. James does not sugar-coat the message — partiality is sin!

1. Sin is transgression of the law (1 John 3:4), failing to do what is right (James 4:17), and violating one's conscience (Rom. 14:22-23).
2. What these Christians were guilty of was sinful!
3. If we favor people today because they have money, or live in the right neighborhood, or wear the right clothes, etc., we are living in sin!
4. We are to be concerned about the souls of men, not their bank accounts!
5. James' phrase, "ye commit sin," is a Present Middle verb, literally meaning, "You all are trafficking (participating) in sin."

CONCLUSION:

1. Paul wrote, *"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world"* (Titus 2:11-12).
2. Every human, rich or poor, black or white, young or old is subject to God's plan of salvation and has access to the grace of God.
3. Who are we to treat our fellow man with contempt or favor just because he may be rich or poor?
4. *"My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons."*

LAW, MERCY AND JUDGMENT

James 2:10-13

Tom Snyder

1. There has never been a time nor place where law (both God's and man's) has not been despised and forsaken by a segment of society
 - a. The history of the Bible shows this very thing. Rom. 1-3
 - b. Our country has a history of civil unrest (rebellion)
2. For the most part, we love law.
 - a. It keeps the peace.
 - b. It allows prosperity.
 - c. It protects me from my enemies.
3. What happens when the law turns on us (taxes go up, speed limits go down). Now how do we feel about law?
 - a. Do we feel that we have the right to set aside laws that we deem to be bad?
 - b. Do we think ourselves exempt from at least certain laws?

4. This is what James discusses in chapter 2:10-13 about God's law. There is nothing new to suggest the need to remove us from God's law: there might be different man-made laws, different customs, different generations; but nothing new under the sun.
 - a. To understand what James is saying is to:
 - 1) Make better citizens of the kingdom.
 - 2) And to make better citizens of earthly kingdoms.
 - b. James 2:10-13 discusses three words of upmost importance: Law, Mercy and Judgment.
5. In our study we will consider:
 - a. The unity of the law, 2:10-11
 - b. The implication of the law, 2:12
 - c. The defeating of the law, 2:13

DISCUSSION:

I. THE TEXT DISCUSSED.

- A. The Law is not to be dissected.
 1. James 2:10, *"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."*
 2. Notice how Paul expressed it: *"Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."* Gal. 3:10
 3. A man by the name of Jehoiakim was a literal dissector of God's word. Jer. 36:20-24
 - a. What this man did with a penknife in open rebellion,
 - b. Others do by attitude, Luke 6:46
- B. The Law has no divided authors.
 1. James 2:11a, *"For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill."*
 2. God is constant, there is perfect harmony, there are no contradictions. James 1:17; Heb. 13:8
- C. There are no discriminatory rights in the Law. To break one portion of the law is to be guilty of all.
 1. James 2:11b, *"Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law."*
 2. Man can be rather fickle.
 - a. James discusses man's fickleness. 3:8-12.
 - b. Paul discusses this in different terms. Rom. 2:22-23
 - c. Jesus puts a name to this fickleness, "hypocrisy." Matt. 23:25
- D. Law demands judgement.
 1. James 2:12, *"So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty."* Gal. 5:1.
 2. John 12:48
 3. Wages of sin is death. Rom. 6:23
 4. Sin is the transgression of the law. 1 John 3:4

5. Why do we need mercy? Because of law. 1 Cor. 15:56, *"The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law."*
- E. Mercy can dismiss judgement.
 1. James 2:13, *"For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment."*
 2. Condemnation comes in breaking the law, as in this case, by showing no mercy to his fellow man.
 - a. Lack of mercy is not the only thing that brings judgment, but it was used often by the prophets to show unrighteousness.
 - b. Jesus used it as well. Matt. 6:14,15
 - c. When Jesus taught a lesson on the final judgment; he used mercy toward others as means of entry or exclusion into the Father's kingdom. Matt. 25:34-46

II. LAW DEFINED AND DEFENDED.

- A. What is the purpose of Law? Rom. 3:19
 1. Twofold purpose of the law. 1) That "every mouth may be stopped" and 2) "all the world may become guilty before God."
 2. Purpose of the law. To give knowledge of what sin is. Rom 3:20, 7:7
 3. Purpose of the law. That offence might abound showing the greatness of grace. Rom 5:20
- B. Some myths pertaining to law.
 1. "Law is evil"
 - a. God said it is good. Rom. 7:12, *"Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy,...just, and good."*
 - b. The evil is not law, it is sin. Rom. 7:13, *"Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful."*
 - c. The law is not evil, it is spiritual. Rom. 7:14, *"For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin."*
 2. "You can't legislate morality."
 - a. We have become afraid of the 18th amendment: On January 29, 1919, Congress ratified the 18th Amendment, which prohibited the manufacturing, transportation and sale of alcohol within the United States
 - b. That you can't legislate morality is a lie, we have laws against murder, stealing, rape.
 - c. God's command shows it to be a lie. Rom. 13:3
 3. "Laws only make law breakers."

- a. It is argued that the 18th amendment brought organized crime and that laws against the recreational use of drugs are doing the same thing.
- b. That is a very low estimation of mankind, God's creation after His image.
- c. Law is intended to make men holy. Rom. 7:14; 1 Tim. 1:9; Rom. 8:5-9
- 4. "You can't legislate attitudes."
 - a. If this is true, why do we have terms such as "hate crimes" and "hate speech?"
 - b. Why would some use law to prevent the public preaching against homosexuality and abortion?
 - c. What is needed is the correct motivation and training to change attitudes. This is done with Jesus and Him crucified.
- C. Law does change people.
 - 1. Law gives directions and instructions.
 - 2. Love doesn't remove law; but it does fulfill law. Rom. 13:9-10; James 2:8; Psa. 119:97, 163
 - 3. There must be reason to love the law giver. Matt. 5:17; Psa. 119:11
- D. "Prohibition" did not fail, the people did.
 - 1. There were Law makers who would not obey it.
 - 2. Judges who would not obey it.
 - 3. Law enforcers who would not obey it.
 - 4. Religious leaders who were exempt.
 - 5. In fact, many of these supported, encouraged and made money from the organized crime.
 - 6. "Prohibition" did not give us organized crime, the law breakers did.

III. LAW IS MEANT TO BE A BLESSING. James 1:25

- A. It is meant to produce holiness. 1 Peter 1:15,16
 - 1. Man needs guidance. Jer. 10:23,24
 - 2. It is the law of God that provides this.
- B. The law came by the grace of God and is in fact God's grace. Titus 2:11,12

CONCLUSION:

- 1. Law, Mercy and Judgment three beautiful words.
- 2. Yet, if we do not understand the unity and the doctrine of these words, we will grow to hate what we are to love and make it impossible for us to be holy.
- 3. Psa. 19:7-11, *"The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. ⁸The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. ⁹The*

fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. ¹⁰More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. ¹¹Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward."

RESPONSIBILITY TO TEACH (ESPECIALLY OLDER/YOUNGER)

Ladies only
Irene Taylor

1. The basic need for effective teaching is a profound respect for God and His Word.
 - a. With this foundation, such respect will undergird the specific emphasis of truth in other areas.
 - b. Older women should be equipped with wisdom pertaining the role Christian women are assigned in life.
 - c. They are commanded to so teach (Titus 2:3).

DISCUSSION:

I. SPECIFIC LESSONS WE ARE INSTRUCTED TO TEACH.

- A. We are to be known for our "behaviour as becometh holiness."
 1. We are not to partake of the ways of the world (1 John 2:15).
 2. We are to be different from the world, distinct. It is a difference that matters.
 3. We teach best by example that harmonizes without words.
 - a. "Do as I say, not as I do" goes in one ear and out the other!
 - b. Consistency is essential in our teaching.
- B. We are to watch our speech. We are not to be false accusers.
 1. This means we are to be sure of our facts before we speak (1 Tim. 5:14; James 3).
 2. "When a little bird tells you something, don't repeat it until you find out whether the little bird is a little cuckoo!"
- C. We are to teach *good* things, not just anything.
 1. We are to teach the beauty of the home relationship.
 - a. Notice inspiration's description of our role in the home (Titus 2:4-5)
 - 1) The husband is the head of the home.

- 2) The husband/wife relationship comes before the parent/child relationship.
- b. Reflect frequently on truth we are to teach regarding God's plan for the home rather than listening to the world's philosophy.
- c. Read especially verse 7 of Titus 2. This should be true of us all. We need to be a "pattern of good works."
2. We set a standard for respect in the home when we respect the husband/wife relationship. The best gift we can give our children is to love our mate.
 - a. Notice especially the teaching of Titus 2:5; Eph. 5:22-24, 25-29.
 - 1) If we *really* love our children we will train them to respect God (Gen. 18:19; Prov. 22:6; Eph. 6:1-4).
 - 2) The home is not to be a battleground or merely a place to come and refuel.
 - 3) The home as God would have it is a refuge from the world.
3. Our conduct in the community should reflect that we "have been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13b).
 - a. We represent the church, God's family, wherever we are. What kind of impression do we make?
 - b. Does our appearance and attire reflect our respect for God's standard (1 Tim. 2:9).
 - 1) Ladies, watch those necklines and hemlines.
 - c. Our nation is in dire need of the Christian's influence. Stand up and be counted!
4. Respect for the property of others must be taught each generation. Such would eliminate much of the looting prevalent today.
 - a. Do *we* respect the things which belong to others?
 - b. Start teaching respect when the child is in infancy.
5. We must teach respect of self.
 - a. We must have a healthy respect of self, not an arrogant attitude (Rom. 12:3).
 - b. We are somebody. We are the children of The King. We must act accordingly and teach others to do so.
 - c. We must respect the personage of others. They, too, were made in God's image.
6. We must teach respect for life itself (Psa. 139:14).
 - a. In no form or fashion can abortion be accepted.
 - b. It is clear and simple the murder of human life.
 - c. The "freedom of choice" was made when the act was consummated which resulted in formation of life.

CONCLUSION:

1. We older ladies (the Bible says *aged*) must not neglect this command to teach the younger.
2. Why are there not more Bible classes with senior women teaching the young wives and mothers the beauty of the home as God would have it? I still reflect from time to time on whether I did right as a young preacher's wife when I taught a class of mostly older ladies.
3. All teaching is not done in the classroom. These basic truths need to emanate from the home both by example and word. They can then be strengthened by the Bible classes in our congregations.
4. Accept the challenge! Start to teach *early* in childhood and *stay late*. There is no retirement for the Christian this side of heaven. There is work for all to do.

FAITH AND WORKS

James 2:14-26

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

1. It is a deep delight and high honor to appear again on this good, great and grand lectureship. Thanks for the invitation.
2. A serious study of James is timely and relevant in our day.
3. Men and women en masse understand neither *Biblical faith* nor *obedient works* in becoming Christians and remaining such.
4. Jesus stated in Matthew 19:6, "*What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.*" This is of far wider application than just in marriage.
5. God has joined faith and works in John 6:28-29; 1 Thess. 1:3; Heb. 11; and here in James 2. Let no man put asunder.

DISCUSSION:**I. AN ANCIENT ERROR IN A MODERN SETTING.**

- A. There were "faith only" proponents in James' era which he refuted.
- B. In the 1500's A.D., there was Martin Luther, German Reformer, who accepted and defended "faith only" even declaring James to be a "right strawy epistle."
 1. Deity did not leave it up to this fiery Reformer to decide what books were canonical (allowed in the Bible).
 2. This Luther assessment was slander and blasphemy against this inestimable section of Sacred Scripture.
- C. Article Nine of the Methodist Discipline declares "faith only" to be a wholesome doctrine and full of comfort.

1. It is not wholesome because it is not so.
2. It is filled with no crumb of comfort.
- D. It is widely believed, promoted and practiced among modern religionists en masse.

II. FAITH AND WORKS: TWO QUESTIONS PROPOUNDED (2:14).

- A. What is the profit in having faith and no works?
 1. What type of faith is addressed here?
 - a. The very faith under discussion, faith only, faith minus any and all works, is addressed.
 - b. This is not Biblical faith, Scriptural faith, vital faith, or profitable faith.
 2. James comes quickly to the fundamental focus — what is wrong with “faith only?”
 3. Yet, this is the very type of faith James refutes and that we have to refute among our Protestant friends.
- B. Can that faith, “faith only,” save him?
 1. This is a rhetorical question with its own built-in answer.
 2. Faith only has not even an iota of saving power.

III. A REAL OR HYPOTHETICAL CASE PRESENTED (2:15-16).

- A. The case would be the same whether real or supposed.
- B. The brother or sister has two basic needs.
 1. Clothing is an essential.
 2. Daily food (hungry all the time with no abatements) is needed.
 3. If these needy people were non-Christians, we still have an obligation to help as per 2 Cor. 9:13, Gal. 6:10 and James 1:27, the saint only-ism to the contrary notwithstanding.
- C. Yet the observing member has only pious platitudes to offer.
 1. Be warmed but with what? Empty words?
 2. Be filled but with what? Empty professions?
 3. Vain verbiage does not clothe the naked or feed the hungry.
 4. It is a case of *saying* and not *doing*.
 5. It is the very opposite of Christian benevolence.
 6. It is a total failure to practice Matt. 7:12 and Luke 6:31 — the Golden Rule.

IV. LIVING FAITH VERSUS DEAD, BARREN FAITH (2:17-20).

- A. The analogy is striking and significant.
- B. Faith, unaccompanied by works, is dead, barren, fruitless.

1. Yet James is describing what Luther favored, what Article Nine of the Methodist Creed endorses and what untold millions have accepted blindly minus any protest.
2. It is amazingly amazing that even one person has accepted it.
- C. James raises an objection and refutes it.
 1. An objector may contend there are two ways of expressing faith—by a wordy claim and by the validity of works.
 2. James challenges the objector to show his faith minus any and all works. He has to use what he denies or disparages, works, to show faith in his life.
 3. James says he will demonstrate his faith by his works.
- D. James commends the one who believes there is one God.
 1. This is from Deuteronomy 6 and the great Shema.
 2. This is well, but stops short of faith's demand.
 3. Demons believe and even tremble advancing one step beyond what the "faith only" patron is willing to do.
- E. The "faith only" man is vain or empty.
 1. What he has accepted will not save him.
 2. Neither will it save others.
- F. Faith without works is dead.
 1. Dead faith will not save.
 2. Dead faith never honors God.
 3. Dead faith does nothing to keep Christianity alive.

