

The Book of
James
A
Study
IN
Christian
Maturity

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Introduction

In our introduction, we want to determine which James wrote this book as there are three mentioned in the New Testament.

- The 1st James mentioned is James the Apostle in Mt. 4:17-22. He is the brother of John, Jesus called them Sons of Thunder, for their impatience, aggressive attitudes. This James was martyred in AD 44 in Acts 12:1,2.
- The 2nd James mentioned was James the less, son of Alphseus in Mt. 10:3, Acts 1:13. Other than those two verses, there is little written about him.
- The 3rd James mentioned was James the half-brother of Jesus in Mt. 13:55, 56 and Mk. 6:3. He did not accept Jesus as Messiah while Jesus was here - Jn. 7:1-5.

A few facts about the writertg of the Book of James:

- James was saved after seeing the risen Christ -1 Cor. 15:7.
- He was one of those praying in the upper room - Acts 1:14
- He was the first pastor of the church in Jerusalem - Acts 12:17; 15:13, 19; Gal. 2:1, 9, 10, 12.
- This is the earliest letter dated around AD 45. The synagogue is mentioned as the place to meet.
- He was an intense man of Prayer. Tradition has his knees as callused as a camel's knees.
- He was spiritually mature - Acts 15.

The next thing to determine is - when did James write this book. To the Christian Jews from all twelve tribes the word brethren is used 19 times: (1) Brothers in Flesh, and (2) Brothers in the Spirit. They were scattered throughout the Roman Empire. These Jews had two problems: (1) Being Jews in a hostile kingdom, and (2) They were Christians.

The next thing to determine is - why did James write this book. Every letter written has its own special purpose (Primary, Destination, Theme). In I Cor. - to correct problems and to deal with legalists. In this letter, Christian Jews were having some personal problems, which are just as familiar to us today:

- (1) Difficult tests
- (2) Facing temptation to sin
- (3) Catering to the rich, while being robbed by them
- (4) Church members competed for office
- (5) Failing to love who they believe
- (6) Tongue is a serious problem
- (7) Worldliness
- (8) Some were disobeyers
- (9) Some were straying

The theme of the Book of James is Christian Maturity. The word perfect is used time and again. This referring in every instance to spiritual maturity and not to some supposed sinlessness. The word means to be a completely mature balanced grown-up.

In the 5 chapters of this small, yet powerful book, James will give us characteristics of truly mature Christians.

- (1) Ch. 1 - Patience in testing
- (2) Ch. 2 - Practice the truth
- (3) Ch. 3 - Power to control the tongue
- (4) Ch. 4 - A Peacemaker not a troublemaker
- (5) Ch. 5 - Prayerful in all troubles

Verse 2

We are instructed to expect trials. Notice there is no "if here. Trials are a certainty. Jesus warns us of trials in Jn. 16:33. We are scattered, not sheltered people. Everything will not always go our way for the world hates us. Some trials happen because we are human (accidents, sickness, disappointment). Some happen because we are Christian - I Pet. 4:12. To "fall into" means to encounter a trial. In I Pet. 1:6, "divers" means different.

Everybody's testings are not alike. Our lives are like a rug of variable colored yarn. God arranges and mixes the experiences of our lives to bring forth a beautiful tapestry for his glory. Trials and suffering are from God, they are supposed to bring out the best in us.

Our values set our evaluation of trials. Comfort more than character - then trials will upset us. Material & physical over the spiritual - we cannot count it joy. Living only for the present - then trials will make us bitter not better - Jn. 23:10.

Verse 3

Know - an understanding mind. God tests to bring out the best - Satan tempts to bring out the worst.

What do Christians know that makes it easier to face trials?

- Faith is always tested
- Testing works for us not against us
- Trying - checking sturdiness
- Trials rightly used, help us mature
- This is not passive accepting of circumstances - Rom. 5:3, 4
- It is perseverance in the face of suffering is difficult.

Immature people are always impatient. Impatience goes with unbelief. Patience goes with true faith - Heb. 6:12, 10:36.

God's desire is for us to be patient. This is the way to blessing. Little children who do not learn patience do not learn much else. When you learn to walk with God, then he can do great things in your life - Jn. 18:10, 11.

The way to develop character is trials. It doesn't come from books, prayers. It is though patient trust in God during trials. Knowing this then we can face trials joyfully and we will know the result will bring God's glory. Satan can defeat a believer who is not spiritually mature, but he cannot overcome the one who knows the word, and understands the purpose of God for his life.

Verse 4

Let - a surrendered will. God cannot build our character without our cooperation. If you assist Him, he will certainly chastise you into submission. If we submit willingly, God can accomplish His work in us. God wants a finished product. A potter with his clay.

God's goal is maturity. It would be a tragedy if our children stayed babies. We enjoy watching them grow. Many Christians shelter themselves from trials. God wants little children to first become young men and second for young men to be fathers -1 Jn. 2:12- 14.

Paul outlined three things in Eph. 2:8-10 that are necessary for a complete Christian life. (1) Salvation - what God does for us; (2) Sanctification - what God does in us; (3) Service - what God does through us.

God builds character before he calls to service. He must work in us before he can through us. For example: 25 years for Abraham, 13 years for Joseph, 80 years for Moses to serve 40 years. The mature does not argue about God's will, nor do they try to excuse away God's will by denying that it is God's will. For example: "He wouldn't do this or that to one of his own" - this is the statement of spiritually immature Christian. Jonah behaved more like a spoiled brat than a prophet of God.

Verse 5

Ask - a believing heart. The people were having problems with their praying. We are going through God's ordained difficulties. What should we pray about? Wisdom in Lk. 2:40, 52. Wisdom - is knowledge and the ability to apply it - Prov. 2:2. We need wisdom so we do not waste our opportunities to mature. We all know people who are loaded with knowledge but can't make the simplest decision.

Verses 6-8

James not only tells what to pray for, but how to pray. Ask in Faith - God is anxious to answer, he will not scold if we ask. Instead he will do something else 4:6 -

Grace. The greatest enemy to prayer is unbelief. The doubting believer is compared to waves - up one minute down the next.

This is the experience of the man in verse 8. Faith yes - unbelief no. Then doubt drops by and goes yes & no. Most of us are like waves on the ocean - up and down, even better like yo-yo's. This is the evidence of their immaturity - Eph. 4:1. If we have believing hearts we can ask in faith. God will give wisdom.

Verses 9-11

These three verses are an illustration of this principle. Social status was a real problem in these people's lives. It is much the same today in many mainline churches where people use money and influence for church positions. This should never happen in church. James mentions it in 3 chapters five times.

God's testing has a way of leveling us. When the poor are tested he rejoices in the fact that his spiritual riches cannot be taken from him. The rich man who has his heart in tune with God and not in his material possessions, will let God have his way, and he will rejoice also that his spiritual riches in Christ cannot fade away. It is not material resources that move you through testings, it is spiritual resources.

Verse 12

James closes this section with a "Be" attitude. He starts at verse 2 "Joy" and ends at verse 12 with "Joy."

(1) Outlook determines outcome. In verse 12 is a great encouragement to those in trial and suffering for it promises a crown to those who patiently endure. "Blessed is the man that endures" - this is a mature Christian receiving a reward for the fact that he grew up in a time of trial. "Rewarded for bringing Glory to God" - first the cross then the crown. If God removed the tests from our lives he would not be helping us.

(2) For when he is tested. Testing is tough, and it has a tendency to produce Pessimism. When faith is tested, the child of God knows that this is not the end - Ps. 3 0:5.

(3) He shall receive the crown of life. What is this crown of life? It is that which will bring you into a closer relationship with the Lord Jesus more than anything else possibly could.

(4) It is promised to those who love the Lord. It is not obey or trust but love. Love is the spiritual motivation for the four imperatives we have been looking at. Why do we have a joyful attitude in trials - because we love God and he loves us. Why do we understand, because he shares his truth with us. Why do we surrender our will, because we love him - where there is love there is surrender. Why a believing heart, because love

and faith go hand in hand. When you love someone there is trust and no hesitation in asking for help.

(5) The double minded need to make their lives chaste. God's purpose is maturity - if that is what you want then you should: Count, Know, Let, and Ask. These are key words for maturing.

Next, comes a section on inward trials. Now you may wonder why James connects the two; simply put, trials on the outside may become temptation on the inside. When a trial is one that is hard to bear and we start grumbling against God - Satan then can present opportunities to escape and these lead to sin and sin leads to death. For example: Abraham came to Canaan and found a famine instead of proving God's promise. He fled to Egypt and there he failed Israel also while in the wilderness when, without water instead of trusting, murmured and failed. God does not want us to yield to temptation, but he cannot spare us the trial, if we are to mature.

There are three primary facts we must consider in the next six verses. First - consider God's Judgment v. 13-16; Second - consider God's Goodness v. 17; Third - consider God's diving nature within v. 18.

Verse 13

Notice that James changes from the noun form to the verb form of temptation, because he now wants to emphasize action. Man has always wanted to pass the buck of his own failure over to God. Right from the beginning - Eve to Adam to Satan. Insurance companies have Act of God clauses as if he intentionally sends tornadoes, cyclones, hurricanes, etc.

There is no evil in God whatsoever - I Jn. 1:5, Jn 14:30, Mt. 4:7. This is Jesus being tempted. Why? To prove he cannot sin for our assurance, that he is faithful. However, God does permit temptation. What David did was sinful, so did God do it? No - I Chr. 21:1 gives us the inside story. Satan stood up against Israel and provoked David to number Israel. So a temptation is an opportunity to do a good thing in a bad way - such as cheating on a test.

Verse 14

This verse deals with Sins of the Flesh. When you yield who is responsible - God, the Devil or you? We all possess certain idiosyncrasies and eccentricities.

Lust - definition - overwhelming desire and uncontrolled longing. His Own Lust - this is anything you over-desire. We all have normal desires: thirst, hunger, love, rest. When we try to satisfy them outside God's will then it becomes lust - gluttony, laziness - Heb. 13:4, Pro. 23:7. A person can be hooked, he can be enticed and then he can be drawn to fall into sin. Because the devil always makes sin look lovely. Such as alcohol, a

little tastes good, but it is like drugs will put you on skid row now and cause you to lose values. Jesus always dealt with temptation by using the word he said "it is written." The better you know the Bible the easier to see the different temptations of the Devil and avoid the sin.