V. PERFECTED FAITH VERSUS "FAITH ONLY": TWO OLD TESTAMENT EXAMPLES.

- A. Abraham — our spiritual father if we walk in his steps.
 1. His justification was not by meritorious works, Mosaic law, circumcision or sinless perfection (Rom. 4).
 2. His justification was by an obedient faith — his faith coupled with works reaching an apex in offering Isaac (James 2:21-23).
 3. When faith and works are linked, there is perfect faith.
- B. By an obedient faith, a faith that works, man is justified.
- C. Man is not justified by faith only (James 2:24).
 1. Why did Luther and the Methodist creed makers miss this?
 2. Why have preachers in pulpits and pew packers missed this?
 3. James 2:24 is a death knell to "faith only."
- D. Example Two — Rahab the harlot.
 1. She was not justified in her former harlotry or by faith only.
 2. She was justified by her obedient faith when she received the spies, hid them and aided their escape.

VI. TWO CORPSES (2:26).

- A. The body minus the spirit is dead —
 - 1. Life is the resulting state when body and spirit are united.
 - 2. Death is the resulting state when body and spirit separate.
- B. Faith without works (faith only) is dead being separated.

CONCLUSION: LESSONS LEARNED

- 1. At no time has God ever saved man until faith acts.
- 2. Saving faith and “faith only” are poles apart and then some.
- 3. Faith is perfected when coupled with works of obedience.
- 4. Faith only is dead, barren, fruitless, spiritless and minus all profit and yet this is what preachers peddle and deluded pew packers swallow hook, line and sinker.
- 5. There are works excluded; there are works included.
- 6. John DeBerry, during the 2014 Power, Lectureship, said, “James gave a great inspired oration on the behavior of obedient faith recorded in James two. Therein he gives the relationship of faith and works that clearly explain God’s part in salvation as well as man’s part.”

RESPONSIBILITY TO TEACH

James 3:1

Brandon Baggett

- 1. The Christian life is filled with many great blessings.
 - a. It is the abundant life. (Jn. 10:10; Eph.1:3)
 - b. It provides eternal life in heaven. (I Jn. 2:25; 1 Cor.15:58; Jn. 14:1-3)
- 2. The Christian life is also filled with many great responsibilities.
 - a. The blessings we have in Christ do not come without responsibility.
 - b. The two concepts of responsibility and reward are tied together. (Heb. 4:9-11)
- 3. The book of James (a book on practical Christian living) points out numerous responsibilities found in living the Christian life. We have responsibilities:
 - a. In the midst of the trials of life. (1:2-11; 5:7-12)
 - b. In the time of temptation. (1:12-17)
 - c. Towards the Word of God. (1:18-25)
 - d. Towards our speech. (1:26; 3:1-12)
 - e. Towards those who are less fortunate. (1:27; 2:1-13)
 - f. Towards material things. (4:1-17; 5:1-6)

- g. Towards those who are sick. (5:13-15)
- h. Towards those who sin and the erring. (5:16-20)
- i. In addition to these, James continually stressed the fact that Christianity is not a "do nothing" religion.
 - 1) True religion involves fulfilling our responsibilities. (1:16-27)
 - 2) True faith works; dead faith doesn't. (2:14-26)
- 4. In this lesson, we want to deal with only one responsibility that James mentions in this practical book on Christian living. This is the responsibility to teach found in James 3:1.

DISCUSSION:

I. IT IS A PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY.

- A. The New Testament reminds us that all Christians have the responsibility to teach.
 - 1. Part of the Great Commission involved the disciples going forth to teach others what the Lord had commanded. (Matt.28:20)
 - a. This Commission was passed down from the apostles to the early church.
 - b. The early Christians went about fulfilling this commission. (Acts 5:42; 8:4)
 - 2. The writer of Hebrews later scolded the Christians to whom he wrote, because many of them were not spiritually mature enough to teach others. (Heb. 5:12)
 - a. They had been taught themselves. Yet, they had not grown or matured enough to be able to teach others.
 - b. This was a problem! By this time, they were expected to be able to teach.
 - 3. Even though we all should mature enough so we can teach someone else, that does not mean we have to be a public teacher of the Word of God like a preacher.
 - a. God has already ruled that some people scripturally cannot do this. (1 Tim. 2:11-15)
 - b. Not everyone is expected or required to do this.
- B. We must realize that teaching God's Word is something that involves us all, because there are many aspects of teaching mentioned in the New Testament.
 - 1. There is the teaching of the alien sinner. (Jn. 6:45; Acts 5:25)
 - a. This involves teaching the soul saving Gospel to those who have never obeyed its commands.
 - b. All should be actively involved in this.
 - 1) This is not just the preacher's job.
 - 2) This is not even just the preacher and elders' jobs.
 - 2. There is the teaching of the erring Christian. (Gal. 6:1-2; James 5:19-20)

- a. When someone leaves the fold of God, they need to be taught, encouraged, and motivated again.
 - b. Even those who are weak, frail, and spiritually immature need to be taught again. (Heb. 5:12)
- 3. There is the teaching, training, and preparing of other men to preach the Gospel. (2 Tim. 2:2)
 - a. The church is to ensure that men are being adequately taught to preach the Gospel.
 - b. Thank God for faithful schools and congregations that are doing this good work.
- 4. There is the teaching done by older women and men to educate younger women and men. (Titus 2:1-6)
 - a. The older generation of the church has the responsibility to teach the younger generation of God's people.
 - b. This can be done in many ways: Bible classes, special training classes, etc.
- 5. There is the teaching of a preacher done to equip the congregation and convince the gainsayers. (1 Tim. 4:16; 2 Tim. 4:1-5)
 - a. The place of a preacher within a congregation is certainly scriptural.
 - b. The work of a preacher is important.
- C. The responsibility to teach, in some way, involves us all.

II. IT IS A PRESSING RESPONSIBILITY.

- A. It is vital to understand that the teaching of God's Word is something that is very important.
 - 1. Sadly, it seems like many congregations and individual Christians have lost a sense of urgency associated with the preaching and teaching of God's word.
 - 2. Teaching the Scriptures is an urgent responsibility.
- B. There is a great and pressing need for people to be taught.
 - 1. There is a world full of lost people who need to be taught.
 - a. This world certainly has no shortage of lost people. There are around 7 billion people on this earth.
 - b. Most of these individuals are on the path that leads to their soul's destruction. (Matt. 7:13-14)
 - 2. There are erring Christians all across the brotherhood who need to be taught.
 - a. In most communities, there are many unfaithful Christians who haven't been heard from in years.
 - b. Sadly, in some cases, little at all is being done to snatch their soul from the fire. (Jude 22-23)
 - 3. There are congregations who need meaningful and Biblical teaching.
 - a. There are congregations with a pulpit problem.

- 1) In some cases, a congregation might hear a great Gospel sermon from a guest speaker and reply: "We haven't heard preaching like that in years." Such is tragic!
- 2) There is a need to get back to book, chapter, and verse preaching. Many preachers need to start preaching the Word. (2 Tim. 4:1-5)
- b. There are congregations with Bible class problems.
 - 1) Most congregations struggle to find teachers.
 - 2) Many congregations become frustrated and allow unqualified teachers to fill the vacancies.
 - 3) Sadly, the result is not beneficial to the congregation's well-being.
4. There are men, young and old, who need to be taught to preach.
 - a. There are men who need and crave more training and education.
 - b. Such men need to be directed to good schools where this can occur.
5. There is a younger generation that desperately needs to be taught.
 - a. Sometime the younger generation does not respect, admire, and listen to the older generation. Other times, the older generation becomes agitated with the younger generation, but they will not take the time to teach them.
 - b. The church urgently needs to be teaching young men to be like Timothy & young women to be like Dorcas.
- C. There is an urgent and pressing need all throughout the brotherhood for people to wake up and start teaching the Word of God.

III. IT IS A PRECIOUS RESPONSIBILITY.

- A. Teaching the Word of God is truly a tremendous honor.
 1. Sadly, many people want the honor associated with teaching God's Word without having to pay the price that is associated with such a precious privilege.
 2. Teaching the Word of God demands certain things of us: knowledge, preparation, faithfulness, convictions, etc.
- B. A failure to understand the precious nature of teaching God's Word is not a new problem, because it existed even during the days of James.
 1. James 3:1 — the serious nature of teaching.
 2. He was not writing to discourage teaching, but he was admonishing his readers to understand the serious nature of it.

- a. He gives a very serious command — “Be not many masters” (teachers).
 - 1) Evidently in the days of James, there were many unqualified Christians who not only desired positions where they could teach, but there were such Christians actually occupying these roles.
 - 2) As such, James not only commands those who were unqualified to never start teaching, but James commands those unqualified teachers to STOP teaching!
 - 3) Such is made evident by the Greek particle “me?” (translated “not”)
 - a) When this particle is used with a verb of the aorist or subjunctive mood (verbs showing the possibility of the action taking place), it suggests that one is to never start the action which is contemplated.
 - b) However, when this is used with a verb in the present tense imperative mood (a command), it suggests the need to stop the current action.
 - c) In James 3:1, the verb is a present imperative. Thus, the thought is: “Stop being teachers!”
 - b. James warns those who may desire to teach, and tells the unqualified teachers to stop what they are doing, because those who teach God’s Word will be judged strictly.
 - 1) Good teachers will be richly blessed.
 - 2) Bad, unfaithful, and unqualified teachers will be judged with severity.
- C. Understanding that teaching is personal, pressing, and precious, who would be the kinds of people James would command to stop teaching?
- 1. If one does not respect the Word of God, they should stop teaching.
 - a. We must have authority for all that we teach. (1 Pet. 4:11; Col. 3:17)
 - b. When people begin to teach things other than the Word of God, they destroy instead of buildup. (1 Tim. 6:3-5)
 - c. Those who change, alter, abandon, and disregard the truth will face severe judgment. (Gal. 1:6-10)
 - 2. If one places a position, a title, or honor above souls, they should stop teaching.
 - a. Teaching others, public or private, is about souls.
 - b. Popularity, honor, or a title should never be the motive behind one trying to teach someone else. (Luke 17:10)

3. If one refuses to prepare, they should stop teaching.
 - a. Many preachers, Bible class teachers, and other Bible teachers are tempted to not prepare.
 - b. Instead of being lazy teachers, we all need to be teachers who prepare like Ezra. (Ezra 7:10)
- D. Every teacher of God's Word needs to constantly remember just how precious their responsibility truly is.

CONCLUSION:

1. Christianity is a taught religion that teaches us to teach others.
2. The future of the church demands teaching. Therefore, let us, as the body of Christ, take this responsibility seriously.

ATTENTION TO OUR SPEECH

James 3:2-12

Bill Davis (Jacksonville)

1. In many ways, the tongue is a "tattletale" that tells on the heart. It reveals who and what we really are.
2. "The good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and the evil man out of the evil: for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh" (Luke 6:45). Consequently the tongue is the revealer of the heart.
3. James, through inspiration of the Holy Spirit, calls special attention to the tongue/speech in every chapter of this Epistle: 1:19, 26; 2:12; 4:11; 5:12, and he does a masterful job dealing with specifics regarding the tongue in chapter three. He says, in essence, that the transformed life in Christ manifests itself in the mouth (how we talk)! Furthermore, true, living faith that is surrendered to Jesus manifests itself through and by control of the tongue.
4. We speak about 18-25 thousand words a day. It has been calculated that we probably put together a 54-page book every day. And in a year, we would probably produce about 66 800-page books! Most people will spend one fifth of their life talking.
5. I remember my Mom taking me to the doctor when I was a child. I can still hear Dr. Rogers as if it were yesterday: "Billy, let me see your tongue." He would put the thermometer under my tongue to take my temperature. As I reflect upon this great chapter, James, in a spiritual sense, says to those who profess to be disciples of Christ, "Brother/Sister, let me see your tongue." James knew the tongue itself exposes our spiritual temperature – whether we want it revealed or not!

6. Chapter three personifies the tongue/mouth as the living symbol of what is in the heart.
7. Nothing is more liable to reveal our true character than our speech/mouth. As the people in the courtyard said to Peter on the night he betrayed Christ, "...Of a truth thou also art one of them; for thy speech maketh thee known" (Matt. 26:73). While the crowd capitalized upon Peter's dialect, the true meaning of his words went deeper into his psyche – revealing his lack of commitment to Jesus. Would we have fared better? I seriously doubt it. In that moment of truth, Peter was more concerned about physical preservation than verbal proclamation.
8. Nowhere is the union of faith and works more visible/evident than in our speech. Someone said, "Every one of us is carrying around a concealed weapon." All we have to do is open our mouths and it's unconcealed. So, the mouth is the "spiritual monitor" on the human condition. And so, in chapter three, James calls upon his brethren to measure their speech for consistency with what they claimed to be the reality of their faith.
9. James provides five compelling reasons why we must make every effort to control our tongues. We must make this effort because the tongue has: 1) potential to condemn, 2) power to control, 3) peril to corrupt, 4) primitiveness to combat, and 5) perfidy to compromise.

DISCUSSION:

I. THE TONGUE HAS THE POTENTIAL TO CONDEMN (vs.1-2).

- A. James provides a sober warning to those making private and public proclamations of God's Word to be extremely careful about rushing foolishly into the role of teaching.
- B. His comments to those with a Jewish heritage/background would have piqued their attention because of the respect/attention that teachers like Nicodemus and others received from the public.
- C. Matt. 23:8-10, Jesus condemned the love of preeminence and position and love of being called "Father", "Rabbi", and "Master". The temptation was strong to pursue this type of recognition because they were condemnable attitudes by Jesus. Unfortunately, the same attitude persists now. Men and women lust for power and control of vulnerable hearts and souls by carelessly handling the precious Word of God. They will be held accountable for their actions.
- D. James 1:19 provides the correct order to assimilate and share God's Word; "be swift to hear, slow to speak." Also, the condemnation mentioned in Matt 7:21ff was due in large part to disciples who "professed to know/serve Jesus"

but in actuality were never recognized by Jesus. Their professing and speaking was in vain. May God give us the grace and mercy to stay on the straight and narrow when proclaiming the truth of the Gospel of Christ.

- E. The Scriptures are replete with discussions/descriptions that occur when we fail to control our mouths. The tongue has been described as wicked, deceitful, lying, perverse, filthy, corrupt, bitter, angry, crafty, flattering, slanderous, gossiping, back-biting, blaspheming, foolish, boasting, murmuring, complaining, cursing, contentious, sensual, vile, tale-bearing, whispering, exaggerating, and the list goes on and on. Have you fallen prey to any of these actions/behaviors? Yes, we have. The easiest way to sin is to sin with the tongue. Nothing is more representative of man's sinfulness than his mouth and there is no easier way to sin than with the mouth because you can say anything you want to say! There are no restraints. You can't do any evil deed you might want to do because, maybe the circumstances aren't there for you to do it. But you can say absolutely anything.
- F. Matt. 12:34, Jesus reminded the Pharisees that what came out of their mouths was an accurate reflection of what was in their hearts. Consequently, He did not expect them to speak good things because their hearts were evil.
- G. It is a scientific fact that once something goes out over the airways, it stays there. Scientists say that the sound waves set in motion by every voice go on an endless journey through space and that if we had the right instruments, delicate and sophisticated enough and the power to recapture those waves, we could recreate every word every person has ever spoken. God has that machine (Matt. 12:36-37)! So there's a real sense in which men's words will be the basis of their judgment because they are the absolutely accurate judge of their soul. A man's heart is the storehouse and his words indicate what is stored there.
- H. Prov. 20:9; 2 Chron. 6:36; Rom. 3:23; 1 John 1:8-10; 1 Cor. 9:24-27; 1 Tim. 4:16, make it crystal clear that we must guard our tongues because it has the potential to condemn.

II. THE TONGUE HAS THE POWER TO CONTROL, vs 2-4.

- A. The word perfect is translated "*teleios*", which expresses the concept of maturity versus sinlessness. James is making the point that only spiritually mature people are able to control their tongue. The only human being who ever lived who had an absolutely perfect tongue was Jesus Christ. In John 7:46, the officers who were sent to arrest Jesus said, "Never man so spake." Jesus manifested perfection in His speech –

without error. And in 1 Peter 2:22, the perfection of Christ is further highlighted by the words *"Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth."* There was no sin in His life, no sin in His mouth. So to the degree that our holiness approaches the holiness of Christ, to that degree we are conformed to His image. And consequently our speech will be godly.

B. Small Objects – Generate Powerful Consequences.

1. Bits can control horses. You put a piece of metal (bit) in a horse's mouth. It lays on his tongue. And then you put a harness around that, pull it up over his head, take some reins and when you pull that, you pull that metal bit against the horse's tongue. By controlling the horse's tongue, you control the horse's movements. What kind of work do you get from horses who haven't been broken/bridled? None whatsoever! You have to break them, don't you? And you break them with a bit in the mouth and you control the whole body by controlling the tongue. You can direct the whole body. That's what James is saying. You get control of your tongue and you can direct your whole body. Everything else falls in place.
2. Rudders can control ships. Battleships, cruise ships, pleasure crafts, the size is irrelevant. They are all guided by the small but all important rudder.

- C.** James is calling special attention to the importance of getting control of the "little member" that resides in our mouth. It does a lot of boasting and bragging. And there is an ever-present danger to destroy people, congregations, relationships, marriages, families, and even nations. But thank God, on the other hand, it can build up, create love and good will, enthusiasm, encouragement, comfort, joy, and peace. If we could only get control of it, we would be able to bring the rest of our body into subjection. This certainly sheds great light on the admonition in Eph. 4:29!

III. THE TONGUE HAS THE PERIL TO CORRUPT, vs5-6.

A. Exclamation at the danger of the tongue.

1. *"How great a forest is kindled by how small a fire."*
2. One misplaced smoldering cigarette can ignite thousands and tens of thousands of acres ablaze. One tiny flame can burn a city to the ground.
3. Water cannot multiply, but fire can. If you have a cup of water and you pour it out, it won't become a flood. But if you have a match, you can light a forest fire or burn down a whole city because fire has a way of multiplying. And trust me, the tongue is not like water, it is like fire!

4. On October 8, 1871 at 8:30 P.M., a spark started in Mrs. O'Leary's barn. And before it was over, that one spark from supposedly that one cow in Mrs. O'Leary's barn burnt 17,500 buildings. Tragically, 300 people were burned to death and 125,000 people were left homeless in the streets of Chicago. The estimated damages from the fire exceeded 400 million dollars. And all of this devastation started with one spark.
5. Prov. 15:28; 16:27; 26:20; Psalm 52:2; 57:4; Job 19:2 point to the fiery, burning devastation caused by the tongue.
- B. Four sobering aspects of the tongue discussed in verse 6.
 1. The "World of Iniquity among our members"—microcosm of evil among our members; no other bodily part has such far-reaching potential for disaster as the tongue.
 2. "Defileth the whole body" – a filthy tongue stains the whole person. The world of iniquity that is set loose in your mouth either burns or smoke-stains your whole person. Mark 7:20, *"That which proceedeth out of the man, that defileth the man."*
 3. "Setteth on Fire the Wheel of Nature" – Present tense – setting on fire the circle of life. It touches every participant in the circle of your life. We must remember that people really know us by how we talk.
 4. "It is set on fire by hell" – Present tense – habitually being lit. This is the only time the term Gehenna/hell appears outside the Gospel narratives of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. In 2 Kings 23:10ff, King Josiah stopped the ungodly practice of idolatry/child sacrifice to Molech that took place in the Valley of Hinnom. So from the outset, this valley was a place of burning, garbage, stench, and the horrible smell of dead bodies. The fire never went out. "*Gehenna*" is the Valley of Hinnom. It is the Greek word for the Hebrew "Valley of Hinnom," *ge-hinnom*.
 5. We must continually be on guard to keep the evil one from using our tongue to do harm to ourselves and others.

IV. THE TONGUE HAS PRIMITIVENESS TO COMBAT, v7-8.

- A. The tongue loves to come out "wagging"!
 1. It loves to control – versus being controlled!
 2. It is uncivilized, undisciplined, irrepressible, irresponsible and untamed.
 3. It is impossible to list the causalities and carnage inflicted upon mankind by the poison from the tongue.

- B. Every kind, *phusis* – every species. Doesn't matter if it walks, flies, swims, or crawls, it can be tamed/subdued by man.
 - C. Special Note: The Scripture doesn't say the tongue can't be tamed, the record says, "But the tongue no man can tame." Thank God, He certainly can!
 - D. The word "restless" is the same word that is translated unstable in James 1:8, *akatastatos*. The tongue is an assassin that kills without much effort, Rom. 3:13; Psa. 140:3; Psa. 64:1-10.
 - E. Many people have died because of deadly poison administered by the tongue. Even Jesus, our Savior, was delivered up because of envy (Matt. 27:18). The tongue is a deadly weapon with deadly power that kills everything in its path: reputations, joy, peace, love, and all things sacred.
- V. **THE TONGUE HAS PERFIDY TO COMPROMISE, vs.9-12.**
- A. Definition of Perfidy: treachery, a deliberate breach of trust. It means faithlessness, hypocrisy, inconsistency, duplicity.
 - B. The tongue has mastered the art of "flip-flopping."
 - C. The duplicity/hypocrisy of the tongue is seen when we bless God on the one hand and curse those made in His image on the other.
 - D. "Out of the same mouth cometh forth blessing and cursing." The Pharisees extolled their love and reverence for God and cursed Christ at the same time. Peter confessed that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God and a few weeks later cursed and swore an oath, "I don't know the man." We are guilty of this behavior as well.
 - E. James could have learned a similar lesson from Jesus with regard to knowing a tree by the fruit it bears, Luke 6:43-45.

CONCLUSION:

1. The disciple of Christ is known by his speech. The committed Christian speaks with a tongue that is under control.
 2. Peter said that the requisite for loving life and seeing good days is, "*Let him refrain his tongue from speaking evil, and his lips that they speak no guile*" (1 Peter 3:10).
 3. We must make a concerted effort to "Manage our mouths". And that means to "Think" before we speak: T—is it true? H—is it helpful? I—is it inspiring? N—is it necessary? K—is it kind?
 4. May God give us the wisdom, grace, and presence of mind to reflect our love, obedience, and submission to Him in all that we say, do, and think. To God, be the glory.
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THE USE OF TRUE WISDOM

James 3:13-18

Michael Roberts

May I extend my sincere gratitude to Sydney White and the Northwest Florida School of Biblical Studies for the invitation of participation in this Bible-focused and Bible-centered, "23rd Annual Laborers Together With God Lectureship." I am truly honored just to be here in God's presence and in the company of great biblical minds and to drink deeply from the book of James. The inspired Book of James has been selected and the lectureship theme is "Christian Living Involves...."

This theme incorporates over thirty topics and I have been assigned the topic, The Use Of True Wisdom. The text I have been assigned is James 3:13-18 and it is here that we find these words recorded: ¹³"Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by his good life his works in meekness of wisdom. ¹⁴But if ye have bitter jealousy and faction in your heart, glory not and lie not against the truth. ¹⁵This wisdom is not a wisdom that cometh down from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. ¹⁶For where jealousy and faction are, there is confusion and every vile deed. ¹⁷But 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. ¹⁸And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for them that make peace."

Within the background of James 3:13-18 is the expanded context of chapter 3 where James begins by addressing teachers. He starts out in verse one, talking to and talking about teachers, "Be not many of you teachers, my brethren, knowing that we shall receive heavier judgment" (James 1:1).

After introducing the subject of teachers, he then moves to the subject of the tongue. "So the tongue also is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how much wood is kindled by how small a fire" (James 3:5). "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" (James 3:6). "But the tongue can no man tame; it is a restless evil, it is full of deadly poison" (James 3:8).

Then he comes to our text on the subject of wisdom. Our broader context speaks to teachers and to those who would become teachers; this would account for anyone, everyone and every Christian who has a tongue and that such a person should be guided in his use of true wisdom.

The word wisdom is a theme that runs throughout both the Old and New Testaments. It is mentioned some 228 times as recorded from the book of Exodus to the book of Revelation. The word wise

which is the biblical twin-word to wisdom is mentioned some 244 times as recorded from Genesis to Revelation.

In the book of James, we discover that wisdom is a theme in this particular book of the New Testament. "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" (James 1:5).

DISCUSSION:

JAMES 3:13-18

Our text opens with a question. ¹³"Who is wise and understanding among you? let him show by his good life his works in meekness of wisdom." The Greek word for "wisdom" (*sophia*) is a general word. The Greeks used the word *sophia* to mean speculative knowledge, theory and philosophy. But the Hebrews infused the word "wisdom" with a much deeper meaning than just speculative knowledge, theory and philosophy. It has been expanded to mean the ability to apply knowledge to the matter of living life. To a Greek it was absolute speculation. To a Hebrew it was a matter of practical living with skill, understanding and the proper application of knowledge. According to Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, the word "understanding" as used in our text refers to an intelligent and experienced person with the knowledge of an expert — a specialist or a professional who is highly skilled in some area of knowing and doing. May I suggest to you that anyone who is wise and demonstrates a degree of understanding, it becomes evident and visible by how that person conducts the course of his or her life. Just as the speech of anyone is revelatory of what is in the heart, the visible conduct of one's life speaks volume to the acquisition of wisdom. James is saying to the recipients of his letter — among all of you who are claiming to be wise and understanding, I want you to demonstrate who among you is wise and who among you is understands? Who among you has practical skill? Who among you is in fact a professional? Who among you in reality is a specialist in the matter of living? That's the question to be answered! Any of you who claims to have wisdom, you must illustrate that wisdom and understanding by your life. Who has real knowledge? Who has real understanding? Who has real skill? Who has real wisdom will reveal it in his or her life. The use of true wisdom produces a changed life. And so James says, let him show by his good life, his works. Let him show it. Just don't say that you are wise — demonstrate it...live it — not just talk it but walk it. The text before us reveals two types of wisdoms:

First, Earthly Wisdom! This can also be classified as Wisdom from Beneath, or Wisdom of Men or False Wisdom of Earth. Second, Heavenly Wisdom! This can also be classified as Wisdom from Above, or Wisdom of God or True Wisdom from Heaven. In an observation of our text, I have observed that James covers the scope

of opposing forces as he introduces the devilish wisdom which is contrasted with godly wisdom, and the devilish strife, which is contrasted with godly serenity. There were those of his immediate readers who had aligned themselves with the deceptive wisdom of the earth; our passage clarifies these two kinds of wisdoms by the qualities which are connected to each type of wisdom.

I. EARTHLY WISDOM:

James 3:14-16 addresses the concept of earthly wisdom: "But if ye have bitter jealousy and faction in your heart, glory not and lie not against the truth. ¹⁶For where jealousy and faction are, there is confusion and every vile deed." The verification of Earthly Wisdom is observed in the cause, the characteristics and the consequences of earthly wisdom.

The Cause of Earthly Wisdom: It is evidenced by "bitter jealousy" and then there is the word "faction," which is strife. From our text, worldly wisdom starts with bitter jealousy and that creates the attitude of negative competition and conflict. This is personal ambition which creates rivalry, partisan spirit and bitterness toward others.

The Characteristics of Earthly Wisdom: Now, James gives us three words to describe the wisdom that is of the earth. "This wisdom is not a wisdom that cometh down from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish" (James 3:15). One, it is earthly. Two, it is sensual. Three, it is devilish. The wisdom that does not come from above is first: earthly, that's the world; second: sensual, that's the flesh and third: devilish, that's the devil. This is a characterization of human wisdom apart from God.

The Consequences of Earthly Wisdom: "For where jealousy and faction are, there is confusion and every vile deed" (James 3:16). Verse 16 indicates that it is possible to assess what type of wisdom is in action by examining its fruits. The wisdom of the world leads to tragic results. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. Instead of bringing people together, earthly wisdom drives people apart.

How easy it is to believe that with technology, research and scientific development that the human race will continue to get smarter and wiser, but it only takes a casual look at the World's social, economic and political conditions to convince us that more than earthly wisdom is needed to live the life that God would want us to live.

II. HEAVENLY WISDOM.

Heavenly wisdom is introduced with these words in verses 17-18. "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. ¹⁸And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for them that make peace."

The verification of Heavenly Wisdom is also observed in the cause, the characteristics and the consequences of heavenly wisdom.