Verse 15

We have moved from desire and deception to disobedience of the will. James goes from hunting and fishing to the birth of a baby. Christians often say "I don't feel like studying or going to church." Little children act on feeling. We are however, to act on the basis of will - Phil 2:13. When our old nature joins with temptation, then is sin conceived in the heart. We rationalize sin today, we even excuse it. But it is still sin to God.

Death - sin when it matures always brings death. If we only would know God's word we would not yield. There are four types of Death: (1) Physical - we all die, Rom. 6:23; (2) Spiritual death - Eph. 2:1; (3) Broken fellowship - 1 Jn. 1:6; (4) Eternal death - Rev. 20:14, 15.

Verse 16

Do not err - This is an injunction about doing anything that would or could lead to sin. Don't even try and rationalize sin away. If you can be satisfied in a sin, you would do well to check yourself. "He that fall into sin is a man; He that grieves in sin is a saint; He that boasts of sin is a devil."

Verse 17

Consider God's goodness. Everything God does is good for us. But Satan wants you to feel like God is holding out on you in some way. Eve and the forbidden fruit; with Jesus, Satan posed an illustration - "If your Father loves you, why are you hungry." It is better to be hungry in God's will than full outside his will.

Four facts about God's goodness: (1) only good gifts - if its from God it is good -II Cor. 12:1-10. (2) The way God gives. If a gift is given in the wrong attitude, the gift loses some of its value. (3) He gives constantly. Cometh down - it keeps coming even when we don't see it. (4) God doesn't change - Prov. 10:22. If you think you need something, try waiting on God, He will provide when it is right.

Verse 18

God's divine plan is maturing inside. Look inside I Jn. 3:9, birth in Christ can give victory. Four characteristics of this birth: (1) It is divine - Jn. 3:1-7 - It is the work of God. (2) It is gracious: we did not earn it or deserve it - Jn. 1:13 - we are not born again because of relatives. (3) It is through God's word - divine birth has two parents - word of God and Spirit - Jn. 3:6, 1 Pet. 1:23, Heb 4:12 says the word is living and powerful - It

can generate life. (4) It is the finest life possible - we share God's nature, it is beneath us to accept Satan's bait to sin. The new nature needs to be fed the word of God daily so it will be strong - Mt. 4:4. When we sin, we have no one to blame for sin but ourselves. God has placed barriers to protect us.

Verses 17, 18

"Every Good Gift" - act of giving in vain here. Everything God does is good for us. Satan on the other hand, would rather have you feel God is holding out. For example: Eve and the forbidden fruit. It is better to be hungry in God's will than full outside his will.

If it comes from God it is good even if we don't understand - II Cor. 12:7-10. We are talking of true gifts, not cars and homes. Some of God's gifts include:

- The most important one - his only son - Jn. 3:16.
- Eternal life - Rom. 8:32
- Word of God-Jn. 17:8
- Holy Spirit-Jn. 14:16
- Peace of Christ-Jn. 14:27
- Gifts of Service - Rom. 12:6-8

Since these are gifts, there is no room to boast - I Cor. 4:7.

"Every Perfect Gift is From Above" - Perfect - complete and entire. This is the total gift. This is a contrast between heavenly and earthly. Heavenly is forever. Earthly will not last, therefore we should not become entangled therein - II Cor. 4:17, 18.

Let's consider all we have from above. The Bible is from above - Ps. 119:89; Our Savior - Jn. 3:31; Salvation - Ps. 18:16, Jn. 3:3, 7; Wisdom - I Kings 4:29; Power - Jn. 19:11.

"Gift of Light" - Light is the first gift given this world - Gen. 1:2, 3. Spiritual - first gift given in Spirit realm - Jn. 3:1-9, Jn. 8:12. Light is an emblem of knowledge, purity, happiness - I Jn. 1:5-7. You cannot run from the Light - Ps. 139:7, 11-12. In age of ages all will be Light - Rev. 22:5.

No variables, shadow of turning - Pr. 10:22. Jesus never changes - Heb. 13:8. God doesn't change - Num. 28:19. When God promises, He carries out in his time. We then need to learn to wait. David had 2 opportunities to kill Saul but he did not. The shadow of turning - the sun changes direction of our shadow, God never moves away. Heb. 13:5-1 will never leave you! All the leaving is on our part - Heb. 1:10-12.

"Of His own will begat he us" - This is grace! Those who say James is a works book have missed the point and do not understand what he was saying to us. There are 4 things in here to look at in this birth depicted:

- It is divine - Jn. 3:1-7. It is the work of God. It can give victory -1 Jn. 3:9. We have to place our trust - II Pet. 3:9,1 Tim. 2:3-4, Jn. 1:11-13.
- It is grace - Jn. 1:13. We are not born again because of relatives, resolutions or religion.
- It is through God's word. Divine birth has two parents - Word of spirit - Jn. 3:6,1 Pet. 1:23. It can generate life - Heb. 4:12. This life is God's life.
- It is the finest life possible. Prov. 3:9, Exod. 23:19, Deut. 26:2. The Jews reading this would remember the laws concerning the feast of first fruits in that God expected the very best of the first of the new crop. To us it says much the same since we have Christ residing in us. It is beneath us to accept Satan's fruit to sin. We do need to feed this new nature so it will grow strong - Mt. 4:4. We have no one to blame for sin but ourselves.

From here to the end of the chapter, we will be dealing with the Word - what it means to us.

Verse 19

Let every man be swift to hear. - Mt. 13:9 - Who hath ears, let him hear. Rom. 10:17 - Faith comes by hearing, hearing by the word. Every believer from Pastor down should be quick to hear the Word. This is why we have two ears. It is important how we hear -1 Thess. 2:13. Mk. 4:24 - Take heed what ye hear. Lk. 8:18 - Take heed how ye hear. Too many Christians fit another category - Mt. 13:13. Hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. They attend church but never seem to grow. Is it the Preacher's fault, or is it because of what Heb. 5:11 says to be dull of hearing because of decoy of spiritual life?

Be slow to Speak. We do God and ourselves a disservice if we speak without giving thought. Even though what you say may be true, you can say it in a hurtful way. Prov. 10:19,17:27-28, 29:20 - it is better to speak a few wise words, than to spew out a multitude of useless words.

Be slow to Wrath. A quick temper can be a very sharp knife - Prov. 14:29, 16:32. A rule which should govern every Christian life. If we want others to see God's righteousness and be drawn to Jesus for salvation, we must conquer wrath - Gal. 5:17-23, Eph. 4:31. There is Godly anger - Eph. 4:26, we must hate sin especially that in our own lives. Do not do as the men who broke the mirror because he did not like what he saw. Don't throw away the word because of your sin.

Verse 20

Wrath - here it is violent passion - or for us it would be. I'm right - you're wrong and if you don't agree I'll beat you up to prove God's on my side. Some tribes have opponents fight to death with the winner being declared right. Man's wrath never promotes the righteousness of God.

Verse 21:

Lay Apart All Filthiness - we are to lay apart ALL filthiness - Gal. 5:11-21, Rom. 1:25-30, 3:11-18. We are to remove these from our lives if we are to grow in the word. Not only these but anything that falls in between. Superfluity - this is all excess sins connected with these.

Some people are like this, they want to go to heaven but they want to live like the devil until its time to go. God says here to put it away and cleanse yourself. Now you can't do this on your own, for that would be reformation. They need victory given by the Spirit - Rom. 8:13, 6:3, 6, 11, 12. We do not have to sin or live in it as some Christians do. Phil. 2:12,13 - Paul is telling us to live up to the position you have before Christ. Eph. 4:22 - tells us to put off the old man. Put into action what your position in Christ means. What you are inside will eventually come out - Jer. 17:9,10 and Mark 7:21-23.

Receive With Meekness - I Thess. 2:13, Jer. 4:3. This meekness is the opposite of wrath. When you receive the Word this way, you accept it and honor it as God's word. You certainly do not twist it to suit your way of thinking.

The Engrafted word - farming term from implanted or placing one type of tree into another to form some new fruit - Jn. 1:1,1 Jn. 1:1,2. God places his word in our corrupt hearts to bring forth new fruit - Matt. 13:8 - here the word received by faith in meekness bears fruit. What is this fruit:

- Winning Souls - Rom. 1:16
- Growing in Holy Living - Rom. 6:22
- Sharing Material Possessions - Rom. 15:28
- Spiritual Cheer - Gal 5:22-26
- Good Works-Col. 1:10
- Praising the Lord - Heb. 13:15. Works can be manufactured but they have no life.
Real fruit produced by accepting God's word has life - Jn. 15:1-5.

Salvation is in 3 Perfect tenses. (1) Past Perfect: has been saved - from guilt and penalty - Jn. 3:16. (2) Present Perfect: are being saved - from the habit and domination of sin - Rom. 6:14, 8:2, II Cor. 3:18, Gal 2:19-20, Phil. 1:19, 2:12-13, II Thess. 2:13. (3) Future Perfect: will be saved - at the Lord's return - I Cor. 15:53, 54.

Verse 22

Look at Luke 6:46-49 and Matt. 7:21-27 - hearers and doers are likened unto those who built on sound and solid foundation. As opposed to those who build their Christian life on some experience - I Cor. 13:11 and Jn. 13:17. It is not enough to just have knowledge. Happiness lies in doing - Rom. 2:13.

A true believer will be a doer - Jn. 3:20, 21. A saved individual will reveal his salvation

–Ph. 2:12,1 Jn. 2:3-6. A mere intellectual acquaintance with the word is possible even for the best. Notice the Bible is the best selling book every year. Lots of unsaved own and read it. But it does no good without the indwelling power of Christ

Deceiving you own selves - Mal. 1:6-14. Priests here are trying to fool God by giving second rate sacrifices. II Cor. 13:5, 6 - tells us that we should prove ourselves. Gal 6:7, 8 - tells us we can deceive others but not God? In the previous verses, James looked at the word as a seed or young plant being grafted. Now he shifts to it being as a mirror. There are two other references to mirrors. With them we will see the purpose of this aspect of the word ministry.

Verse 23 - 24

The first reference is examination. A man beholding his natural face. Just like women putting make-up on without looking in the mirror. We cannot conduct our lives without learning and applying God's word to our lives daily.

There are 6 verses that will help us see this: (1) Ez. 33:3 1 - These set in church hear the preacher and that's all, they do not let the word change them. (2) Mt. 13:20, 21 -This is the word in shallow hearts - Mk. 4:16, 17. (3) Lk. 6:49 - This is a Christian who has built his life on experiences instead of the solid word. (4) Jn. 6:66 - These could not stand the deep and strong words of Christ's deity and left. Liberals fill this today. (5) Eph. 4:14 - These are spiritually immature Christians who run from exciting doctrine or preachers to another, never trying to settle in a Bible preaching Church. (6) II Tim. 3:7 -These need their Bible all the time and listen to a bunch of preachers from all sorts of denominations and they miss the simplest truths of the word.

Restoration - made of mirrored brass was for the washing of the priests hands and feet. Water here is a picture or symbol or type of the word of God in its cleansing power -Jn. 15:3. Eph. 5:26 tells us the church is cleansed by the word. Tit 3:4-6 and I Cor. 6:9-11 - here the pertinent sinner is once and for all washed clean. I Jn. 1:9 gives us God's promise to cleanse us from all sin.

Transformation - II Cor. 3:18. change comes from metamorphosis which means a change on the outside that comes from the inside. It is found in Mt. 17:2 and Rom. 12:2. We do not become strong soldiers overnight - it is long, diligent work. We need to remove the veil - Ps. 139:23-24, I Jn. 1:8. It was said thus, "when the child of God looks into the word of God, he sees the son of God and is transformed by the Spirit of God to live in the Glory of God."

There is spiritual prescription: (1) Take a weekly bath in Ps. 51 - It focuses on our need for God's forgiveness. It also reveals how we are affected by sin. (2) Check yourself regularly with Ps. 139 especially verses 23, 24 - This Psalm starts the greatness of God, the awesomeness of all our actions. (3) Seek constant guidance from Ps. 25 and Prov. 3:5-7 - Reveals how we need to ask for constant direction and tells how we are to rely on the Lord rather than ourselves.

Verse 25

Verses 22-24 - we are disobedient Christ. Verse 25 is obedient Christ. Whoso looketh - is anyone who intently studies God's word. If and when we so look, we need to be

willing to say with Isaiah in Is. 6:5 "Woe is me for I am undone." Peter in Lk. 5:8 "Depart from me or I am a sinful man." Job in 42:6 - "I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes."

The Perfect Law of Liberty - this is Christ's law. Old Testament law brought bondage to ritual, Christ brings liberty. Gal. 6:2, 5:1 - this is what James is dealing with. Rom. 3:20 - the law was and is there to show us how sinful man is. Liberty is not license to sin - sin brings death - Rom. 6:23. Liberty is freedom in Christ - Jn. 8:36 which is freedom of eternal death and gives you his life - Ph. 2:13. Col. 1:29 - this is Paul stating a change took place when he was saved. He went from bondage to the law to doing all he could for Christ out of love.

A warning about liberty - I Pet. 2:16, Gal. 5:13 - love should control our hearts -II Jn. 1:5. Moses' law demands love - Lev. 19:18, Deut. 6:5, Lk. 10:27. Christ's law is love - Rom. 5:5, I Jn. 4:7, 19, 20 also Heb. 10:16, II Cor. 5:124, Rom. 13:10.

In verse 25, this person looks until he has brought his life in line so that he truly honors God - Ps. 119:11. Continueth therein - if you stay in the word it will keep you from sin and give you power to witness and share the truth of God and also to do his will - Mt. 11:28-30. We share his yoke, but he carries the majority of the load so that there is balance.

Shall be blessed in his deed - blessed means happy - Ps. 19:11, Jn. 13:17. If you want deep satisfying happiness, take Christ's yoke and follow him.

Verse 26

Religion - "outward practice of service to a God". Pure religion as we will see has nothing to do with ceremonies, temples and special days.

Bridle not his tongue - James deals with this matter of speech 5 times in 4 chapters. It therefore must have been a problem then and it surely is one today. It is the tongue which reveals the true heart of a person - Mt. 12:34-35. If the heart is right, your speech will reflect it. A controlled tongue means your body is in control!

Pure and undefiled - we need to first see God then ourselves in the word; then others and their needs. Then speak and do with a heart of love and compassion. Even if they appear unlovely - Is. 6:1-8. Words alone cannot do what is needed many times - I Jn. 3:11-18. We should not pay someone to do our personal service.

Separation - this is not staying home except for church time. Here are several things we need to see:

- (1) The world - society without God.
- (2) Satan is the prince of the world - Jn. 14:30

- (3) The lost are children of this world - Lk. 16:8
- (4) We are in the world physically but not of this world - Jn. 17:11-16
- (5) We are sent into this world to win others to Christ - Jn. 17:18

We need to maintain our separation in that we should not become as the world is. Here are 4 danger signs to watch for in becoming spotted:

- (1) Friendship - Jam. 4:4
- (2) Love of world - 1 Jn. 2:15-17
- (3) Conformity - Rom. 12:1-2
- (4) Condemnation - 1 Cor. 11:32

We will be judged and the rewards mentioned throughout the New Testament will be lost to us. This is Job's example to us. He pitched men, then moved into, then took part in, then saw his family destroyed and his testimony ruined.

We must go into the world to serve. Jesus spent time with sinners but was pure - 1 Pet. 1:9.

Chapter Two

Verse 1

In this chapter we will see Faith put to the test. The first test is regarding respect of persons. We will see God's war on poverty and riches. Prov. 30:8 says Give me neither poverty nor riches. A lot of people talk about following Christ and his life. And they say he wants us to have all we want here. Let me show you what our Lord really emphasized.

He was born in poverty. It was in a borrowed stable. He borrowed food to feed the crowds. He spoke from a borrowed boat. He had to borrow a coin to illustrate a truth. He borrowed a donkey to ride to his city. He borrowed a room to have Passover. He even had a borrowed cross. They laid him in a borrowed tomb.

Christ knew poverty. He walked with sinners and poor people. His work wasn't to fill their stomachs or heal their bodies, but to heal their heart! James knowing this sends one of each to Church to watch what happens.

Have not - Hold not, by showing favoritism Jews at that time coveted recognition. We have the same thing going on today. People using church offices to gain power and influence. There are a few things from Jesus' view on this:

Jesus looked at hearts. The poor widow was greater than the Pharisee. He looked at the potential in sinners. The woman at the well was an instrument for reaping great harvest. Jesus was despised. He is the very Glory of god. The Old Testament says the Glory dwelled in the Tabernacle - Exod. 40:34-38. Then the Temple - I Kings 8:10-11. God's glory resided in Jesus. Today the glory lives in us - 1 Cor. 6:19-20 and the Church - Eph. 2:21-22.

How can we practice the life Christ set forth in our relationships? See everyone through Christ's eyes. If a visitor is a Christian, because Christ lives in him. If a visitor is lost, because Christ died for him.

Verse 2

Assembly - Synagogue rested on Sunday. They had no erected buildings. A man with a gold ring - not a single ring, but on all fingers. Goodly apparel - rich silks and linens. "Some go to church to close their eyes, and other go to eye the clothers." Some churches are full of pomp and glitter, but it is all vain and vulgar - Lk. 11:19.

Verse 3

The one who knows Christ as Lord of his life should recognize the value of each person. But the down side is that man's heart has never changed. There is always a partiality to the rich. This shows a lack of faith in Christ - Phil 4:19. Do we believe this? Our actions will tell whether we do or not. Especially around the wealthy.

Verse 4

Here James accuses individuals of judging strangers based on outward appearances. This is inconsistent with what Christ showed us. He cared for everyone the same. You claim to follow him then you must be consistent.

Verse 5

These next three verses will show us the grace of God does the choosing. He chose us who would not earn salvation. God passes all national boundaries - Acts 10:3, 4. There is no difference in condemnation - Rom. 2:6-16 or salvation - Rom. 10:1-13. God ignores social differences - Eph. 6:9. Rich and poor are alike to God for he looks deep into the heart like an x-ray. He sees nothing but the bare soul - 1 Sam. 2:7-8.

From the human point, God chooses the poor - I Cor. 1:26-29. It is possible according to I Tim. 6:17-18, to be poor here and rich there or rich here and poor in heaven. Or poor in both or rich in both. It depends on what you do with Christ and the wealth he gives you.

He promises the kingdom to them that love him - not those who love worldly possessions - Lk. 18:18:30. What you have doesn't earn salvation.

Verse 6, 7

This is a stern rebuke James sets down for those who show partiality. In that day, the rich used and oppressed the poor and could influence the courts to get richer. Sounds familiar doesn't it? Solomon said there is nothing new under the sun.

These types of sin make vain the name of Christ in our lives. Our Lord was poor and was the victim of great injustice at the hands of the religious rich. A church built on the class system does not magnify Christ or his grace. Eph. 2:11-22.

Verse 8

Royal Law of True Judgment - Lev. 19:18. James says this is the royal law. Jesus declared in Mt. 22:37-39 that it is the second commandment. First we love God. Then your neighbor as yourself. We should practice it because we are a royal priesthood - 1 Pet. 2:9. DL Moody said, "Every Bible should be bound in shoe leather."

Lk. 10:25-37 - in the parable of the Good Samaritan, our neighbor is anyone who needs us. It is not geography, but opportunity. "To whom can I be a neighbor." Rom. 5:5, Heb. 10:16 tells us Christ living his perfect life through us produces divine love for others.

Verse 9

Let's observe the seriousness of showing respect. To show the least respect is to violate the spirit of the law of Christ. To look down on someone, literally opposes the indwelling Christ. Ph. 2:12, 13 reveals that he works in each to do what he wants and what pleases him and it is not pleasing to him when we get into showing respect.

Verse 10,11

Now people like to classify sin into degrees usually putting murder first and so on. One sin, no matter how small we consider it, is large enough to condemn. It alone would have put Christ on the cross for you or I. Therefore we must conclude that we are forgiven sinners, everyone the same.