The Cause of Heavenly Wisdom: Wisdom that is from above is true wisdom; this is God's wisdom that He gives to us. It is eternal and comes from the One who is all knowing, all loving, and all caring. "That their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, ³in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. ⁴Now this I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words" (Col. 2:2-4). "For Jehovah giveth wisdom; Out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding" (Prov. 2:6). "For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew not God, it was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. 1:21).

The Characteristics Of Heavenly Wisdom: These are stated as pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without variance, without hypocrisy.

"Pure" This is wisdom that is unmixed with the evil qualities of the world. It is pure and is established and grounded upon God's knowledge as revealed in the Scripture. "And that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 3:15).

"Peaceable" This is the yearning for harmony and unity and suggests that there is no place and pleasure for division. It is the quality of living in accord and not discord and living without strife

"Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called sons of God" (Matt. 5:9). "Follow after peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14).

"Gentle" This is from a unique word which signifies, that which is equitable and fair. It suggests, "reasonable in judging." And that one is able to submit to maltreatment without malice, trusting in God in spite of all the atrocities of life. "Let your forbearance be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand" (Phil. 4:5).

"Easy to be entreated" means, "willing to yield." It is from a word which suggests the opposite of being disobedient. The wise teacher recognizes that he does not know it all and is willing to submit to the instructions of the Lord. "And the Lord's servant must not strive, but be gentle towards all, apt to teach, forbearing, ²⁵in meekness correcting them that oppose themselves; if peradventure God may give them repentance unto the knowledge of the truth, ²⁶and they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him unto his will" (2 Tim. 2:24-26).

"Full of mercy and good fruits." James said in chapter 2 that mercy should characterize the life of those who demonstrate the use of true wisdom. "For judgment is without mercy to him that hath showed no mercy: mercy glorieth against judgment" (James 2:13). Jesus declared in the beatitude, "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy" (Matt. 5:7).

Christians are admonished to manifest mercy when others who may have treated them with an evil/worldly attitude appear for repentance and forgiveness. Also involved in this concept of being full of mercy is the practical side of mercy, which is living out mercy by giving out or showing mercy. The doers of mercy would be included in this verse. "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves" (James 1:22).

"Without partiality" The wise and understanding teacher is impartial, undivided, unwavering in regard to his service to Jehovah. The wise teacher is stable, not tossed about by the false wisdom of the world. He is consistent in both his disposition and actions for the cause of the kingdom. "I charge thee in the sight of God, and Christ Jesus, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing by partiality" (1 Tim. 5:21).

"Without hypocrisy" The use of true wisdom helps us to be authentic and without pretense in our faith. Wisdom which is from above will prevent the teacher from being a hypocrite.

"Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good" (Rom. 12:9). For hypocrisy can have a negative effect on one's faith. "And the rest of the Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that even Barnabas was carried away with their dissimulation" (Gal. 2:13).

The Consequences Of Heavenly Wisdom: "And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for them that make peace" (James 3:18).

A harvest is gained by the use of heavenly wisdom. This harvest is a fruit of righteousness, which is peace. In contrast, to devilish wisdom, godly wisdom solves problems. Every attribute mentioned in the last verses of chapter 3 is a problem-solving attribute and only results in peace because of the use of true wisdom. The truly wise person is led not to sow seeds of discord, but seeks to bring true peace between God and man and then between man and man and never compromises the truth of Scripture.

CONCLUSION

In our presentation of the use of true wisdom, we have examined The Earthly Wisdom and The Heavenly Wisdom with their characteristics and consequences. The sad story of humanity is that God created us and has revealed to us a proper knowledge of Him. Yet, we have trusted our own moral compass and our own earthly wisdom rather than heavenly wisdom, which is true wisdom

from above. Daily, humanity suffers the consequences of its lack of and the proper use of true wisdom. But as Christians, we have access to God's wisdom. Allow God to direct our lives, those around us will see true wisdom, wisdom that is not of the world but of God.

AN ABSENCE OF UNGODLY STRIFE

James 4:1-5

Jared Knoll

1. "Can't we all just get along?"
2. The Psalmist said, "How good and pleasant..." (Psalm 133:1)
3. Certainly, life is more pleasant when people "get along" with each other (though I think a few thrive on divisiveness).
4. Unity has to be worked at.
 - a. Eph. 4:3, Endeavoring expresses diligence in persevering toward that end.
 - b. James 3:18, fruit is brought forth from sowing and making.
5. Our text focuses on things which disrupt unity and precipitates and propels ungodly strife (One work in sowing and reaping is eradicating noxious plants and weeds, so that the good can thrive and produce in very fertile land).

DISCUSSION:

I. JAMES BEGINS WITH A QUESTION (4:1A).

- A. James was no stranger to asking questions.
 1. Twenty-three are posed in this epistle.
 2. The majority is rhetorical or posed to drive home a point that should have been well understood by the reader.
- B. Considering the parts of the question:
 1. "From whence come" — what is the source?
 2. "Wars" — a prevailing state of strife. A. T. Robertson calls it a "chronic state or campaign."
 3. "Fightings" — reference to the individual battles that occur within the prevailing state of war.
 4. "Among you" — In the midst of God's people.
 - a. We have no expectation of persistent peace in the world (John 15:19-21; 16:33; Gen. 3:15; James 3:14-16).
 - b. But within the church, we are to be a people that pursue peace with God, others and ourselves (1 Peter 3:11; Rom. 12:18; Matt. 5:9; James 3:18; Phil. 4:6-7; 1 Cor. 6:1-8).
- C. The presence of strife should be an indication that something is amiss. Consider the broader context:

1. "Ought not so to be" (James 3:10) – misusing the tongue.
2. "Earthly, sensual and devilish" (James 3:15-16) – worldly wisdom. Fix it!

II. PEACE IS DISRUPTED BY UNGODLY PERSONAL AMBITION (4:1B).

- A. "Your lusts that war in your members?"
 1. "Lusts" denotes pleasures (Thayer's lexicon).
 2. "Satisfaction men seek from the senses and oftentimes the impelling desire for gratification" (Guy N. Woods).
 3. Such desires or ambitions will have one oblivious or even blatantly disregarding the good and desires of others.
- B. Such ungodly ambition exemplified:
 1. As seen in Ahab and Jezebel desiring the vineyard of Naboth (1 Kings 21:1ff).
 2. As seen in Miriam and Aaron of the O.T. and Diotrephes in the N.T. (Num. 12; 3 John 9-10).
 3. As seen in the Chief Priests who for envy crucified Christ (Matt. 27:18).
 4. As seen even among the disciples (Matt. 18:1ff) – it was a problem of the heart defeated by these men.
 5. As seen in David lusting after Bathsheba (2 Sam. 11).
- C. An answer to this problem — Change the heart (Prov. 23:7; Matt. 15:19).
 1. Put the Kingdom first (Matt. 6:33). What is best for the church?
 2. Put the needs of others first (Mark 12:28-31; Phil. 2:4,5). What is the best for my brethren?
 3. Put the godly desires of others first (Rom. 12:9-10). What is best to make for peace?

III. PEACE IS DISRUPTED BY UNGODLY ACTIONS (4:2).

- A. "Ye kill...fight and war"
 1. This is connected to those ungodly ambitions — lust, desire.
 2. The problem of the heart initiated activities of the flesh.
 3. "Kill" may be a reference to the disposition of the heart, however we clearly recognize that many lives have been violently taken to fulfill the lusts of the flesh since the world began.
- B. Such ungodly actions exemplified. Consider:
 1. The subsequent actions of those previously mentioned: Jezebel, David and Chief Priests.
 2. Cain (Gen. 4:1ff). He killed.
 3. Balaam (Num. 22-25:5; 31:13-20). How many perished as a result of his counsel?

4. Esau (Heb. 12:16). What did he give up? How did he respond when he realized what had been given up?
- C. Change the heart and you change the actions.
 1. As previously mentioned.
 2. Also consider Rom. 12:19-21; Luke 10:25-37; Matt. 5:44; 1 Peter 2:23; 3:9; Acts 7:60; Luke 6:34.

IV. PEACE IS DISRUPTED BY UNGODLY PETITIONS (2c-3).

- A. Communication is essential to unity, however, improper communication or an absence of communication will most certainly disrupt. In this case the communication is with God.
 1. "Have not because ye ask not." You're not asking for essential things, so God is not giving.
 2. "Ye ask and receive not." For that which you are asking your motive is wrong.
 - a. Ask — for one's self or selfishly.
 - b. Amiss — base or mean; evilly
 - c. Upon your lusts — to spend or consume wastefully or to be squandered (Luke 15:11-13 as opposed to 3 John 2).
- B. To keep our peace from being disrupted we need to pray as we have been taught by the Lord and His apostles (Matt. 6:5-15; Luke 11:1-13; 18:1-14; 1 Thess. 5:17).

V. PEACE IS DISRUPTED BY UNGODLY ASSOCIATIONS (4:4).

- A. "Friendship of the world is enmity with God."
 1. The reference is to the church. ASV has only "adulteresses" which is understood to implicate the church as a bride (not uncommon in scripture: Psalm 73; Isaiah 57; Ezekiel 23; Hosea 1-3; Eph. 5:23-33; 2 Cor. 11:2; Rom. 7:1-4).
 2. "Friendship" — warm affection; chief desire (a warning, 1 John 2:15-17).
 3. "Enmity" — a state of hostility.
 4. Being married to Christ, if we cast our lot with the world we enter into a hostile state with our spiritual spouse!
- B. We must be concerned about our associations.
 1. They have the potential to corrupt us (Prov.s 13:20; 1 Cor. 5:6; 15:33).
 2. They have the power to overcome us (2 Cor. 6:14-18).
 3. They have the ability to allure us (2 Peter 2:18-20).
- C. To keep our peace from being disrupted, we need to associate with those of like precious faith (Joshua 24:15).

VI. PEACE IS DISRUPTED BY UNGODLY NEGLIGENCE (4:5).

- A. "Do you think the scripture saith in vain?"
 - 1. The scriptures are the standard for unity (John 17:20-21).
 - 2. If one believes them to be empty, worthless or void of significance, then they proceed without a foundation upon which to establish unity.
 - 3. The scriptures are replete with warnings which are often disregarded.
 - 4. Consider Prov. 14:34; 14:30; Eccl. 4:4
- B. Void of scripture, our heart will be overcome of lust in many forms:
 - 1. Consider Prov. 14:12; 30:12; Jer. 10:23
 - 2. This in turn gives place to all the previous things mentioned by James in the text: ungodly actions, petitions and associations.
- C. To keep peace from being disrupted, let us be filled with knowledge of the scriptures (Col. 3:16; 1 Peter 2:2; 1 John 2:24; Matt. 4:4,7,10; Heb. 2:1; 12:15, 25).

CONCLUSION:

- 1. We can get along, and it can be good and pleasant!
- 2. But, we must put away ungodly ambition, ungodly actions, ungodly petitions and ungodly associations.
- 3. Fill our minds with God's word and with faith put into action.
- 4. We know what causes strife, now let's work to avoid it before it comes and overcome it where it exists.

HUMILITY SOLUTION OF UNGODLY STRIFE

James 4:6-10

Dan Wheeler

- 1. The context of our subject is James 4:6-10, which mentions humility at the beginning and at the end of the section.
- 2. The greater context should include James 4:1-5 because it discusses conflict among brethren. Such conflict is caused by covetousness and worldliness.
- 3. How are we to overcome ungodly strife?

DISCUSSION:

- I. UNDERSTAND MORE ABOUT GOD'S GRACIOUSNESS.

A. *"He giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble"* (James 4:6).

1. Quotation from Proverbs 3:34: *"Surely He scorneth the scorners: but he giveth grace unto the lowly."*

a. The rebellious and ungodly will deserve what they get: scorn or rejection from God.

b. The lowly will receive God's: favor, kindness, gifts.

2. There are two parts of this verse to consider.

a. He gives "more grace." Taken on face value, it means that God gives more blessings or favor.

1) Grace is our help in time of need (Heb. 4:16). We pray for help before the "throne of grace."

2) We should be confident that the Lord will provide the blessings we need on a daily basis to sustain and help us.

b. He gives grace to the humble.

1) The humble person is one who has emptied himself of ego and pride, and thinks of others rather than himself.

2) If you are filled with the world, you don't have room for God.

II. COMMANDS LISTED IN JAMES 4:7-10.

A. Submit to God.

1. The only way to know that we're submitting to God is to obey His word. James 1:22, do not merely hear the Word, do what it says.

2. There are countless examples in Scripture to consider. Notice, however:

a. Naaman (2 Kings 5). He was told to wash in the Jordan River seven times to be cleansed of his leprosy. He became incensed that a bigger deal was not made over him or that the chosen river for his cleansing was not one of beautiful Damascus rivers. He was gently rebuked by his servant for not obeying and when he humbled himself and obeyed, he was cleansed.

b. Saul (son of Kish, 1 Sam. 15) was instructed to utterly destroy the Amalekites and their livestock, but he decided to spare the king as a captive and to keep the best livestock, supposedly as a sacrifice to God. The prophet Samuel rebuked him, stating that "to obey better than sacrifice; and to hearken than the fat of rams; For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry" (1 Sam. 15:22-23).

- c. Saul of Tarsus, this persecutor of Jesus became fearful and bewildered, and humbly asked Him, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6).
 - d. Pentecost converts. "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41).
- B. Resist the devil. How do we do it?
 - 1. Look at examples
 - a. Joseph resisted Potipher's wife. Gen. 39:9 verbally, 39:12, physically.
 - b. Israelites were blessed, but overthrown in the wilderness (1 Cor. 10).
 - 2. 1 Cor. 10:6-10, Don't be like them. Don't lust, become idolaters, commit sexual immorality, tempt Christ, murmur. Other places it says "Flee fornication" (1 Cor. 6:18) and "Keep yourself from idols" (1 John 5-21).
 - 3. Look at result. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. The devil fled from Jesus for a season (Luke 4.13) and the angels "ministered to him" (Matt. 4.11).
- C. Draw near to God.
 - 1. A bad example. Unfaithful Jerusalem "drew not near to her God" (Zeph. 3:2).
 - 2. It is a command: "Let us draw near to God with a true heart" (Heb. 10.22).
 - 3. Ways we draw near: Through Christ, our High Priest, we can come boldly before the throne (Heb. 4:14-16).
 - a. In prayer. Great men of prayer include Solomon, David, our Lord Jesus (John 17), and the apostles (Acts 4.24-31).
 - b. In reading God's Word (Psalm 119).
 - c. In meditation. Think on these things and the God of peace shall be with you" (Phil. 4.9-10).
 - d. In worship. Drawing near (Heb. 10.22) is connected to exhortation, assembling of the saints (10:25).
- D. Cleanse your hands represents what we do.
 - 1. Matt. 15:1-2. Disciples transgress tradition of elders by not washing their hands when eating.
 - 2. Matt. 27:23-24. Pilate washed his hands at the trial of Jesus. Did it absolve him from guilt? See Acts 4:26-27, *"For truly against your holy servant Jesus whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together."*
- E. Purify your hearts — think the best thoughts. You can tell who is pure-minded. *"Unto the pure, all things are pure, but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure, but even their mind and conscience is defiled"* (Titus 1:15).