To offend in one point is to be guilty of the whole law. And by rebelling, you have already done so. Since there is only one law given and all laws come from his heart - This confirms Jer. 17:9.

Verse 12,13

James further encourages us to speak and do as one who will be judged by the law of liberty. This is for rewards. Your salvation is determined by trusting Christ as Savior. We are to honor Christ by our lives. Even the word we are called by "Christian" means in a simply put way, "a little Christ". Not that we are God, but that he should be seen and not the individual. Our deeds will be judged - Col. 3:22-25. Sins affect our character and works. Even our careless words - Mt. 12:3 6.

These two verses are a sole reminder: Don't show partiality - but love equally; Don't classify sin or consider some not serious. Even little sins show wickedness in our

hearts that needs to be cleansed. As we are reminded of the importance of eternal values, we will be helped in not showing partiality to rich or temporal values.

Verses 14-26

This is the best know passage in this book. It is the one which caused Martin Luther to call it a "right strong epistle." The problem lies in confusing what James and Paul say about works and justification. Paul insisted on justification by complete trust and faith before God. For the works of the law never saved anyone. James - on the other hand, is saying showing faith produces good works to prove the reality of it before man!

Verse 14

Notice the word say - this is a contrast between what a person says and what his life shows to others. Also "can faith save him?" James is asking, can a faith of mere words save anyone -1 Jn. 3:17, 18.

Verse 15,16

Here James gives an illustration to prove his point from verse 14. This is a verbal faith, true salvation brings change so that a person will not act this way. God's love is an active love as in Jn. 3:16, Rom. 8:32. Spared not a person possessing this love will express a giving, doing attitude.

Verse 17

James states here that a professing saying of faith is useless and empty. This person is void of Christ and his love. John Calvin said, "It is faith alone that justifies, but faith that justifies can never be alone." Alone means - by itself. True faith is never alone.

Verse 18

James continues his argument for a faith that proves itself by works. This verse has caused this whole book to be misunderstood. We will look at several passages that support and prove this point.

In Luke 8:4-15 - this parable shows how people receive the word differently. This parable shows professing possessing. True faith produces fruit. Not necessarily souls but: the selfish become selfless. The stingy become charitable. The foul mouthed become God praising, and so on.

We need to look at some specifics on salvation. Rom. 10:9, 10 shows this faith goes deeper than acknowledging certain facts. It changes life. The person that says he trusts Christ but has no desire to change his life may not be saved. Gal. 5:6 - faith produces love and this love acts towards others. Mt. 7:16-20 emphasizes the fact that true faith or possessing faith bears fruit, but professing faith is dead and condemned already.

True faith produces a changed life. Ironside said once, "there is no work of grace in the heart where there are no acts of grace in the life."

Verse 19

To merely believe in one God is not enough. The devil does that. They even know the awful judgment coming on them - Mt. 8:29, Mk. 1:23, 24. This verse shows that just knowing Jesus is God's son is not enough.

Verse 20

A faith that doesn't produce good works is like a barren field that produces nothing. Such a faith is not one that saves. Some churches accept someone as saved just because they go to the altar, sign the church books, and give his money - he's saved. This is far from the truth. They need to be checked out.

Verses 21-24

James reaches into the Old Testament for two illustrations. That will rightly show a living active faith.

Abraham - Rom. 4:3 says he was justified by faith. Gen. 15:5, 6 says Abraham's salvation was counted the same as New Testament. Did Abraham offer Isaac? No! Then what was the work of faith? He bound his son, laid him on that crude altar, then he lifted the knife that Isaac had seen used to offer sacrifices before. He prepared to do what he did not believe God would ask him to do. But since he had, Abraham was willing, because he knew God would raise Isaac from the dead. This is an illustration of demonstrating faith by actions. The action - Abraham believed God.

Dynamic living faith obeys God in every phase of their lives, he is Lord. Unfortunately we have some who fit another description - Tit. 1:16. Paul would want us to act according to 3:8.

Verse 25

Rahab - the account of her is in Joshua 2 and 6 - Heb. 11:31. She took spies in, hid them, let them see all they needed to see and then sent them out safely. This was at risk to her life and her family's as she turned her back on her people. What was gain became loss - Josh. 2:11. She did not stand by saying, "Hallelujah, Praise the Lord." She believed what they said about Jericho's falling. She became involved with just a little information - what about you? Lk. 12:48.

Josh. 6:23-25: Rahab did not have dead faith - merely intellectual experience. Nor did she have demonic faith - her mind enlightened and her emotions running wild. She

had dynamic faith. She knew the truth - her heart was stirred by it, and she acted on the truth. Faith is the root and the root proceeds the kind of fruit that the root is - II Cor. 13:5.

Verse 26

Faith without works is as a body in a mortuary. James and Paul both taught it, I believe both of them. Do you?

Chapter 3

Hell On Fire! James moves from works to the tongue as proof of one's faith. We are not dealing with the Biology but the Theology of the tongue. This member of our body is as dangerous as any atomic bomb. There are a 100 to 1 more verses about the tongue than about alcohol. James will show us that our tongues are our greatest enemy. They can either uplift or destroy, build character or assassinate it. James talks to teachers and preachers first.

Verse 1

Not many should be teachers. That is not everyone can be. God doesn't call everyone, but a lot jump on the bandwagon, and teach heresy. They will be judged of a higher standard, they need to not only teach truth but a balance perspective. They have authority of qualification not power.

II Tim. 4:3 - This is happening today, and especially in the last days. II Tim. 4:2 - This is my guide and not mine only but all of us. Teaching comes from God - Eph. 4:11- and Christ places us in the local Church and we have a great responsibly to perform our gift.

Condemnation is judgment. Since so many are like sheep, it's hard to say how much harm a false teacher can do. Many never think through what they are being taught. It was said, "85% of people do not think, 10% think they think, 5% do think." This shows that the majority travel blind. This is bad for Christians when they receive wrong information.

Verse 2

James continues on to say that we all have problems with the tongue. James is honest in that we all offend. Moses spoke rashly, Peter had many problems with his tongue. Perfect - means mature. The more mature the better the control of the tongue. Because they are more given in to God. We will never be sinless here, so when you make a slip of the tongue, one needs to ask forgiveness.

James says that the one who can control the tongue can bridle the whole body. Just as a horseman knows when to reign in his horse, so as a mature Christian will control his

conversation. He will always try to be edifying. The tongue is usually the last member to be controlled since it tells what is in the heart. God has provided the means to control our lives - II Cor. 10:4, 5. Since Christ lives in us the more we yield our lives, the more there is control.

When we fail we need to take comfort in that God understands. Ps. 103:8-14 is an excellent passage to consider when we fail and need encouraged. Gen. Montgomery in his farewell speech to the 8th army said "command must be personal and it must be verbal otherwise it will have no success, because it is wrapped up in the human factor." I often have at the back of my mind a passage from the New Testament I Cor. 14:9, "Except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken." This is the kind of tongues we as teachers should have.

Verse 3

In Ps. 39:1, David always wanted to give the right testimony. In horse and buggy days if one got away it would often cause death and damage. A tongue out of control will do the same. Ps. 32:8, 9 - God doesn't want to have to jerk our reigns all the time to keep control. He would prefer we be like a pony ride. Prov. 18:21 - Solomon strong warning or wrong use of our conversation. Ps. 141:3-4 - David knew that the heart is the key that starts right speech. MT. 12:34 - when Jesus controls the heart he also controls the speech. It takes us 2 years to learn to talk and 50 more to learn to keep quiet!

Verse 4

Large ships are guided by relatively small rudders. Our tongues are small but they can control our destiny. Some comparisons: the down side of the tongue - Prov. 12:22. Prov. 10:19 says we need to speak carefully. Liquor and drugs are a nagging epidemic but God speaks worse judgment for the tongue. Prov. 6:16, 17 - you see God hates a lying tongue, it's in his Top 10.

Now the upside - Jn. 4:38-42, 25, 29 - Jesus spoke to this woman and her life and her neighbors all were changed by it. Acts 2:41 - Peter preached and 3,000 souls came to know Christ. On April 21, 1855 Ed Kimball went to a Boston store, while he was there he led a young man to Christ. That young man went on to become one of the the greatest evangelists America has every known - D.L. Moody.

In the next 6 verses, we will view some characteristics of the tongue: Destruction, Deceptive, Dangerous, Hypocrite.

Verse 5

Hell here is gehenna - it refers to the valley of Hinnon where the fire never goes out. It is used 12 times in the New Testament. Jesus used it 11 times. We all know how destructive forest fires can be. Remember last year there were so many brush fires, one could hardly breathe. Fire can be our friend, we cook, heat, process light in our lives.

Let's see some of what fire out of control can do. In 1871 in Chicago, 17,450 buildings were burnt, 300 people died, 90,000 were homeless. In Prov. 12:18 - the tongue is a sword of death or a health in itself. Prov. 15:14 - this is a true picture of the tongue. We are the master of the unspoken word, the spoken word is master of us. Prov. 18:21 - think of it life and death. The last phrase is especially true for gossips - compare to Gal. 6:7, 8. How we use our tongue is important - Prov. 18:19 shows this. For gossips - Prov. 17:9, Prov. 16:27,28.

Verse 6

Words spoken under control are of tremendous benefit. Prov. 13:3, 2 1:23, an unwise word may cause the speaker lots of trouble. Many local churches have been destroyed by people saying things that consumed everything in its path.

The tongue is a little word of evil, the various kinds of evil concentrate in the tongue. No one can measure the evil that arises from the scandal or slander that the tongue is capable of. It can produce profanity, perjury, blasphemy and all kinds of lies. It produces the honeyed words of the seducer. Look at Mt. 11:19 - they did not like Jesus so they slandered him, said he did miracles by Satan. Even on the cross they taunted him.

James here says that the tongue defiles the whole body. Lets see this from our perspective. Someone who is pure or clean hi their language is considered refined or pure. But someone who uses profanity is thought to be corrupt completely. The tongue defiles, for it draws the body to sin. No instance of adultery takes place without lying words. Most drug users say their so-called friends talked them into it. Let's see what Jesus says about defilement - Mt. 15:11, Ecc. 5:6 - so the tongue defiles.

Satan's tongue in Eden has cost all of us. And to use our tongue for anything that even remotely appears to be evil furthers Satan's cause and not Christ's.

Verse 7

A further description of a tongue out of control is an untamed animal. Here James says that every animal can be tamed but no one can control the tongue. An animal trainer for Wringly Bros, circus was seen playing with 3 cubs and was asked why, "he said he wouldn't go into the ring with a lion he hadn't fooled with since it was a cub?" He replied, "the most untamable thing in the world has its den just behind the teeth." Just when we think we have the tongue tamed and trained, a crises arises that causes it to break loose and say things we often regret. What people call a slip of the tongue really comes from within the heart and that is serious.

Verse 8

The tongue is deceptive - "can no man tame" - believers often have the hardest time with the tongue. Why? Simply because a Christian has 2 natures - Rom. 7:18. But the

person who trusts Christ has a new nature - II Pet. 1:4. This new nature enables him to control that which is uncontrollable. Man can't control the tongue but God can. Rom. 10:9 - we are to sing a duet - the tongue and heart are to be in harmony. Matt. 12:34 says out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. "What is in the well of the heart will come out through the bucket of the mouth."

When Jesus healed the dumb man, "he touched his mouth." If he has touched you, he has also touched your mouth also. Christ gives victory over all. But how? Rom. 6:6 -notice the old nature is not dead, but crucified. This is the basis for doing vs. 11-13. We are to count on the fact that we are crucified with Christ and we are to yield ourselves to him daily. Lk. 9:23 tells us to take up our cross, we do this by having died "or yielded" with Christ and living to please him not self.

Our tongue either serves the devil or Christ. We are crucified with him. We need at that moment yield our tongue to serve Christ.

Dangerous - an unruly evil - restless, undisciplined. Prov. 10:18-21 - the more we speak the more likely we will commit sin. A tongue serving God is like pure silver, it can feed many a hungry soul. A wicked tongue isn't worth much and simply can't understand what God wants from it. The Holy Spirit provides power to conquer the sins of a tongue -Eph. 5:18. Be filled - constantly daily vs. 19, 20 - tells us how to put our tongues to use.

Full of deadly poison - our words can often poison the thoughts of others by putting in their minds what we want. We don't want to be taken in by some smooth talking preacher/teacher, spouting doctrine that sounds good but is false. I have pointed some of these out today, not to dwell on them but to help you be able to discern and to grow to spiritual maturity. It is part of my responsibility as a teacher to help you see error. We need to know that we're up against.

The whole human race is affected by sin. Without salvation by Christ our tongues will be vile and vicious - Rom. 3:13. Because of our old nature, we too are just as capable of this as an unsaved person. Slandering someone to someone else could be evidence that vs. 13 - poison of asp, is under our lips. When Paul was accused by the Corinthians he had this to say: I Cor. 4:4,5.

Verses 9,10

You and I are capable of praising God here and then go out there and curse our neighbor. Is there something like this in your life, are you doing something hypocritical? Are you saying one thing and planning something else? James said these things should not be. We should live our lives so that we would not hesitate to sell our pet parrot to the town gossip. If you are doing anything against a brother, Jesus equates that as hypocritical. This, then, should not be.

The fountain provides cool water to drink, to wash, cook from, produce light. In oriental countries, a fresh water fountain is a blessing and is protected. Let's see what God says in comparing water to man's life - Prov. 18:4, 10:11, 13:14. Water is life giving, and these verses parallel and back up what James is saying about the importance of our words. However, water if not controlled brings death. When we stop and take a cool drink we rarely think of floods, we enjoy the refreshing coolness - Prov. 12:18, Rom. 15:32. Our words can help cleanse others, they should be as the river described in Eze. 47 that brings life to all it touches.

Verse 12

Trees - here the tongue is compared to trees. We all know that on a hot day a big shade tree is a real comfort. Our words too can bring shelter and encouragement to a weary soul - Prov. 10:2 1, Jn. 6:63. Jesus said his words were spirit and life. As we share his word we feed and encourage.

The roots of a tree are the most important part, if they are shallow the tree will be weak and small. A tree with deep roots will grow strong and tall. Christians need to be like this rooted deep in the things of the Lord and we will be the man in Ps. 1. If not we will be like the tree Christ spoke of in Mt. 12:33-37.

The Pharisees would say one thing and do another. Jesus told them this in 33, 34, and then spoke a solemn warning, one we need to pay heed to vs. 36. The importance of our words are seen in vs. 37. What example did Christ give in difference to the Pharisees? He communed everyday with the Father - Isa. 50:4, Mk. 1:35. We must become more like this.

James issued a warning for us. A fountain is either bitter or sweet, a tree bears its own fruit and nothing else. Christians should do the same, our tongues should bring forth blessing. If the tongue is inconsistent there is something radically wrong with the heart. Let's look at some verses that will help us gain control of an inconsistent tongue - Heb. 13:20, 21 - Submission of mind.

Words come from thoughts so we must "bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." He alone is worthy and able to give us victory. How many know the song, "O for a Thousand Tongues?" The writer was so thrilled when he was saved that he wanted to write a song. He felt he could not adequately express his inner thoughts so he wrote this song. How are you using yours? The next few verses deals with 2 types of wisdom.

Verse 13

This is James¹ statement of a wise man? Evidenced by his moral character and responsibility "meekness" - not weakness, but power under control. Like a horse broken for a rider. Meekness is a fruit of the spirit, or a real evidence of being filled with the spirit.

Meek people seek only God's glory, and will not cater to man. In vs. 13, James says "meekness of wisdom" - this is right use of power and knowledge.

Verse 14

Here we have evidences of false wisdom. Bitter envy - selfish ambition - this goes back to vs. 1 where James warned them not to be ambition about church offices. The devil says, promote self and get all you can. Be all you can. This is true of God's people. They selfishly, carnally promote themselves. Even the apostles argued over who was the greatest. Jesus said the least would be greatest.

In Mt. 6:1-18 we should be zealous of the Lord's work but we must also be sure of our motives -1 Cor. 1:17. Verse 29 - this is why God works as he does. Verse 31 - this is Paul's admonition to us.

Strife - It's the attitude of, get everyone behind you at all cost. Paul on the other hand says this, Phil. 2:3. Our goals should be the betterment of the whole church and glorifying of God's name. Boasting - pride loves to boast - and nothing boasts like self-wisdom. We don't need mutual admiration societies. II Cor. 10:12 - Paul is careful to give glory to God. When God's wisdom works, there is humility and submission. Deceit - the sequence is easy. First - selfish ambition. Second - petty spirit. Third - self boasting and

ambition. "Purity from God's Word" - we should daily experience the cleansing effect of the word. Ps. 119:9-11, Ps. 1:2, 3. We cannot overestimate the value of reading and meditating on God's word. "Purity from Above" - we should recognize that all that is pure is from above. Ps. 19:8. The word is pure -1 Jn. 3:3. Christ is pure - Heb. 7:26.

The title "Holy Spirit" says the spirit is pure. Our question to everything should be "is it pure?" There is a spiritual purity that results in a chaste relationship with Christ -II Cor. 11:3.

- (2) "Peaceable" - peace based on holiness not on compromise. God does not have peace at any price. Peace is not more important than purity in the church. If the church is pure, there will be peace - Isa. 32:17. It is significant that "Pure and Peaceable" are listed first. They have an important relationship. An individual is made pure through Christ and this establishes peace - Mt. 5:9, Rom. 12:18.

The tongue most often stops peace. Christ gives victory. It was only fitting at his birth that the angels proclaimed in Lk. 2:14 on earth peace, good will toward men, for in Is. 9:1 it was prophesized he would be "The Prince of Peace." He was well qualified to say in Jn. 14:27 - "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you not as the world gives."

- (3) "Gentle" - sweet reasonableness, or moderation without compromise, plentiness without weakness, a gentle person never starts a fight, nor does he compromise to keep peace. Carl Sandburg said of Lincoln, "he wore velvet steel." This part of God's wisdom pardons human failing. Christ had something to say in Mt. 5:38-41 and 43, 44. This is more than an attitude, we desire to seek the highest good for others and what

will give Christ the greatest glory. Each believer should exhibit this gentleness -II Tim. 2:24,25,26.

- (4) "Reasonable" - not harsh or stubborn. He is willing to listen to reason. A reasonable person can disagree without being disagreeable - Jam 1:19. Many think that being stubborn or stuck in tradition is conviction, they must have their way or no way. Well this is not from God, God's wisdom will listen, think, pray, obey what God reveals. Not tradition - Lk. 22:42 - Jesus prayed not my will but thine be done, it should be our prayer.
- (5) "Merciful and Fruitful" - the person with God's wisdom is controlled by mercy -Lk. 6:36. The parable of the Good Samaritan - Lk. 10:25,37 is another good example of mercy. The Samaritan could gain nothing by helping a Jew. Except God's blessing for doing his will. The Jew could not pay him back. This is mercy. Mercy produces fruit. Jn. 15:1-16, Gal. 5:22, 23. Paul wanted Christians to be what Ph. 1:11 says.
- (6) "Decisiveness" - without partiality - it's the wisdom that I Tim. 5:21 allows us to make up our own minds. The impartial person has principles based on God's word. this usually involves lies. Our life is not read in some press release, but by God in our hearts-I Cor. 4:5.

Verse 15

This world's wisdom is satanic in origin, and causes more sin and disobedience. Practice the words James used. Earthly - because it originates from the world system. Sensual - because it appeals to the senses of the old man in us. It is witnessed everywhere, society dictates what's moral. The old adage is go with the flow. Devilish - because it originated with him in its entirety. That is man's wisdom, now follows his outcome.

Verse 16

Worldly wisdom produces trouble, envy, strife, confusion, evil word. It does not appear that God was moving in this church - in Chapter 4, James will deal with the wars and fighting. Wrong thinking produces wrong living. The word confusion means disorder from instability. It is related to unstable in 1:8 and unruly in 3:8. Let's see a truly confused church - II Cor. 12:20. Jesus used that word in Lk. 2 1:9. Here it is the happenings of the last days. Jealously, competition, all contributes to confusion.