- F. Lament, mourn, weep, turn. As humans we try to stop tears and deny grief. But it is better to “go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting; for that is the end of all men and the living will lay it to his heart” (Eccl. 7.2).
- G. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord and He will lift you up. To humble oneself is to bring low, to reduce to a lower condition. Just as the last shall be first, the humble will be exalted by God Himself.

III. APPLICATION: HUMILITY IS THE SOLUTION TO UNGODLY STRIFE IN:

- A. FAMILIES. A man asked Jesus to speak to his brother that he would divide the inheritance with him (Luke 12:13). But Jesus would not be a judge over them in that matter.
- B. MARRIAGES. Marriage counselors often talk about the many trouble-spots in marriage: money, in-laws, intimacy, and communication; but EGO is the most of marriage problems. Even adultery, the ultimate in betrayal and the only scriptural cause for divorce (Matt. 19:9) is caused by selfishness.
- C. CHURCH. Fights over personalities, carpet, worship times, and many other issues too numerous to cover.

CONCLUSION:

- 1. HUMILITY will cause you to obey God's instructions on how to get along: Rom. 12:9-10; 13:8-10.
- 2. All of us need to put this into practice.

RESOLVE TO CONTROL OUR SPEECH

Nina Ruth House (Ladies only)

- 1. Impressions may be made upon others by several means:
 - a. One's economic class could be perceived by virtue of one's attire, vehicle, or house in which one lives.
 - b. A person's educational class might be determined by the size of his library or by the use of his vocabulary.
 - c. Someone's character might be perceived by his activities, or by the associates that he keeps.
 - d. It is clear, however, that when a person speaks, the content of his speech will reveal his true character, and thereby determine how he is perceived.
- 2. The use of the tongue is one specific means by which man is able to communicate.

3. Consequently, the importance of how a person uses the tongue, as is emphasized in scripture, can determine his eternal destiny.
4. Just to note the obvious contrast, man might use his tongue to honor God and bless his fellow man, or he might choose to dishonor God in blasphemy, or by cursing man and engaging in filthy or inappropriate speech.
5. While it is the case that the inspired James states that the tongue is a 'little member,' (3:5); it is a matter of record that the influence of the tongue is immeasurable.
6. It will be the primary purpose of this lesson to address the need to examine ways to discipline the tongue.

DISCUSSION:

I. THE PHYSICAL PROPERTIES AND PURPOSE OF THE 'LITTLE MEMBERS' (James, 3:5).

- A. Note first, the physical properties of the tongue.
 1. The adult tongue is about 2"x5", which consist of muscle fibers, and is covered by a mucous membrane.
 2. Physiologically speaking, the tongue is used for tasting, masticating, swallowing, and constructing words in the speech process.
 3. Much is learned about one's health by the tongue.
 - a. A physician will observe the tongue to assess any symptoms of certain types of diseases as anemia, allergies, vitamin deficiencies, etc.
 - b. Relate the example of mother – coated tongue was a sign of constipation.
 - c. Doctors have also determined whether or not a person has had a stroke by examining the tongue.
- B. One of the specific uses of the tongue is its capacity to construct speech.
 1. It is in man's nature to communicate his feelings, thoughts, and needs.
 2. Throughout the generations of man's history the methods of communications have evolved and fluctuated.
 - a. In past generations man used drawings, drumbeats, smoke signals, and eventually writing, printing, and the use of mail.
 - b. In more recent generations, man has used signs, radio, TV, phones, cell phones, texting, and social media by use of digital satellite data.
 3. While the methods of communication have changed, man and his typical nature, have not changed.

II. THE POWER BEHIND THE TONGUE.

- A. The brain or the mind of man is his spiritual heart.
 1. It is here that man's capacity to reason is generated.

2. How a person thinks, and what a person thinks is the making of his character; for the sum of his thinking will at sometime, be manifest (Prov. 23:7).
3. When God saw the manifestation of the thinking of Noah's generation, He determined to destroy the earth with a flood. (Gen. 6:5).
4. The Lord taught rather prolifically about the working of man's heart. (Matt. 15:19).
5. Since it is the heart of man which is the seat of his knowledge and understanding, it is imperative that the information absorbed by it be that which would elevate his life.
6. Clearly, the heart has the ability to be convinced by fact; to the extent that it can believe in evidence that is presented to it, or it can reject fact in spite of the evidence. (Matt. 13:15; Rom. 10:10).
- B. While the heart may absorb information, it is the tongue which will manifest what lies upon the heart.
 1. Jesus stated that "out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh" (Matt. 12:34-36).
 2. If the heart feeds on evil things, then evil will proceed from it. (Matt. 15:18).
 3. Hence, the character of the heart is manifested in one's conduct and speech. (Matt. 15:19; Prov. 23:7).
 4. Consequently, it is vital that each individual guard the information he absorbs, and guard the character of his heart. (Prov. 4:23-24; Psalms 19:14).

III. THE MISUSE OF THE TONGUE.

- A. Consider first, the problem of gossip or slander.
 1. Defining the terms:
 - a. Gossip is defined as "idle, often malicious talk, especially about others."
 - b. Slander is defined as "an oral statement of a false, malicious, or defamatory nature, tending to damage another's reputation, means of livelihood, etc."
 2. Consider the words from these inspired writers:
 - a. Solomon — Prov. 18:8; Prov. 26:20-22
 - b. James — James 3:11-15
 3. The apostle Paul would urge the Roman brethren to avoid using the tongue to enact revenge on anyone. (Rom. 12:19-21).
 4. In fact, Jesus taught one should love his enemy, and treat them kindly. (Matt. 5:11-12, 43-48).
 5. It is, however, rather typical behavior for groups of friends to gather and speak slanderously of someone. (Note Moses' warning — Exo. 23:2).

6. One should take note how Solomon admonishes his son to avoid slanderous speech. (Prov. 20:19; Prov. 16:28).
- B. Secondly, consider the matter of using the tongue to murmur and complain.
 1. There are those who have the general disposition to complaining.
 - a. It is often said of them, that 'misery loves company.'
 - b. While that might be the case, most do not prefer to associate with those who persistently murmur.
 - c. To be around those who constantly complain, will leave one depressed, and generally incite bad moods in others.
 - d. Paul warned to "do all things without murmuring." (Phil 2:14)
 2. Note some Biblical examples of those who murmured.
 - a. The children of Israel were well noted for their murmuring. (Num. 14:1-3)
 - b. Jesus alluded to the problem in the parable of the laborers. (Matt. 20:1-16)
 - c. The scribes and Pharisees murmured about Jesus eating with sinners. (Luke 5:29-32)
 - d. The Jews murmured about the Lord's teachings. (John 6:41)
 3. One might ask, "What causes one to murmur?"
 - a. With some, it is their discontentment. (1 Tim. 6:7-8; Heb. 13:5)
 - b. Others murmur because of jealousy and selfishness.
 4. One should be mindful that it is not intrinsically wrong to speak of matters that need to be corrected.
 - a. Note the situation with the Grecian widows in Acts 6.
 - b. But with their needs being met, it would have been wrong for them to have complained about how they were being handled, or how little was being provided for them.
 - c. Remember the Jews in the wilderness. (Psa. 78:19-22)
- C. Another misuse of the tongue to be considered is the use of filthy language.
 1. The opposite of language which would be characterized as 'vulgar,' would be decent tasteful and polite.
 2. For some reason, there are those who are intent on using language which is the vilest in nature.
 3. Some have been so long exposed to vulgarities that it has become the norm to engage in the same.
 4. Paul warned against the use of 'corrupt communication.' (Eph. 4:29)

- a. The word 'corrupt' comes from a word which means "rotten, worthless, or bad."
- b. Thayer defined it as 'putrid, worthless, and no longer fit for use.'
5. George Washington once stated: "The foolish and wicked practice of profane cursing or swearing is a vice so mean and low that every person of sense and character detests and despises it."
6. The content of one's speech is a clear indication of what one thinks.
 - a. Hence, it is imperative that one's thinking be influenced by that which exalts righteousness.
 - b. The use of vulgar speech only manifests a person's inability or ignorance to properly express himself.
- D. Yet another misuse of the tongue is to allow the tongue to engage in lying.
 1. Relate the story of the butcher.
 2. Consider the following passages. (Matt. 5:37; Rev. 21:8)

IV. THE PROPER EXERCISE OF THE TONGUE.

- A. The challenge to proper use of the tongue might be for one to concentrate on choosing the words that can do the most good in any given situation.
- B. Simply considering others before self will most certainly lend to greater self discipline in the choosing of words.
- C. Consider the benefits of selfless speech:
 1. When employing encouraging speech, one usually does not have to be overly concerned about what has been said; thus eliminating stress.
 2. When eliminating speech which focuses on one self, it will:
 - a. Improve relationships,
 - b. Improve professional performances,
 - c. And most importantly, it will make one more like Christ.
 3. The use of edifying words will not only lift up others, but will bring greater peace to one's own heart. (Eph. 4:29). (Zig Ziglar is quoted as saying, "He climbs highest who helps another up.")
- D. Consider the following formula to sustain the affirmation that one should think before speaking.
 1. T – Is it TRUE?
 2. H – Is it HELPFUL?
 3. I – Is it INSPIRING?
 4. N – Is it NECESSARY?
 5. K – Is it KIND?
- E. Solomon stated:

1. Prov. 15:4, "A gentle tongue is a tree of life."
2. Prov. 16:24, "Gracious words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul, and health to the body."
- F. Paul would add, "Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person" (Gal. 4:6).
- G. The challenge in exercising proper speech is to change the heart so that it is guided by the will of God.
 1. "Set a watch O Jehovah before my mouth; keep the door of lips" (Psa. 141:3).
 2. "The lips of the righteous feed many; but the foolish die for lack of understanding" (Prov. 10:21).
 3. "I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress" (Psa. 17:3).
 4. "Be an example to them that believe, in word, in manner of life, in love, in faith, in purity." (1 Tim. 4:12)
 5. "Be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath" (Jam. 1:19).

CONCLUSION:

1. It has been estimated that the average person speaks about 11,000,000 words a year.
2. It behooves every individual to take particular notice to every word spoken.
3. It is never appropriate to use filthy speech.
4. There are good words which can be spoken, but if spoken at the wrong time or in the wrong way, harm can follow.
5. One should be mindful that every word will be brought into judgment.
6. Jesus stated: "For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matt. 12:37).

PROPER SPEECH TOWARD BRETHREN

James 4:11-12

Jimmy W. Bates

1. James 4:11-12, "*Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.* ¹²*There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?*"
2. "Proper Speech" is a prominent theme in the epistle of James, but the emphasis of our study will be limited to the two verses

of our text dealing with proper speech toward our brethren in the church, as well as toward our fellow-man.

3. Failure to obey the inspired instruction in these two verses has and will result in:
 - a. "A world of iniquity" (James 3:6).
 - b. Division among brethren which becomes a great hindrance to the work and growth of the church.
 - c. The destruction of the closest of relationships.
 - d. The loss of souls eternally.
 - e. Our study will be developed in the following points:
 - 1) What the "perfect law of liberty" (James 1:25) requires of us in our speech and treatment of brethren.
 - 2) What is forbidden in our speech and treatment of brethren.
 - 3) Improper speech toward our brethren involves the wrong attitude and treatment of the law of Christ.
 - 4) A failure to respect the One Lawgiver.

DISCUSSION:

I. THE RIGHT SPEECH AND TREATMENT OF OUR BRETHREN AND OUR FELLOW-MAN.

- A. Practice the Law of LOVE:
 1. Love God supremely and our neighbor as ourselves (Matt. 22:37 40).
 - a. James called it the "royal law" (James 2:8).
 - b. All the law fulfilled in one word love (Gal. 5:13,14; Rom. 13:9 10).
 - c. Love is of God (1 John 4:7,11,12,16,21).
 2. Disciples must love one another as Christ loved them (John 13:34, 35).
 - a. Love all the saints (Col. 1:4).
 - b. Exercise brotherly love (Heb. 13:1; 1 Thess. 4:9; 1 Peter 2:17; 3:8).
 - c. Unfeigned, without hypocrisy (1 Peter 1:22; Rom. 12:9, 10).
 - d. Forbearing one another in love (Eph. 4:2).
 - e. Hearts...knit together in love (Col. 2:2).
- B. Must exercise "righteous judgment" toward brethren and others (John 7:24).
 1. James 4:11, 12 does not condemn all judging.
 2. We can and must be "fruit inspectors" (Matt. 7:15 20).
 3. We are commanded to reprove, rebuke, exhort, and admonish even brethren (2 Tim. 4:2-4; Heb. 3:12,13; 10:24; 1 Thess. 5:14,15).
 4. To restore a fallen brother requires proper judgment (Gal. 6:1; James 5:19,20).
 5. James 4:11-12, a kind of judging that is condemned.

II. IMPROPER SPEECH AND TREATMENT OF BRETHREN:

- A. "Speak not evil one of another, brethren..." (James 4:11).
 1. ("Speak not one against another" ASV). Literally means, "stop speaking against each other."
 2. Includes the act, the will (habit), and even the evil thoughts that produced the evil speaking.
 3. Also includes the receiving and circulating to others evil speaking against a brother.
 4. Involves: pointing fingers at one another; backbiting – running others down behind their back; unjust, destructive criticism; slander, starting false rumors; gossip, tale-bearing, all defaming speech motivated by malice (Eph. 4:31; Col. 3:8; 1 Peter 2:1; Rom. 1:30; Psa. 15:1-3; 2 Cor. 12:20; Prov. 10:18; 11:13; 18:8; 20:19; 26:20).
 5. Such evil speech shows a lack of love for God and for brethren!
 6. It comes from a haughty, proud disposition and a feeling of superiority that looks down on others.
 7. Let us not engage in the sin of speaking evil of our brethren, or anyone else; nor should we listen to such evil speech and become partaker of their evil deeds!
- B. Refrain from the unrighteous judging of brethren. "He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother..." (James 4:11).
 1. The evil speaking against a brother constitutes evil, unjust judging of that brother. (Compare Matt. 7:1-5).
 2. The judging that is condemned in James 4:11 involves:
 - a. Forming an unfavorable opinion against a brother without knowing the circumstances or the real character and motives of the words or acts condemned – placing the wrong interpretation upon it.
 - b. Censorious judgments without all the facts.
 - c. Judging or impugning motives.
 - d. Judgments designed to hurt or defame one's character.
 - e. Unjust, ill-natured criticism without true or complete information, motivated by a "better than thou" attitude!
 3. This is not the righteous judgment required. Matt. 7:24.

III. THE WRONG ATTITUDE AND TREATMENT OF THE LAW OF CHRIST: "...speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge." (James 4:11)

- A. Speaking evil of and falsely judging a brother is to speak evil of and judge the law of Christ.

1. Because it ignores and rejects the part of the law that commands us to love one another.
 2. It's judging the law to be wrong and not worthy to be practiced and therefore should be disregarded.
 3. Such is the height of arrogance and wickedness to pass judgment upon the law of God as to what it should or should not teach!
 4. The law of God protects us and our brethren from all unfair, unloving, hurtful speech and to just ignore it in attacking and unfairly judging our brethren is in effect attacking and unfairly judging the law itself. (2 Cor. 12:20; Eph. 4:29-32; 1 Peter 2:1)
 5. We must not put ourselves above the law and act as if it does not apply to us!
- B. We are to be doers of the law and not judges of the law (James 1:22-25; Rom. 2:13).
1. All have a responsibility to obey the law of God and not violate it or attempt to pass judgment on its worth or validity (1 Sam. 15:22; Acts 5:29; Rom. 10:3).
 2. We cannot have a right relationship with God, without obeying His law of love and sustaining a right relationship with our brethren (1 John 2:11,12; 4:20,21).

IV. THE ONE LAWGIVER AND JUDGE: "There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?" (James 4:12).

- A. "One only is the lawgiver and judge..." (ASV)
1. Christ is our only lawgiver and judge (Isa. 33:22).
 - a. Lawgiver (Acts 3:22,23; Gal. 6:2; Heb. 1:1,2).
 - b. Judge (2 Tim. 4:1, 8; 1 Peter 4:4,5; Rom. 2:16; 2 Cor. 5:10; Acts 17:31).
 - c. Christ has ALL authority (Matt. 28:18; John 5:26,27).
 2. No man has authority to make laws or pass judgment on the validity of the laws of Christ!
 3. Legislative and judicial power belongs only to Christ and not man.
 4. Those who have presumptuously tried to legislate for God have caused much division and trouble in the church (Col. 2:18,20,22; Acts 20:28-30; 1 Tim. 4:1-3; 2 Tim. 4:1-4; 1 John 4:1).
 5. Only those laws given by Christ through His Gospel are binding on men today.
- B. "...Who is able to save and to destroy..."
1. Christ only able to save in heaven (Luke 19:10; John 4:42; Eph. 5:23; Col. 3:20; 1 John 4:14).
 2. Christ also able to destroy in hell (Matt. 10:28; 25:31-46; Rev. 20:10-15).

- C. "...Who art thou that judgest another?" (Rom. 14:4; 2:1; Matt. 7:1).
1. Man has no authority in himself to legislate law or set himself up as a judge of others!
 2. Man has no power to save a soul in heaven or condemn one to hell.
 3. What right does man have to speak evil of and judge a brother and in so doing speak evil of and judge the law of God that forbids such?

CONCLUSION:

1. Let us remember the warning of James 4:11,12, the next time we are tempted to:
 - a. Speak evil against and falsely judge another,
 - b. Verbally "run down", slander, backbite, degrade another individual,
 - c. Start some juicy piece of gossip against another,
 - d. Or, pass on that gossip or rumor that's hurtful to another,
 - e. Seek to defame, harm, or destroy the reputation of another.
2. Remember that such speech is actually speaking evil and judging the law of Christ that condemns such.
3. Our responsibility is to obey the law of Christ and not sit in judgment against it.
4. There is one lawgiver (Christ) who has authority to save and condemn.
5. Therefore, who are we to be unlawfully running down another human being, especially a brother or sister in Christ, in violation of God's law of love?

GOD IN OUR PLANNING

James 4:13-17

Tom House

1. The Book of James not only contains rich, in-depth material for every level of Bible student, from the novice to the veteran; but will also incorporate practical lessons and admonitions to its readers.
2. The forth chapter of James presents several of these practical admonitions:
 - a. Dealing with conflicts stemming from covetousness
 - b. Dealing with the lack of prayer, or improper prayer
 - c. Dealing with problems of worldliness
 - d. Dealing; with the contrast of pride and humility
 - e. The practical appeal to draw nigh to God

- f. Dealing with the problem of unrighteous judgment
- g. And finally, dealing with presumptive, Godless planning
- 3. The task assigned to this lesson is to address the last of these admonitions — leaving God out of one's planning.

DISCUSSION:

I. THE STATED PRESUMPTION.

- A. First, consider the purveyors of the presumption as noted in the text — the merchants.
 - 1. In general, the Jews were rather accustomed to travel.
 - a. The Law of Moses required that the Israelites travel to Jerusalem in order to participate in the Jewish feast days.
 - b. For those who lived in foreign countries, it would require of them to leave their homes for the long journey, and would mean for some, months away from home.
 - 2. It was no less the case for those who were Jewish merchants, or merchants of any culture and ethnic background.
 - a. Depending upon the type of business in which they were engaged, there would be contingent plans for travel to certain areas to engage in the local commerce.
 - b. And, as is suggested in the text, some of the business ventures might involve a lengthy stay.
 - 3. To be noted, incidentally, is the disposition of the merchants of James' day, and those who plan business ventures today — many will leave God out of their plans.
- B. Secondly, consider the presumption stated in the text, which involves several interesting particulars. (4:13).
 - 1. The time of their departure is first considered.
 - a. While considered, the time is not precisely determined.
 - b. The example employs the first-person plural; indicating that the venture which is here stated, involves more than one merchant.
 - c. Based on what is stated, it seems to imply that at least one of them is ready to depart immediately, while the other, or others, may not be ready.
 - d. It is, however, determined that at the least, departure will be made the next day.
 - 2. The destination is next taken into account.
 - a. Since James is citing a general example to illustrate his point, the reader may assume that the perceived merchants have decided upon a particular location.

- b. Merchants will generally consider the profitability of a location before committing to a specific locale.
 - c. It must be assumed that the merchants have studied and considered several sites before settling on a certain site.
- 3. The third element of the presumption is the determined length of stay.
 - a. In this case the length of time slated for this venture, is a year.
 - b. This may have been determined by previous experiences, or by the testimony of other business men having spent time in the chosen vicinity.
- 4. The final point of the presumption involves the stated purpose for the venture; and will involve three parts: buying, selling, and getting gain or profit.
- 5. Obviously, what is presented in the text is the general principle of commerce which is still practiced today; buy wholesale, and securing profit from selling at a retail price.

II. THE PROBLEM WITH PRESUMPTIOUSNESS.

- A. The English Dictionary defines the word 'presume:'
 - 1. "To take for granted, or suppose"
 - 2. "To act or proceed with unwarrantable or impertinent boldness."
- B. The Psalmist well knew the dangers involved with presumptions. (Psa. 19:13)
- C. As previously noted, the primary problem presented in the illustration submitted by James indicates the typical mistake man will make in setting plans in motion without considering God in the process.
- D. Note the problems with the stated presumption.
 - 1. The merchants first state that 'today or tomorrow' "we will go."
 - 2. It is the sense of definitiveness in which the claim is made that makes the tone of the presumption so serious.
 - 3. James inserts a dose of reality to the prospective venture — "ye know not what shall be on the morrow." (vs. 14)
 - a. Solomon provides the proper perspective as well. (Prov. 27:1)
 - b. One need not speak definitively about the future, even though it may be as soon as the next day; for one has no way to know 'what a day;' (even the present day); 'will bring forth.'
- E. Specifically, James addresses the folly of the presumption from the vantage point of the brevity of one's life.
 - 1. The question asked, is profound — "what is your life?"

2. Most assuredly, volumes have been written to address that very question.
3. However, James sets the context in reference to time, and the brevity one's existence.
4. The conclusion is not only based upon experience, but is provided by inspiration – life 'is but a vapor.' (1 Peter 1:24)
5. Fittingly, James had earlier addressed the certainties of death, even for the rich. (James 1:10-11)
 - a. Solomon was perhaps humanity's richest man; but what did he learn from his life of luxury? (Eccl. 2:1-12; Eccl. 12:13)
 - b. What did the rich farmer of Luke 12 learn? (Luke 12:16-21)
- F. The truth is man knows nothing of the future; therefore, he is not in the position to speak definitively about it.
- G. James notes a response to the merchant's perceived presumption – "ye know not..."
 1. Of the future, only two conclusions can be drawn:
 - a. Man does not know; he can only speculate;
 - b. Man knows he can't know, but fails to acknowledge it.
 2. To be clear, one can assume that there is a future based on the past; but he has no assurance of it.
- H. Additionally, to put things in full perspective, the only certainties of the future are identified by God – death, the resurrection, and the judgment!
 1. Death (Heb. 9:27).
 2. The resurrection (John 5:28-29).
 3. The judgment (Heb. 9:27).
- I. When one makes plans for the future, the aforementioned events should be the focus of any definite decisions, because the certainty of their occurring is based on promises of God.
 1. Consider the people of Noah's day; what did they think in respect of Noah's preaching?
 - a. What did they 'know' as juxtaposed with what they 'thought' they knew?
 - b. What did Noah know?
 2. Did Noah make plans for the future?
 3. Was God involved in Noah's planning?
 4. What difference did it make?

III. THE SIN OF PRESUMPTIVE ARROGANCE (v.16).

- A. James clearly indicates that godless presumptions are evidence of arrogance, (v.16).
- B. An examination of the text will reveal some vital points to be considered.

1. The presumption presented in the text involves a time of activity not yet experienced, but presented as if it were.
2. As a consequence, James suggests that 'now' such arrogance is evil.
- C. The definition of terms will sustain the charge James rightly makes.
 1. The 'rejoice' is used in some versions, others will employ the word 'glory,' which is from the Greek word *kaucha omai*, meaning 'to boast or vaunt.'
 2. The word 'boastings' is from *alazoneia*, meaning 'braggadocio,' 'self confidence' or pride.
- D. Arrogance, or pride, has always been considered an abomination to God. (Prov. 6:16,17; Prov. 8:13)

IV. THE PROPER APPROACH TO PLANNING.

- A. James does not condemn future planning, but he clearly admonishes his readers to make sure God is included.
- B. The disposition to be taken in any planning should be approached as follows:
 1. With the understanding that life is filled with uncertainties;
 2. With the understanding that life, at best, is brief;
 3. With the understanding that one should say and act upon the principle 'if the Lord will...'
 - a. How many will utter the phrase, but still do not include God in their plans?
 - b. To illustrate – how many plan vacations, but do not include the plans for their worship, or take into account their contribution, etc.
 - c. How many plan vacations to places where Christians have no business being seen?
 - d. How many plan their finances for the future, but without consideration to the cause of Christ?
 - e. How often will someone state a plan with a definitive tone, and not include God in it?
- C. Additionally, how often are plans for doing good failed to be made; or good deeds which should have been done, failed to be accomplished? (v.17)
- D. It seems, based on James' line of reasoning, that it is just as serious a mistake to fail to do that which is known to be good as it is to arrogantly presume that one will 'do this or that' without considering whether or not it is God's will.
- E. In either case, God is omitted; and man sins.

CONCLUSION:

1. It would do well for every human being to consider God in all that is done.

2. But there is no excuse for any Christian to fail to be mindful of his brief existence, and to 'redeem the time' he has by properly including God in his plans.

PROPER REGARD FOR MATERIAL THINGS

James 5:1-5

Ronnie Whitemore

"Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. ²Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth eaten. ³Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. ⁴Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. ⁵Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter."

1. Riches and wealth can be great blessings.
 - a. God has given some people the ability to make money. Some people use their knowledge of economics, supply and demand, marketing and they use their sense of timing, their ability to take a risk with an invention or a new method to produce great gain.
 - b. God gave great possessions and riches to Abram (Gen. 13:2,6; 14:20,23), Job (Job 1:3,5; 42:10,12) and Solomon (1 Kings 1:37; 3:13).
2. Riches and wealth may be harmful.
 - a. The rich farmer lost his soul because of his covetousness (Luke 12:15).
 - b. The rich man in Luke 16 lost his soul because of what he failed to do with his riches.
 - c. The man with one talent in Matthew 25 was called slothful and wicked.
 - d. Ananias and Sapphira were put to death because of their evil intent with their goods in Acts 5).
3. There is neither virtue or vice in our possessions.
 - a. What matters is how we obtained our riches.
 - 1) We obtain our wealth through the law of labor we earn it (Gen 3:19).
 - 2) We receive our wealth through the law of love we are given it (Phil 4:16-17).

- 3) We gain our wealth through the law of investment and interest (Matt. 25:27).
- 4) We obtain our wealth through the law of happenstance we find it (Matt. 13:44).
- b. What matters is what we do with our riches. Do we waste it, hold it or use it wisely?
- c. What matters is our attitude toward our riches. Are we covetous or generous?
4. The passage under consideration gives us an opportunity to examine, in context, the identity of the rich men, their abuses and what a Christian's disposition to wealth should be.