Gen. 11 is a good illustration. Even today we use the word Babel for confusion. This sets the stage for "every evil work." Evil here means worthless -1 Cor. 3:12. Some great ministry operating in man's wisdom may look pious but at judgment will burn. This is what Paul says in I Cor. 4:5.

In Revelations, the church at Syria said it was poor but God said rich. Loodicia said were rich, God said poor. We should judge all we do by God's word. Battles, splits, lack of purity and peace suggest something is absent. Now that we've seen man's wisdom and its outcome, let's see God's wisdom and what it will bring.

Verse 17

Wisdom - good sense of judgment. A wise attitude. Common sense - sound and prudent. "From above" - it finds its fullness in Christ -1 Cor. 1:30. Prov. 2:6 - wisdom in Proverbs is the personification of Christ - Prov. 3:5-7.

We will now look at 7 characteristics of God's wisdom.

- (1) "First Purity" - notice the word "first". If your not pure then the other 6 will never be in you. 5 things we should have purity: "Purity of Thoughts" - Rom. 12:2 - refuse impure stories and sights. We should avoid anything that will give Satan opportunities - II Cor. 10:5. "Purity of Habits" - too many people allow bad habits to gain control in their lives. Paul told Timothy in I Tim. 5:22, "Keep thyself Pure." Each believer needs to heed and obey this. "Purity of Motives" - it is one thing to be used by unbelievers, but Christians should never do things dishonorable for gain or He is not on one side today and another tomorrow. He tries to treat people as Jesus did and knows he will be opposed - Lk. 15:2.
- (7) "Without Hypocrisy" - II Cor. 6:4-6 - unfeigned and consistent. We should all be very careful what we say and mean. The Greek word used here is an actor playing a party. We look at a hypocrite as that person who says do and doesn't not. Judas was such a one. He seemed to be a disciple and then betrayed Christ with a kiss. Would you betray the truth to serve your own good. Let us not be that way but let us listen to I Jn. 3:18,1 Pet. 1:22, Rom. 12:9. We need to remember that God knows our hearts -1 Jn. 1:47.

Verse 18

God's wisdom produces blessing and a wise Christian sows righteousness. We are not to be trouble makers. Lot followed man's wisdom and brought trouble to Abraham, but he followed God's wisdom and brought peace. Lot's decision brought useless works and all he lived for went up in smoke. Abraham's decision led to blessings for his household and ultimately the world, Prov. 3:13.

Chapter 4

Deals with how to end wars, and produce submission.

Verse 1

Fights and conflicts among Christians. Is this normal? Let's see in Ps. 133:1. Surely brothers should live in harmony. As we have seen Lot cause problems for

Abraham. Abraham started a war with David - II Sam. 13-18. The disciples fought over who was greatest - Lk. 9:40-48. Some of the early churches had their share of fights - I Cor. 6:1-8, 14:23-40.

James mentions several sources of conflict. Rich and poor class wars - 2:1-9. Employment wars - 5:1-6. Church fightings - 1:19, 20. Personal wars - 4:11-12. The saints were speaking evil of one another. Again the Bible says speak the truth in love. Eph. 4:5 - we should not speak in a spirit of rivalry. If the truth about a brother is harmful, we should do what I Pet. 4:8 says. If he has sinned, we should go to him as in Mt. 18:15-19, Gal. 6:1-2.

James here is not forbidding us to use discrimination to evaluate people - Ph. 1:9-10, but we are not to act as God in our judgment. We must follow Mt. 7:1-5. It is unfortunate that saints fight one another. Leaders against leader, church against church. The name of Christ gets blotched by Christians more often than by the devil. But why, we have the same Savior, the same Holy Spirit indwells us. Yet we fight one another. Why?

The war in the heart is helping to cause war in the church. Look at 3:14-16. The essence of sin is selfishness. Eve disobeyed God because she wanted the fruit - Gen. 3. Abraham lied about his wife, to save his life - Gen. 12:10-20. Achon caused defeat to Israel, over illegal loot - Josh. 7:20, 21. Isa. 53:6 says "we have turned before to his own way."

We veil religious quarrels under spirituality. We are like Miriam and Aaron who complained about Moses' wife, but they were envious of Moses' authority. Paul wrote about his conflict - Rom. 7:23. Peter warned in I Pet. 2:11. Each person who has trusted Jesus as Savior has a new nature - II Pet. 1:3, 4. This gives us power and hope of living above sin. There will always be conflict between the old and new. A persons new nature is made for eternity and is not nor can be satisfied with the earthly. On the other hand, the old nature is not satisfied with anything.

Verse 2

Character assassinations: I Jn. 3:15 - a person characterized by hate, probably has never trusted Christ. These are sobering words. Today more than ever we need to carefully examine our lives. Sometimes in an effort to be separate from sin, Christians commit sin by bitterly attacking fellow believers. We should stand against sin, but we must not let hatred grip our lives. Even if we totally disagree with someone we are commanded to love and seek that persons highest ^{goo}

James was written to those considered believers. Some however, were only religious and did not trust Christ as Messiah. These wrong actions lead to wrong praying. When our praying is wrong our whole Christian life is wrong. Wrong praising is failure to apply faith, open attack on someone might indicate no change of heart, or this person might simply not learned to live by faith. They need to see that Christ is to be Lord of our lives in every area, and he will give us all we need to live in victory over sin. Mt. 7:7, 11-one must

ask to receive. II Cor. - we need to come to this verse when we have need. It will remind us that he has the ability to meet any and all needs. Also Eph. 3:20, we see here that we must ask to receive help. If we are not confident he will meet our need, he will not - James. 1:6. James is trying to get his readers to realize that they have no victory, because they ask for selfish reasons.

Verse 3

Do you every wonder why so many of our prayers go unanswered; because of selfish desires. The give-me attitude is definitely the wrong one. It should be, " I will gladly accept your will, whatever it may be because God will always do that which is right." We ask for too often what pleases us. When it should be what pleases God -I Jn. 3:22 - a similar promise is in Jn. 15:7. If we ask with the right motives, God will hear and answer. He will not give us our selfish desires, because if he did they would just separate us from him. The purpose of our praying is not to manipulate God but to bring us into submission to him.

Verse 4

In this verse we see three reasons for a believer being at war with God. What is war with God - rebellion. The first reason is - The World. What is worldliness? It is placing anything above God. It's not just possessing things, it's an attitude a Christian does not just become worldly. It is gradual. A man gets a job and slowly the job begins to take precedence in his life. To the point where getting ahead is all that matters.

This verse says there is friendship of the world. This results in spotting by the world - 1:27. This is areas of our lives that meet approval with the world. This leads to loving the world -I Jn. 2:15-17. This makes it easy to do the next thing. Conforming to the world - Rom. 12:2. This results in being condemned with the world. I Cor. 11:32 - our soul being saved yet so as by fire -I Cor. 3:11-15.

James says this person is an adulterer. Why? We are in a sense married to Christ - Rom. 7:4 and we should be faithful to him. It is spiritual adultery - the Jewish Christians would understand. For Israel, Jehovah's wife was guilty of this, and was rebuked by his prophets for worshipping false gods. Ez. 23, Jer. 3:1-5, Hosea 1-2 - a friend of the world then is an enemy of God.

Verse 5

This lusting comes by the old nature inherited from Adam. Yet when we accept Christ we are given the Holy Spirit to help us live in victory over the old nature. This causes conflict, for the old hates the new and the new is constantly striving to reign in the person's life - Gal. 5:16, 17. The new is that small voice that will tell you something you are about to do is wrong. He will try to restrain you. If there is no voice, no nagging, then you need to read II Cor. 13:5. When you live to satisfy your flesh or self you grieve the Holy

Spirit, for he has a loving jealousy toward you. For he is guarding our relationship with the Father.

We will now hear James' prescription for curing worldliness. They are here for hope and comfort and should be taken daily.

Verse 6

We have saving grace - Eph. 2:8, 9. We have grace for living the Christian life - II Pet. 1:3. We have grace for every need - Heb. 4:16. We have grace to escape temptation - I Cor. 10:13. In case you still doubt God's abundant supply of Grace read II Cor. 9:8.

God resists the proud. Humility is the key ingredient to obtaining grace and the cure for worldliness. You have to be loving minded enough to receive it. We must see ourselves as God sees us - Ps. 103:13, 14; II Cor. 3:5. When you're humble you know you don't have what it takes to live above sin. Jesus said in Jn. 15:5 that without him you can do nothing. Listen to Paul in Rom. 7:18. Paul was concerned we would overestimate our ability to fight will - I Cor. 10:12. Job said in 42:5, 6 "wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes.

Verse 7

Subjection to God - it is what only the humble can do - I Pet. 5:6, Rom. 12:1. Some say they'll give God the major areas but not the little things. However a believer must recognize he can do nothing, not one little thing that will have eternal value - Rom. 6:15. There must be total subjection.

I Pet. 5:8 - this was true in the first century, it is more true today. Eph. 6:10 - this is how we resist in the name of Jesus. The devil is powerful but not like my Father. He is greater according to I Jn. 4:4. If God is for us who can be against us - Rom. 8:31.

Verse 8

Draw nigh - How? First - prayer - Heb. 10:19-22. Second - Bible reading - Timothy says study and God will draw you to him but not by force even from salvation on. Jn. 1:12 reveals a personal decision. God sometimes uses circumstances to get us (Jonah and the whale).

This injunction is most likely for those caught in worldliness. God will not nor can he work through dirty hands. Heb. 10:22 - God requires a thorough cleansing - Ps. 51:17. How are we cleansed? By confessing and turning from whatever is holding us - Prov. 28:13. This person is one of divided interests. God does not accept half-heartedness - Mt. 6:22-24.

Verse 9

Sorrow for Sin. To grieve, weep over your disloyalty. Those who are attracted to the world are endeavoring to get joy from experiences that are short lived at best. Such people should turn their so-called joy into mourning. We must face the issue squarely.

Verse 10

Notice this verse does not say to humble yourself to men but God. The Pharisees were bad for this, bowing to men but not God. Read Mt. 23 to see what Jesus says about these hypocrites. Each one of us who know Christ needs to realize his wormlessness before God, and such true humility will produce a truly devoted life. When we come with the right attitude, we will experience the last part "and he shall lift you up." As we accept the grace God offers, He will exalt us in due time.