DISCUSSION:

I. THE EXEGESIS OF THE PASSAGE IN JAMES 5:1-5.

- A. We need to identify the main characters under discussion.
 1. The letter was written to Jewish Christians (James 1:1).
 - a. Throughout the epistle, James refers to Christians as "brethren."
 - b. He employs the terms, "brethren, my brethren and my beloved brethren."
 - 1) "Brethren," James 4:11; 5:7, 9
 - 2) "My brethren," James 1:2; 2:1,14; 3:1,10,12; 5:10,12
 - 3) "My beloved brethren," James 1:16,19; 2:5
 2. James cautions brethren who leave God out of their lives (James 4:13-15).
 3. The passage under discussion was written about "rich men" who have an improper relationship with their riches; they are not called brethren.
 - a. "Rich men oppress you" (James 2:6).
 - b. "Rich men blaspheme that worthy name" (James 2:7).
- B. We want to describe the actions and companions of wealthy men who abuse the righteous with their power and possessions.
 1. "Weep and howl for your miseries..." (Joel 1:5,11,13).
 2. "Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten." (Isa. 51:8)
 3. "Your gold and silver are cankered" (Job 13:28).
 4. "The rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire" (Ezekiel 22:3).
 5. "The hire of the laborers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth" (Deut. 24:14-15).
 6. "Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth and been wanton" (1 Tim. 5:6).
 7. "Ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter" (Jer. 12:3).

II. APPLICATIONS OF THIS TYPE OF RICH MEN.

- A. There are Biblical examples of abusive rich men who would use their power and wealth against others.
 - 1. Ahab and Jezebel plotted against Naboth to steal his vineyard (1 Kings 21).
 - 2. King Herod murdered John because of his preaching (Matt. 14:3; Mark 6:17).
 - 3. Pilate mingled the blood of Galileans with sacrifices (Luke 13:1).
 - 4. The magistrates and masters of Philippi dealt treacherously with Paul and Silas (Acts 16:16-24).
- B. There are modern-day examples of oppressive rich men who use their power and wealth against the righteous.
 - 1. Hollywood executives, actors and other representatives undermine Christianity and its teaching.
 - 2. Political activists use their money and influence to turn public opinion against righteousness including Christ and His church.
 - 3. Humanists exalt men and their causes as their object of worship.
 - 4. ISIS, jihadists and other religious extremists war against God for their manufactured cause of 'Allah.'

III. RELATIONSHIP OF WEALTH TO CHRISTIANS.

- A. Christians acquire their wealth in a scriptural manner as noted earlier (work, invest, interest, gift, etc.).
 - 1. God wants us to work; there are redeeming values in working (Gen. 3:19; 2 Thess. 3:8-10; 1 Tim. 5:18).
- B. Christians balance the tangible and the intangible.
 - 1. Bodily exercise is profitable. But godliness is more profitable (1 Tim. 4:7-8).
 - 2. Secular education is beneficial, but Biblical knowledge is more beneficial (Matt. 4:4; 1 Peter 2:1-2; Heb. 5:12-14; 2 Tim. 2:15).
 - 3. A degree of wealth is necessary to function in life, but seeking wealth cannot be our emphasis in life (Matt. 19:22).
- C. Christians practice good stewardship; we are to be responsible caretakers of God's gifts including our possessions (1 Cor. 4:2; 1 Peter 4:10).
- D. Christians give cheerfully; our wealth is to be returned to God (1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 9:6-7; 8:1-5; Luke 6:38).
- E. Christians share generously with others (Luke 10:33-35; Acts 4:32-37; 20:35).

CONCLUSION:

1. There are wealthy people who seek to destroy the influence of the church by threatening and harming Christians.
 2. However, Christians are to rise above the level of these oppressors and be good stewards of the bountiful gifts that God has given.
 3. Let us use our wealth, gifts and treasures to honor God and trust in Him.
 4. Let us be rich in good works.
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PATIENCE

James 5:7-12

Joel Wheeler

1. James is a brother of Jesus, an elder and leader in the church at Jerusalem (Acts 15).
2. James writes about patience and that life is not always easy but the trials of life can be used for our advantage.
3. The Bible is clear that we must have patience and endurance.
 - a. Col. 3:12, *"Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering."*
 - b. 1 Thess. 5:14, *"Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men."*
 - c. 2 Tim. 2:24, *"And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient..."*
 - d. We add to our faith, patience (2 Pet. 1:6).
 - e. Patience (Longsuffering) is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:23).
4. We look at 3 points in James that helps us understand patience.
 - a. How we gain patience?
 - b. Why patience is important?
 - c. How long our patience must be?

DISCUSSION:**I. WE GAIN PATIENCE THROUGH LIFE'S EXPERIENCES.**

- A. Life is full of trials and patience is needed for one to endure to the end.
 1. James 1:2, *"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations"*
 2. James is not saying that we should bring the trials into our life by doing evil deeds.
 3. 1 Peter 2:20, *"For what glory is it, if when ye sin, and are buffeted for it, ye shall take it patiently? but if when ye do*

well, and suffer for it, ye shall take it patiently, this is acceptable with God."

- B. Attitude makes the difference if we pass or fail in our patience.

1. Phil. 4:13, *"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."*
 2. "I Can" – Paul had an attitude to achieve heaven.
 3. "I Can Do" – Paul had a commitment to achieve heaven.
 4. "I Can Do All Things Through Christ" – Paul had the strength and power to achieve heaven.
 5. When Paul wrote the book of Philippians, he was in a Roman prison nearing death. His positive attitude encouraged the Philippians and Christians today.
- C. Without the right attitude which is approaching trials with joy...
1. You will fail as a parent; you will fail with your relationships.
 2. You will fail at your job. You will fail as a Christian.
 3. James 5:7, *"Be patient therefore, brethren..."*
- D. We must wait patiently upon the Lord.
1. Many times we are waiting for news from the doctor. We are waiting for that new job. We are waiting for life when in reality we are waiting for the Lord.
 2. James 5:7, *"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord...."*
 3. Psa. 37:7, *"Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass."*

II. WE NEED PATIENCE SO WE CAN ENDURE.

- A. Patience allows us to become mature and be stronger.
1. James 1:3-4, *"Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."*
 2. Many times we believe that trials and problems are meant to tear us down, but trials can build us up.
 3. The word PERFECT means – completeness or mature age.
 4. Patience and endurance in life is like running a marathon. Life is not a sprint but a long process.
 5. Along the way, runners get tired, their legs and back becomes achy and tired, and lots of pain which brings discouragement and impatience.
- B. Patience is needed because someone or something is going to try you.

1. Satan will try you and seek to draw you away from God. He is as a ravening beast seeking to devour us. (1 Pet. 5:8).
 2. The ungodly will try you and therefore you must have patience to endure those trials (2 Tim. 3:12-13).
 3. James 1:12, *"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."*
 4. Note that it is not God that puts evil in front of us but Satan.
 5. James 1:13-15, *"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: ¹⁴But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. ¹⁵Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."*
 6. Sickness and afflictions will try our patience. Many times intense affliction, mental stress and emotions will cause an individual to give in and give up.
- C. We receive the crown of life if we have patience and endurance.
1. Rev. 2:10, *"be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."*
 2. 2 Tim. 4:7-8, *"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."*
 3. No one ever received a crown by impatience.

III. OUR PATIENCE MUST ENDURE TO THE END.

- A. The farmer is an example of patience.
1. James 5:7-8, *"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."*
 2. In Palestine, the rains come two times a year. The farmer waits for the early rain before planting. If he gets ahead of the rain the crops are usually a failure.
 3. Before a farmer can reap the crop he must plant the seeds.
 4. Patience is required in farming because it takes 60 to 90 days for the crop to mature for harvest.

- B. Second, the Prophets are an example of patience.
1. James 5:10-11, *"Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience... Behold, we count them happy which endure."*
 2. Elijah reformed Israel by challenging the prophets of Baal and in doing so had 850 prophets put to death. Jezebel tried to kill him (1 Kings 18,19). Elijah was so discouraged that he was ready to die.
 3. Jeremiah was thrown into a dungeon (Jer. 38:28ff) and then taken to Egypt as a slave.
 4. Micaiah was fed with the bread of affliction and water of affliction because he did not prophecy as Ahab wanted. (1 Kings 22).
 5. John the Baptist lost his head when he preached on the sins of the king and his unlawfully wedded wife (Matt. 14:3-10).
- C. Job is an example of patience and endurance.
1. James 5:11, *"Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy."*
 2. Job suffered more than any human being beside the Lord.
 3. Satan did all he could to destroy Job's faith... but Job endured to the end.
 4. It wasn't the riches, or his children, his wife or even his friends that got him through but his trust in the Lord which strengthened his patience.
 5. Job didn't have the encouragement of his wife, his children were dead and his friends turned on him and accused him of being a rank sinner.

CONCLUSION:

1. We must have patience and endurance to overcome this world and make it to heaven.
 2. Luke 21:19, *"In your patience possess ye your souls."*
 3. What if Jesus gave up? We wouldn't have a Savior. But He endured the cross (Heb. 12:2).
 4. Heb. 12:1, *"...let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us **run with patience** the race that is set before us."*
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PRAYER

James 5:13a

Edward White

1. At the time of James' writing, Christians were facing trials, temptations, and persecutions of all sorts. cf. James 1:2-3
 - a. Instead of fretting, complaining, or even giving up, James says pray about it.
 - b. The Christian can cast all his anxiety on Him who is our "strength, a very present help in trouble" (Psa. 46:1); cf. also Heb. 4:16; 1 Peter 5:7
 - c. "When the troubles of the world fall upon our shoulders, instead of morbid, fretful complaining, we should ask God for wisdom to cope with our problems." That is what the apostle Paul did (2 Cor. 12:7-10).
2. Prayer is a severe test of our faith in God and His word.
 - a. To the man void of faith, prayer is a vain cry in the wilderness with no one to answer.
 - b. To the man of faith, prayer is an address to Almighty God, who has the power and ability to respond.
3. From the mouth of the greatest preacher who ever lived, we are encouraged to pray, cf. Matt. 7:7-11.

DISCUSSION:

I. PRAYER IS ONE OF THE GREATEST LESSONS TAUGHT BY JESUS.

- A. Jesus, himself, prayed often.
 1. As He began His public ministry, He prayed. Luke 3:21
 2. Before He chose the 12 apostles, He prayed. Luke 6:12
 3. He would often get away from the crowd to pray. Mark 1:35; Luke 5:16; 6:12
 4. Following His final message to His disciples He prayed. John 17
 5. He prayed the same prayer three times on the night of His betrayal. Matt. 26:36-44
 6. While dying on the cross, He prayed. Luke 23:34-46
- B. Jesus even taught His disciples HOW to pray. Matt. 6:9-13; Luke 11:1-13
- C. If the Son of God realized the value and importance of prayer, shouldn't we?

II. PRAYER IS A PRIVILEGE FOR CHRISTIANS.

- A. Christians have the privilege of addressing God as "Our Father." Matt. 6:9
- B. God turns a deaf ear to sinners. John 9:31; Prov. 28:9; Psa. 66:18; Isa. 59:1-2

- C. James states "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." James 5:16; cf. also 1 John 3:7
- D. Christians should consider it an HONOR to have and to enjoy the privilege of prayer. cf. 1 Thess. 5:17; Phil. 4:4-7

III. THE CHURCH OF FIRST CENTURY WAS A PRAYING CHURCH.

- A. The 3,000 on Pentecost continued in prayer. Acts 2:41-42
- B. The company of Christians, joined by Peter & John after being released by the council, went to God in prayer. Acts 4:24
- C. The twelve apostles realized the value & importance of prayer. Acts 6:4
- D. Prayer was made by the church on behalf of Peter while he was in prison. Acts 12:5
- E. Paul and Silas prayed even while in prison. Acts 16:25
- F. Paul prayed with the Ephesian elders following his meeting with them. Acts 20:36
- G. Churches were admonished to pray. cf. Rom. 12:12; Eph. 6:18; Phil. 4:6; Col. 4:2; 1 Thess. 5:17,18

IV. THERE IS POWER IN PRAYER.

- A. Example of Moses on Mt. receiving the 10 commandments.
 - 1. The golden calf was made while Moses was away.
 - 2. God's anger was kindled (Ex. 32:7-10) and was about to destroy them.
 - 3. What changed God's mind? The prayer of Moses, Ex. 32:11-14.
- B. Example of the 12 spies as recorded in Num. 13 & 14.
 - 1. The people believed the report of 10 spies and complained (Num. 14:1-5) and God was about to destroy them, Num. 14:11-12.
 - 2. Moses again prayed to God on behalf of the people, Num. 14:13-21.
 - 3. The Lord changed His mind again, although Israel had to spend 38 more years in the wilderness.
 - 4. Prayer changes things!
- C. The New Testament examples of the power of prayer.
 - 1. Prayer fits the mood of affliction James 5:13a
 - a. The saints of that day were having to deal with all types of afflictions.
 - b. "Sorrow, suffering, pain, indeed, all of the burdens of life at one time or another fall upon the shoulders of the Lord's people..." (Woods).
 - c. Prayer helps one deal with the burdens of life. cf. 1 Peter 5:7

- d. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." James 5:16
2. Elias an example of prayer — his prayer got through because he was righteous. James 5:17-18
 - a. He prayed that it might not rain and it rained not for 3 years and 6 months.
 - b. He prayed again for rain and it rained. Can we not see the power in prayer?
3. While Peter was being held by Herod (who intended to kill him), prayer was offered to God on his behalf and as a result, Peter was released from prison. Acts 12:1-9
4. While Paul and Silas were in prison in Philippi, they were singing and praying, and as a result, an earthquake opened the prison doors. This event led to the conversion of the Philippian jailor (Acts 16). Yes, prayer changes things!

V. GOD ANSWERS THE PRAYERS OF HIS CHILDREN.

- A. God heard and answered the groaning of the children of Israel. Exodus 6:5
- B. Job stated, "Thou shalt make thy prayer unto him, and he shall hear thee..." Job 22:27
- C. Read Psalms 34:15-17; 55:16-17; Matt. 7:7-11
- D. God might answer in various ways.
 1. By giving us just what we ask for. James 5:17-18
 2. By giving us what we ask for and more (Solomon). 1 Kings 3:5, 7-14
 3. By giving us something different or maybe better. 2 Cor. 12:7-9
 4. By saying "NO." Matt. 26:39
- E. We cannot expect to receive without asking. John 14:13-14; 15:7

CONCLUSION:

1. Prayer is a glorious privilege and should be a part of every Christian's life.
 2. Prayer is the medium through which a child of God can enter the throne room of our Heavenly Father.
 3. There is a lot of turmoil in our world today. What will help the child of God deal with it and get through it? PRAYER!
 4. How often do YOU pray? We ought to pray even to our last breath. cf. Acts 7:59-60
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SUPPORT FOR ONE ANOTHER

James 5:16-17

Ron Gilbert

"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. ¹⁷The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

1. Indeed, the book of James is a book on practical Christian living.
2. Involved in Christian living is the help and support of brethren one for another.
 - a. Acts 2:44, "And all that believed were together, and had all things common"
 - b. Reading through the book of Acts, one finds the word "together" mentioned many times.
 - c. Rom. 14:7, Paul said, "For none of us liveth to himself..."
3. The book of James is a book that shows that we need to support one another. Let us consider some of the ways James tells us to support one another.