The lesson - true humility is to comprehend our own unworthiness apart from Christ. Of course this is not possible without the grace of God.

Verse 11

We need to establish what the law here is. It is not the Mosaic Law as such. It is that law James talks about in 2:8. The Royal Law "thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." This law is closely connected with the Law of Christ. It is not a command as much as a principle. Rom. 13:8. Christ enables us to love as we should. This is not just emotional love. This love is more an act of will caused by the love God places in us for others. It is deciding to seek another's highest good even when that person is unlovely in action or lifestyle. This speaking is prompted at times by believers looking down on those less learned or victorious. When we do this, we are placing ourselves as judges above the law. This leads to our next verse.

Verse 12

We judge, not knowing the intent of a believer's heart. Let's see what Paul says in I Cor. 4:4, 5. When we stand at the judgment seat mentioned in II Cor. 5:10 we will answer for our speaking against a brother. Even if someone's actions do not live up with the word, we are not to be judges to an overt sense. God saves and he will deal with that individual-Mt. 7:1.

Verse 13-15

These people were not interested in God's will or death or wise planning. As we read these 3 verses we should come to see that every phase of our lives are totally dependent on God. Wise planning - no one likes to think of death so we plan. Live and figure to live to at least 100. That is not realistic. We should plan wisely and under the leadership of God. It was said once, "Plan as though you were going to have a long time to live and to work but work as though today might be the last day."

Verse 9

We do not need to be in fear of the future. Listen to the Psalmist in 32:8. Finding God's will. How? is always the question asked after this. God know best. But we need a basis. Let's start at Prov. 3:3-5 - we must admit that he knows best. Prov. 3:7 - this sums up this whole section in James. We do not have all the answers. We need God for the answers and we need to shun evil. Ps. 25:2 - ashamed also means confused; vs. 4 - every believer should hold to this; vs. 5 - we need to ask do we really wait; vs. 9, we need humility to be taught by God; vs. 12 - if we fear God, he promises to teach us his way. Prov. 27:1 - we need to check all our plans against God's will. We need to stay centered on God's plan. Ps. 32:8 we do not need to be as mules. That has to have bit and bridle, God said his eyes. After prayer, we should proceed with what is wise and honoring to God. We need spiritual alertness and sensitivity arrived at by prayer and using these verses and James 4:6-10.

Verse 16

Here is the sin of self-sufficiency. We sometimes have an attitude of "I know best."

Verse 17

After studying the 3 & 4 chapters, we as believers should have some idea of what's right but just to know is not enough, we must do. It is sin to not heed the spirit in praying, witnessing, setting forth the truth. To love the world more than God. Has the Holy Spirit been hard on you as he speaks through James. We need not be complacent. We need always to be open and receptive to God's leading and this involves change. To know to do good and doing it is not Sin.

Chapter 5

In this Chapter, James will bear down with strong words on the riches of the world and the church. The Peril of Unsanctified Riches. These are riches gotten without thought for God or of using any part of it for him. There are some very important lessons in this chapter that everyone of us needs to heed, because of the materialistic society in which we live. It is to bad that some Christians are more interested in getting more of this world than the next. I recommend that you check your life and attitude by the first 6 verses of this chapter.

Verse 1

Coming Hard Times - James is telling them that there were hard times coming and there are yet hard times coming for that one trusting in his riches. Rev. 6:6 tells of a measure of wheat for a days wage (a penny) instead of the usual 8 cents. Planing for hard times isn't wrong, as long as God's at the center. Notice he says "ye rich men." The word rich is similar to old. It is selective to who is speaking.

Have you ever dreamed of having a million dollars? If you have, think now what you wanted to spend it on. This will help you judge your attitude. Lets see a few verse dealt with the rich - Lk. 6:24,1 Tim. 6:9, 10, Prov. 11:28 says "He that trusts in his riches shall fall." Jesus admonished this - Mt. 6:19-21, 31, 33-34. Our minds should be staying on seeking first his kingdom.

Verse 2

Corrupt Riches - this is James' statement for those trusting in the material things in the last days. Inflation will make wealth amount to nothing. Stock crashed last year -people lost fortunes. It's easy to get into this trap for our heart according to Jer. 17:9-11 is deceitfully wicked. Who can understand it?'Don't trust it, it will only take you away from God. The only way to stop it is to get in the word.

Verse 3

James says here that the false of ones gold and silver is very unstable. He is trying to tell us to not even trust in what the world calls secure investments. The way people worry over their stocks shows they are not secure. We need to lean wholly on Christ for true security.

Not only are people planning for hard times, but they are actually working only for here not for heavenly rewards - II Cor. 5:10 tells us we will all give an account on that great judgment day. I'm afraid some will watch their worldly securities go up in smoke and enter heaven empty handed.

Verse 4

This verse has special application toward employers and employees. The rich are so anxious to get ahead they will even take their employee's wages. They become oppressive according to 2:6. But listen to the next line - The Lord knows every detail of life, and he will hold responsible those who do this. Self indulgence - James continues his charges in verse 5.

Verse 5

Some would say these are not for me. It is true that the primary application is to the lost businessman. But there is much for us. Notice it says "ye have lived in pleasure and been wanton." To be wanton is to fully indulge oneself. Many believers live for pleasure here instead of for the one who bought them. Let me say you can have wealth without being unspiritual if your attitude is on the same attitude of God. Christians can become so addicted to money and all it can buy, that they forget what they are here to do. Those who live only for pleasure are under Paul's words in I Tim. 5:6 - "But he that lives in pleasure is dead while he lives."

Many is the Christian whose spiritual vitality has been taken from because of their love of the world. These are saved but you can't tell any difference in them as the unsaved, and I will add that the lost are looking at us to see a difference, if they don't see that in us, they will never accept Christ as Savior.

Verse 6

Again, do not say this is not for me. I haven't killed anyone. There is more than one way to kill. Slander is murderous. Some in their desire to gain go through anything and anyone in their way. The reverse is also true of the poor biting at the rich accusing them wrongly. We as Christians should strike a balance in our dealings with both rich and poor - for they are even in God's eyes. They should not be different in our eyes.

Verse 7

Faith in the soon return of the Lord - Faith produces patience. The Lord's return is imminent or could occur at any moment. Knowing this should effect our present lifestyle and give us patience in trials. I Jn. 3:2, 3 - This tells us we are not expecting his return. We will not purify our lives. Could this be you? We need to remind ourselves each day this may be the day Christ returns. Keeping our eyes on this will help us stay out of worldly involvement - Mt. 6:34, Ph. 4:6, 7.

When James wrote "be patient" - that word means long-suffering or long in patience. This is why God allows things into our live - 1 Pet. 1:6, 7.

Significance of Christ's return: Let's consider a few things the Lord's return means. Released from earthly pressures; the judgment seat for reward; an adjustment of all things; rewards; rejoining loved ones. These five should make Ga. 6:9 a little more easier to do. Those who do not look ahead slacken-up - Heb. 10:36, 37 says this to them.

Verse 8

The Lord's return is getting closer each day. James was looking for it at any moment. Paul looked for it to happen at any moment. We too should look at each day as the day he returns - Rom. 13:11-14. James says we need to "establish" our hearts. I mean to ground or stabilize. This is one reason for the local church - Rom. 1:11. Paul sent Timothy to the Thessalonians to establish them - 1 Thes. 3:10-13. How do you get established - by the word and prayer. Also we must not become complacent, as though nothing changes and will just be here till we die - 1 Pet. 4:7. Christ is coming soon and we need to be of a sound mind and active spirit. This will prevent what James is going to say next.

Verse 9

That word - grudge - is to complain. Since this passage has as its basis, the farmer. We know or most should know that when you farm, you are so busy tending the crops that you

do not have the time to argue or complain about your neighbor. We should be like that. We should tend to what is set before us and not gripe about someone else not pulling their share. James says if you do you will be judged for it. We all need to be learning more each day - how to glorify God rather than what so-and-so didn't do - 1 Cor. 4:5.

We need to work and minister to the point that we can say with Paul "For I am now ready to be offered." I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. For the Lord stands at the door ready to come back and he will judge what each has done.

Verse 10

Jesus was referred to the prophets - Mt. 5:10-12. What kind of encouragement do we get from these. First - they were in the will of God yet they suffered greatly. Old Satan says you suffer because of unfaithfulness yet II Tim. 3:12 says all that will live Godly in Christ shall suffer persecution. I think that is the reason so many do not want to live Godly lives, they fear the suffering. Our Savior was obedient and it led him to the cross.

Second - they remind us God cared for us when we suffer. Elijah said there would be a drought, but God fed and watered Elijah every day. Listen to this quote - "The will of God will never lead you, where the grace of God cannot keep you." Why is it that those who speak in the name of the Lord often must endure difficult trials.

It's easy to answer now that I see first hand it's so they can back up their messages. Our patience in times of trouble is a powerful testimony to unbelievers and even to weak believers. Rom. 15:4 - the better we know the Bible the easier it will be for God to give strength and patience.

Verse 11

You cannot endure if there is no trial or suffering. There are no victories without battles. No peaks without valleys. Everyone wants God's blessing and promises, but with them come also burdens, trials, suffering. Many today pray for the wonderful things of God but do not realize that to pray for some of these marvelous gifts comes responsibility. Paul in II Cor. 12:7-10 was called up to the third heaven and saw things not to be written down or spoken about, and for this privilege he was given a thorn to keep him humble. God always balances privilege with responsibility; blessing with burden. If he didn't we would be as the spoiled little rich kid who gets everything and cries for more.

In Job, we see behind the scenes in the first three chapters and then many speeches by him and his so-called friends. Then from 38-42 we have Job's deliverance. First he was humbled, then honored and given twice as much for his faithfulness in not turning against God as his wife wanted him to do. God the Father is full, of pity and mercy toward us. That is why when we suffer he is there to guide us up. He told Paul that his grace was sufficient, and it is.

Verse 12

What does swearing oaths have to do with patience and suffering? Quite a bit, often during trials we say things or make bargains with God that you probably won't keep. Let's go back to Job and pick out a couple. In 3:1 Job did curse the day he was born, but not God, nor did he bargain with him.