DISCUSSION:

I. SUPPORT FOR ONE ANOTHER IN REMAINING FAITHFUL.

- A. Consider these passages from James on remaining faithful?
 1. James 1:16, "Do not err, my beloved brethren."
 2. James 1:27, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."
 3. James 4:7, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."
 4. James 5:16, "Confess therefore your sins one to another, that ye may be healed. The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working." (ASV)
 5. James 5:19,20, "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; ²⁰Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."
- B. Practical ways we can help one another remain faithful:
 1. Heb. 3:13, "But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."
 2. Heb. 10:24, "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works:"
 3. There are many things we can do to help one another remain faithful.

II. SUPPORT FOR ONE ANOTHER IN THE PROPER USE OF THE TONGUE.

A. How are we to use our tongues?

1. James 1:26, "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain."
2. James 1:19, "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to wrath"
3. James 3:1-12, Teaches to control our tongues.
4. James 5:16, "Confess your faults one to another..."
5. James 5:16, "...Pray one for another..."
 - a. 1 Tim. 2:1-8 instruction on who we should pray for.
6. James 5:19-20, "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; ²⁰Let him know, that he which convereth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."

B. How are we not to use our tongues?

1. James 4:11, "Speak not evil one of another, brethren."
2. Col. 3:9, "Lie not one to another, seeing ye have put off the old man with his deeds."
3. James 3:14,16, Says we are to avoid bitter envy and strife.
 - a. Matt. 12:35, "A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things."

III. SUPPORT FOR ONE ANOTHER IN DEALING WITH LIFE'S PROBLEMS.

A. We face many problems in life.

1. James 2:15-16, Benevolent needs.
2. James 1:12, Enduring temptations.
3. James 4:13-14, Helping one another cope with the brevity of life.
4. James 5:7, Being patient.
5. James 5:13-14, Dealing with sickness.
6. James 5:16, The sin problem, confess your sins.
7. James 5:19-20, Restoring the erring.
8. As Christians we can help one another in all the above things mentioned.

B. We need to support one another in life and what it brings.

1. Gal. 6:2, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."
2. Eph. 4:2, "With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, Forbearing one another in love"

3. James 2:8, "If ye fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt Love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well."

IV. SUPPORT IN TREATING EACH OTHER IN A CHRISTIAN MANNER.

- A. How we treat one another is very important.
 1. Matt. 25:41-46
 2. James 2:1-4, Tells us not to have respect of persons.
 3. James 2:8, Teaches us to love our neighbor as ourself.
 4. James 3:16, We are to avoid envy and strife.
 5. James 5:9, "Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned:"
 6. James 1:3, "Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience."
 7. James 2:14-18, Help those that are in need.
 8. James 5:14, Help the sick.
 9. James 5:19-20, Restore the erring.
- B. We are commanded to love one another.
 1. John 13:34-35, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. ³⁵By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."
 2. John 15:12, "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have Loved you."
 3. Rom. 12:10, "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; In honour preferring one another."
 4. Gal. 5:13, "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another."
 5. Eph. 4:32, "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving One another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

CONCLUSION:

1. The book of James and the New Testament has much to say about our support one for another.
 2. God expects Christians to:
 - a. Remain faithful and help one another remain faithful.
 - b. To use our tongues properly and help others do the same.
 - c. Deal with life's problems and help others deal with their problems.
 - d. Treat all men properly and teach others to do the same.
 3. Indeed we need "support for one another."
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RESTORING THE ERRING

James 5:19-20
Garland M. Robinson

1. The saddest picture in all the world is a lost soul — sadder still is one of God's children gone astray!
2. We have a very serious and sober obligation to recover the wayward from the error of their way.
James 5:19-20, *"Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; ²⁰Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."*
- 2 Peter 2:20-21, *"For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. ²¹For it had been better for them not to have known [it], to turn from the righteousness, than, after they have known [it], to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them."*
- Gal. 6:1, *"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."*
 - 1) "If a man be OVERTAKEN in a fault." (surprised — a lapse from truth and uprightness). He is speaking of the person who commits an offense in an unguarded moment.
 - 2) We are not told to ignore it, condone it, gossip about it, or condemn the person — Rather, to restore such a one. Put "in joint" again.
3. There is always a constant need to restore the fallen. It affects every congregation — no exceptions.
 - a. Several terms describe this problem: unfaithful, backsliding, delinquent, out of duty, straying, erring, wayward, fallen, LOST (Jer. 8:4-7; Luke 15; Heb. 6:4-6).
 - b. Brethren become unfaithful in: Doctrine, Morality, Attendance, Involvement, Work...

DISCUSSION:

I. A CHRISTIAN CAN FALL AND BE LOST.

- A. Warned against falling (Heb. 3:12; 1 Cor. 9:27; 10:12).
 1. Told how to keep from falling (2 Peter 1:5-10; 1 Cor. 10:13).
 2. Told what to do when we fall (James 5:16; cf. Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9; Prov. 28:13).
 3. Since we are commanded to REPENT OF, CONFESS, and PRAY for forgiveness of sins, then it stands to reason that a Christian CAN and WILL be lost if he fails to do these things.

- B. The Bible is full of examples of those who fell:
 - 1. Judas Iscariot. Acts 1:25; cf. Luke 22:3; John 13:27
 - 2. Simon, who was once a sorcerer. Acts 8:9-24
 - 3. The Galatians. Gal. 5:4
 - 4. Church at Ephesus. Rev. 2:4-5

II. THE SPIRITUAL CONDITION OF THE FALLEN.

- A. Sick, spiritually sick. Isa. 1:5-6; Matt. 9:12
- B. Out of fellowship with God and the faithful. 1 John 1:3-7
- C. In worse condition than before obeying. 2 Peter 2:20-22
- D. Enemies of Christ. Phil. 3:17-19; Matt. 12:30; Heb. 10:25-31
- E. Spiritually dead — LOST. James 5:19-20

III. WHY CHRISTIANS FALL.

- A. Not because they intended to fall. Luke 8:4-15
 - 1. Lack of convictions.
 - 2. Cares, pleasures and riches of the world. Matt. 13:20-22
- B. Lack of spiritual nourishment of the word. 1 Peter 2:2; 2 Peter 1:5-11; 3:18; Acts 20:28; 2 Tim. 2:15; Heb. 5:12-14
- C. Wrong companions. 1 Cor. 15:33; 2 Cor. 6:14-17
- D. False teaching. Acts 20:28-32; Gal. 3:1; 1:6-12; 1 John 4:1; 2 Tim. 4:1-5; Rom. 16:17-18
- E. Satan is behind every cause. 1 Peter 5:8; Eph. 6:10-12; James 4:7

V. WE HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO RESTORE THE FALLEN.

- A. James 5:19-20; Gal. 6:1
 - 1. A COMMAND — “converteth the sinner from the error of his way,” “Restore such an one.”
 - 2. Who is to do the RESTORING?
 - a. “Brethren” — Not just preachers and elders.
 - b. “Ye which are spiritual” — Not the hypocrite!
 - 3. The spirit in which the restoring is done: “spirit of meekness” — concern and compassion. “Considering thyself” (1 Cor. 10:12; Matt. 7:12)
- B. Go and find the one gone astray. Luke 15, LOST SHEEP, vs.4-7; LOST COIN, vs.8-10; LOST BOY, vs. 11-32
Rom 15:1 *“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.”*
Considering thy self lest thou also be condemned.

CONCLUSION:

- 1. In restoring the Lost/Fallen: We save a soul from death. We hide a multitude of sins.
- 2. Great joy Now and Hereafter!

RELIGION THAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Larry Acuff

1. The book of James has been called Christianity in "shoe leather" because of its practical nature. It has also been called the "Proverbs of the New Testament."
2. The book of James is about how we live every day.
 - a. These five chapters cover everything from seeking wisdom (1:5) to submitting ourselves to God (4:7-8).
 - b. These five chapters cover the avoidance of temptation to the right use of Our money (James 1:2; 5:1-6).
3. This lesson will focus on a religion that makes a difference.

DISCUSSION:

- I. **A RELIGION THAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE IS A PURE RELIGION (James 1:27).**
 - A. A religion that makes a difference is a religion that is pure in doctrine (Titus 2:1; Gal. 1:6-10).
 1. To be pure in doctrine it must be based on scripture (2 Tim. 3:16-17).
 2. To be pure in doctrine it must have the right content (Acts 20:20).
 - B. A religion that makes a difference is a religion that is pure in morality (Psalm 2).
 1. In being pure in morality it must not submit to the world's view of what morality is (Rom. 1:18-32).
 2. Our morality must be what is pleasing to God (1 Thess. 4:1-12).
 - C. A religion that makes a difference is a religion that God accepts (Matt. 7:21-23).
- II. **A RELIGION THAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE IS A FAITH BASED RELIGION (JAMES 2: 17-26).**
 - A. There are three kinds of faith listed in this section of James.
 1. There is a dead faith (James 2:17).
 2. There is a demonic faith (James 2:19).
 3. There is a dynamic faith (James 2:18).
 - B. There are four kinds of faith in Romans chapter one.
 1. There is a faith that converts (Rom. 1:8).
 2. There is a faith that would be called a common faith (Rom. 1:12)
 3. There is a faith that communicates (Rom. 1:17).
 4. There is a consecrated faith (Rom. 1:17).
 - C. This faith is exemplified in the life of Noah as recorded in Hebrews 11:7.

1. Noah's faith involved the whole man. "By faith Noah being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark..." (Heb. 11:7a).
2. Noah's faith influenced his whole family. "...To the saving of his house..." (Heb. 11:7b).
3. Noah's faith indicted the whole world. "...By which he condemned the World..." (Heb. 11:7c).
4. Noah's faith inherited the whole reward. "...And became heir of righteousness which is by faith" (Heb. 11:7d).

III. A RELIGION THAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE IS A RELIGION THAT DRAWS NIGH TO GOD (JAMES 4:8).

- A. If we are going to draw nigh to God we need to know something about God.
 1. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" tell us that God is the creator (Gen. 1:1).
 2. For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God is attribute of God (Deut. 4:24).
 3. God is a destroyer as portrayed in the words of Abraham when He asks, "...Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked" (Gen. 18:23)?
 4. We know God is a loving God because John 3:16 says to us, "For God So loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."
 5. We know that God is a forgiving God for the scriptures state, "Thou Hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered all their sin" (Psalm 85:2).
 6. We know that God is a merciful God (Psalm 100:5).
- B. In drawing nigh to God we come to realize that He is our dwelling place (Psalm 90:1).
- C. In drawing nigh to God we know that He is our refuge and strength (Psalm 46:1).
- D. When we draw nigh to God we learn that He is our salvation (Psalm 27:1).

CONCLUSION:

1. Many folks have the idea that religion is one phase of their life, which is the reason it doesn't make a difference. Christianity is not a "part" of our life. It "is" our life in work, family, recreation, politics and every phase and activity as we trudge up this earth.
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A JOURNEY

Sidney White

1. This lesson will serve as a review, a conclusion, to this series of lessons on the book of James.
2. The Christian life is a journey, a journey through this life, a journey that ultimately leads to heaven.
3. Eph. 4:1 (paraphrased) says, "You have been called, you have answered that call; now live like it."

DISCUSSION:

I. MAN IS CALLED BY THE GOSPEL.

- A. *"Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ"* (2 Thess. 2:14).
- B. Note some phrases in Ephesians 1:13.
 1. "The word of truth", "the gospel of your salvation".
 2. This is the way Paul described the source of their salvation.
- C. The great commission teaches us to "teach all nations", to "preach the word" (Matt. 28:19, Mark 16:16).
- D. Philip, preaching to the Ethiopian, "preached unto him Jesus" (Acts 8:35).
- E. The Gospel is the "power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16).
- F. Thus "the journey" begins with the hearing of the Gospel and one's obedience to it (Rom. 6:17-18).

II. ONE IS "RAISED TO WALK IN NEWNESS OF LIFE" (Rom. 6:3-4; 2 Cor. 5:7,17).

- A. Being raised, one starts the journey; a journey of faith (2 Cor. 5:7).
- B. James, as much as any other book, shows "once saved, always saved" is not according to the scriptures.
- C. *"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin"* (1 John 1:7).
- D. *"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit"* (Rom. 8:1). A good sermon from this verse is to note the LIBERTY (no condemnation), the LOCATION (in Christ) and the LIFE (who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit).
- E. Note other such passages. Eph. 4:1; 5:2,15
- F. Through obedience to the first principles of the Gospel, one enters the strait gate, and is then headed on his journey down the narrow way which leads to life (Matt. 7:13-14).
- G. Heaven is the ultimate goal. (Heb. 11:9-16)

III. THERE ARE THINGS TO “PUT OFF” AND THINGS TO “PUT ON.” Col. 3

- A. The chapter begins at the point of “risen with Christ”, v.1
- B. There are things to be put off; vs.5-9.
 - 1. Paul mentions 12 things that should not be a part of the life of one who is on that journey to heaven.
 - 2. “Seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds” (v.9b)
- C. There are things that are to be put on. vs.10-17
 - 1. We must develop a spirit of sensitivity to others. v.12
 - 2. We must be unselfish. v.13
 - 3. We must put on love. v.14

CONCLUSION:

- 1. Each of us is on a journey currently – the narrow way or the broad way. Matt.7:13-14
 - a. Consider all the lessons discussed in this series. How well are we walking?
 - b. These great principles, applied to our life, will have us on the right course.
 - c. Ignoring these principles will insure that we are headed for destruction.
- 2. Consider your journey. Where is it leading? Is it leading to life or destruction?

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