James is reminding his readers what the Lord had already said in Matt. 5:34-37. The Jews were always making vows, but to be sure and not blaspheme. They would not use his name. But Jesus shows them and James reminds that you can't escape him in swearing by these.

Our character needs to be such that, we need not say anything but yes or no to an issue and people will know. Certain oaths however, are not wrong. God swore an oath to Abraham - Heb. 6:13-17 says he could swear by no greater than himself. Governments have oaths that must be sworn to hold office or during court trials. They will let you say "I affirm" rather than "I swear". Listen to what the last part says, if we are not careful with our words, we will be judged for them.

Verse 13

Prayer and Singing. Afflicted - ill treated, suffering, back in 1:2-6 James dealt with affliction. Instructions for those suffering affliction is given in Heb. 12:11-15. There are 4 reactions to chastening. First - vs. 5 - despise not - this person trust it lightly. Second - nor faint vs. 5 - this is the crybaby "why did this happen to me." Third - vs. 7 - if ye endure - this is the super pious - this is from the Lord and I will endure. God doesn't ask you to be a pessimist. Fourth vs. 11 - we need to acknowledge that we're suffering - that it may be God trying to get me to get out of some sin or trying my faith. It's like exercise, it isn't easy but it yields good results. We can take heart from Paul in I Cor. 9:27. I can't produce holiness and you can't either. What holiness you have is because Christ died for you. That's the only reason you'll get to heaven.

Singing Psalms - Eph. 5:19, 20. We should all sing or hum sound spiritual songs.

Verse 14

There are 4 things in this verse we want to point out. We must dig to understand, so we will look at some Greek words in this section.

The sick to call for the elders. This refutes publicity advertised healing services and Catholicism's extreme action. Why call the elders - this person is in need of a doctor. This person is sick because of sin. The elder was responsible to pray for those going out into sin.

The elders are to pray. The sick person is not said to be praying here. It is assumed he already has prayed. What the elders needed to pray for will be talked about in our 4th point.

To anoint with oil. When the individual books of the Bible were written they were to specific people or groups. Those to whom James wrote would understand this anointing. That's why he didn't need to give any details of the matter. How many times in anointing in the New Testament - 20 times. Mk. 6:13 - this is the 12 sent out by Christ and they were sent only to the Jews. Lk. 7:46 - this is where Christ is anointed by a woman in Simon's house. James 5:14 - It is important to note that no letter to the Gentiles

mentions anointing. Oil was the basis for most medicines in that time as shown in Lk. 10:30-37. Even in the Old Testament - Isa. 1:6.

Greek word for anointing - chrio - this is ceremonial it is the one we get Christ or anointed one from. Also alepho - it means to rub or pour on, this is a medical term. So James was telling them to use the best known medicine of the day. The elders were to pray after they had doctored him.

Prayer and Medicine - God never intended for a person to neglect medicine when sick, nor does he expect you to neglect prayer when you're sick. Our confidence is to rest in God that he will heal us, that may include using doctors.

In the early church, and during Christ's public ministry there were many healings, but not all were healed. Even Lazarus had to face death again. At the close of Paul's ministry he could not perform miraculous healings as in the beginning. Timothy had stomach troubles.

Praying in the name of the Lord - everything the elders did was to be in this manner. So another question - What does it mean to pray in the name of the Lord? Recognizing him as Lord - in doing this we acknowledge that he knows what's best for us. Submitting to his Lordship - when he saves you he becomes master of our lives. So many times we want to pray in his name, but we do not want to submit all of ourselves to his control, and we do not believe - Rom. 8:28. God wants us to do that which pleases him not ourselves. Recognizing His character - in Bible times, names usually designed that person's character.

We need to accept his holy character and that he wants only the best. An individual's circumstance may not seem good, but God will bring it to good in the end.

Recognizing no other name - Acts 4 says there is no other name given whereby we must be saved - Jn. 14:6. There is no other way to come to the father but through Christ - Heb. 10:19 - we enter the holiest on God's presence through the blood of Christ.

Accepting God's will - this is accepting whatever God has for us. Our finite minds do not know what is best for us at all times. Listen, if healing isn't in God's plan, all the

prayer and medicine in the world will not help. We need to be as Paul was in II Cor. 12:7-9. God's grace is sufficient, he can make strength and glory for his name from our weaknesses.

In closing this verse, I feel it is evident God does not always heal now or in time past, for if he did, no one would die. Heb. 9:27 says that all men die. Job 14:1, 2 says we are of few days and then like a flower we are gone. Praying for the sick in the Lord's name is acknowledging that if it's not God's will he will not be healed and accepting that fact with joy and praise.

Verse 15

Phrases to be considered: Prayer of faith shall save the sick - notice not heal. This is the elders' prayer not the persons and the faith is the elders. This faith is a gift according to Eph. 2:8, 1 Cor. 12:8-10, Rom. 10:17. It comes from hearing God's word - this includes personal study.

Four things about this prayer. (1) Assurance of having - this isn't just feelings. It is deep trust that God will act in the sick person's life. (2) in the Holy Spirit - Eph. 6:18 the Holy Spirit knows the will of God and will guide us that way. (3) Faith of God - Mk. 11:22 - Jesus said "Have faith in God" - we need to distinguish between faith and presumption. Heb. 10:18 is misused in this area. This boldness leads some to believe they can demand God to heal someone. That is presumption. On the other hand, we need not be afraid to bring our requests and needs to him. Many today presume upon God and try to force him to heal. Many have great heartaches because of the fact that God didn't heal. Faith then when we pray, is confidence that God is going to do his will in that situation, whether we understand or not. (4) Danger of carelessness - This person says, "well, since it's up to God, why pray." Remember James 4:2 said you have not because you ask not. God provided prayer as a way for expressing our needs and desires to him. Then he gives the confidence when it is according to his will. A good example is parents and children, asked for things that are not always right for them and we as parents do not give it.

Turn to II Cor. 12:10 - it would be good for all of us to have this attitude. We see from this that elders then and now did not have free reign in healing. The word says here freeing from disease - regardless of whether it is doctors or just prayer. It is the Lord who raises a person from the sick bed.

If he have committed sins - This gives us the clue to this person's sickness. Some think all sickness is the result of sin, but notice the word "if. This tells me that it is not always but sometimes sin. Rom. 5:12 tells us death and sin entered by one man - Adam. Because of this we all suffer in our bodies. I Cor. 11:29, 30 sheds light on this matter of sickness and personal sin.

Healing and unconfessed sin - does Jesus heal a person who has unconfessed sin - Jn. 5:8, 14. With this in mind, and there are other instances - it becomes obvious that faith healers

have no right to say it is sin if a person is not healed. This passage on healing indicates it is the elders' faith, not the sick person's.

Verse 16

Confession, Prayer and Healing.

Confession - the Greek word is admit or agree. When we have sinned, we need to confess it and agree with God it is sin. The word "faults" is sin - it goes back to Prov. 28:13. This verse is not telling us to confess personal sin to the assembly. The guideline is in Mt.5:23, 24. Only if the sin is against the assembly is it to be public. The contest shows it is not to be confessed to the elders. This is what Catholicism does. If we are to do this then they must confess to us. This confession is to keep fellowship with God and man- Ps. 66:18.

Pray one for another - confession and prayer will heal any and all wounds.

That ye may be healed - this is the purpose of confessing and praying. This healing is physical.

Effective Fervent Prayer - is earnest - effectual in the Greek is where we get energize or energetic. It is not listless, careless prayer. It is not elegant necessarily but it is earnest even to the point of tears. Be specific - Eph. 6:18, Ps. 34:4 - this is essential in our prayer life. Know your wants from your needs - we need to differentiate between our wants and needs. God said he would supply all our needs. Everything after that is a special blessing.

A Righteousness Man - this is said better as a righteous person. Right in our standing - II Cor. 5:2 1, Rom. 3:21-28. How do we obtain righteousness so our prayers will be heard? Rom. 10:4-10. Having trusted Christ for our position, our practice should fall in line-Un. 3:7-9.

Assurance of righteousness - we cannot take personal sin lightly. If we do there will be severe disciplining - we need the blood applied daily.

Availeth much - Notice it says much not all. Even when a prayer is not answered this type of person will profit for he is not interested in possessions as much as in possessing Christ and in delighting in doing God's will.

Verses 17,18

We will pick out a few verses from I Kings 17, 18 - shows the patience of Elijah. 16:30, 33 shows his wickedness, God sends Elijah in 17:1. Elijah was intensely aware he was standing before God. God was testing Elijah also. Ahab said that Elijah was

responsible, he hunted him vs 3, 4. Notice how specific God was. Look at vs. 5 - Elijah never tested God. He just obeyed. Look at vs. 7. Here is a test and Elijah passes.

Elijah's boldness - move over to 18. This was a true test for Ahab wanted him dead. This would be a time to meditate on Ps. 91:1. When they meet, listen to Ahab in vs. 17. Then Elijah in holy boldness tells Ahab in vs. 18. Elijah knew fear, hunger, thirst, weakness, but also power, strength and boldness.

Verses 19,20

Erring from the truth - in concluding his letter which has dealt with varied subjects, concludes with these words. He starts with the 12 tribes and ends with brethren. He is speaking to a believer who has fallen into a sin. Maybe bitterness of ill health since he has been dealing with that. You gain nothing by bitterness. The words convert him -refer to bringing him back to the truth. God has a blessing for the one who leads this erring one back vs. 19. That is why Paul wrote Gal. 6:1 - we should always be ready to encourage and direct the path of such a person back to the narrow way.

The word - death - in this context is physical death, we have seen that this one is already sick and the natural progression of discipline would lead in this direction. Look at I Cor. 5:5,1 Cor. 11:29, 30,1 Jn. 5:16, 17. This sin is not the same for everyone, but it is there and we are capable of falling into it, if we don't keep our minds and lives turned to Christ.

James says in vs. 20 that the person who leads the erring one back hides a multitude of sins. These are those of the one caught up in them. Once he turns back to God they are hidden from criticism of others.

But the strong one should take guard lest while helping the one he himself fall into sin -1 Pet. 4:8, Prov. 10:12. This love and concern for brethren out of the way is a true sign of maturity.