

James

Chapter 1

- 1- James, a slave of God and the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes in the diaspora:¹
Greetings.
- 2- Count it all joy brothers, when you fall into various kinds of trials,²
- 3- knowing that the testing of your faith works endurance.
- 4- But let endurance have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, falling short in nothing.
- 5- But if any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives freely and does not reproach, and it shall be given to him.
- 6- But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavers is like the wave of the sea, driven of the wind and tossed;
- 7- For let not that man suppose that he shall receive anything from the Lord.
- 8- A double-minded is unstable in all of his ways.
- 9- But let the humble brother boast in his elevation,
- 10- and the rich in his humiliation, because as the flower of the grass he will pass away.
- 11- For the sun rose with its burning heat, and dried up the grass, and its flower fell, and the beauty of its appearance was destroyed, thus also the rich in his goings shall wither away.
- 12- Happy is the man who endures temptation because, having been tested, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord promised to those who love him.
- 13- Let no one, being tempted, say, "I am tempted of God," for God cannot be tempted by evil, and Himself tempts no one.
- 14- But each one is tempted, being drawn away and allured by his own desire.
- 15- Then, desire, having been conceived, gives birth to sin, and sin, having been finished, brings forth death.
- 16- Do not be deceived my beloved brethren.

¹ James was written to the Jews of the diaspora, and has been agreed since the time of the early church writers that it is essentially Jewish. The Epistle is clearly directed more to the early Christian Jewish culture and there is no mention of Gentile Christians. The address of James to "the brethren" should not necessarily be taken to refer to Christian brethren as James would have also addressed Jews in the same manner. Although, James opens up with identifying himself as the slave of Jesus Christ he says nothing about Him in a direct way afterwards except in 2:1 and by reference only in 5:7. Certainly, Christian Jews were a target audience. What we can be certain of is that James is calling out truth and the identity of the true servant of God, and the nature that they should have. He makes certain that his entire audience recognizes the behavior that can lay no claim to the new birth even though he only vaguely mentions it (1:18; 3:14). In many respects there is certainly an examination that supports the reader's need for a Savior and a true conversion. While James certainly addresses those who are faithful to God, He is also clearly addressing either backsliders or those who have never received the change of nature that Peter refers to in 2 Peter 1:3-4. It could be considered that James wrote in a style that might more easily be considered by those Jews who had not yet accepted Jesus as the Messiah. The Epistle was written at a time when both Jews who strictly kept the law and those who were Christians still met in the same synagogue together. To gain a more thorough understanding of these unique circumstances in the early part of the first century church, refer to: *The Pulpit Commentary*, Spence-Jones, H. D. M., ed. (1909). James

² The first two chapters of James appear to be an address focused on the believing Jews.

17- Every good gift and every perfect gift is coming down from above from the Father of lights, with whom is no variation or shadow of turning.

18- He chose to give us birth by the word of truth, so that we would become a kind of firstfruits of His created things.³

19- So, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath;

20- for man's wrath does not work the righteousness of God.

21- Therefore lay aside all moral uncleanness and wickedness and receive in meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

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23- Because if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, this one is like a man who contemplates his natural face in a mirror.

24- For he considers himself and has gone away and immediately forgets what he looks like.

25- But he that looks into the perfect law of freedom, and continues in it, this one having been a doer and not a forgetful hearer shall be blessed in his doings.

26- If anyone among you seems to be religious and does not bridle his tongue, but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is vain.

27 Pure and undefiled service before God and the Father is to care for the fatherless and the widows in their trouble and to keep himself unspotted from the world.⁴

³ The word of God is spirit and life (John 6:63). It is living and powerful and through its incorruptible seed we have been begotten of God (Hebrews 4:12; 1 Peter 1:23). When we were born of God we became a firstfruits or the dedicated portion of His creation. He bought us with a price and sealed us with the Spirit giving to us a down payment and certificate of purchase (1 Corinthians 6:20; 1 Peter 1:18; 2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:13). In so much that we are indeed the purchased possession of God (Ephesians 1:14). If you will take that which has been separated by God and vowed also vowed to Him and set it aside as a consecrated thing even as Hannah did with Samuel then God will bring forth great things from your life (1 Samuel 1:11). However, if you deal forcefully as did Hophni and Phinehas who demanded the consecrated things for themselves you only find wrath and indignation (2 Samuel 2:16). If you will realize how important and sacred the firstfruits are to God then you will understand that your life belongs completed to Him and you should be honored to be a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1; 1 Peter 2:5). You are holiness unto the Lord (Exodus 39:30; 1 Peter 1:16; 2 Peter 3:11; Zechariah 14:20-21; Matthew 3:11; Hebrews 12:14)

⁴ James warns us against only being hearers of the word and not doers of the word. He describes those who are willing to participate in the meetings and will set and listen to the word but remain unmoved when it comes to obedience (James 1:23-25). These are those who say they believe but they never show their faith by their works (James 2:17-22). These folks continue to have an unbridled tongue and an unwillingness to be obedient to the commands of our Saviour Jesus and the purity of the Holy Spirit. Thus James cries out against those who have empty practices without the ethical and moral results.

A compassion for the poor and the needy and especially the fatherless and the widows is an expression of the will and the nature of God (Psalms 68:5; 146:9; Isaiah 1:17; Deuteronomy 10:16-19; 14:29; 24:17-22; Jeremiah 5:28; Ezekiel 22:7; Zechariah 7:10; Job 29:16; Acts 6:1-6; 1 Timothy 5:3-16). If a person has therefore been born of the word and has received the word of God into their nature then the fruits of the word must be allowed to be produced and thus testify of ones transformation (James 1:21; 1 Peter 1:23).

Chapter 2

- 1- My brethren, do not have partiality in the faith of our Lord of glory, Jesus Christ.
- 2- For if anyone comes into your synagogue with a gold ring, in bright clothing; but also a poor one, in filthy clothing⁵,
- 3- and you look favorably on the one who comes wearing the bright clothing and you say to him, "Sit here," and to the poor you say, "You stand there," or, "Sit at my footstool,"
- 4- did you not make a distinction among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?
- 5- Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?
- 6- But you dishonor the poor! Do not the rich oppress you and drag you to court?
- 7- Do they not blaspheme the good name by which you were called?
- 8- If you fulfill the royal law⁶ according to the scripture you do well, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."
- 9- But if you show partiality, you are exposed by the law as transgressors.
- 10- But whoever keeps the whole law but shall stumble in one thing becomes guilty for all.
- 11- For He who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not commit murder." Now if you do not commit adultery, but commit murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.
- 12- So speak and so do as those who are going to be judged by the law of freedom.
- 13- For judgment is without mercy to him that has not shown mercy, and mercy triumphs over judgment.
- 14- What good is it, my brothers, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you?⁷

Too many think God just wants us to recognize Him, God is not looking to be recognized He is looking for relationship. He wants men to engage in the beauty and right conduct of the life that He has created and given to us. God sets the example and He expects us to follow Him. Therefore, the Word of truth and the practice of it produces a right relationship with our Heavenly Father! We cannot have the love of God dwelling in us if we shut off a deep compassion towards the poor and the needy in the community of the church (1 John 3:17; Galatians 6:10). We must become more mindful of the needs of people around us and be willing to participate in helping them with their needs both physically and spiritually.

⁵ James will follow a pattern through the rest of this Epistle. He will address the wrong practices of those who would be both the Jews that have been born again and those who were still without Christ Jesus. In the latter part of the chapters he calls the reader to repentance and to that which is right before God.

⁶ This is the first of nine references that James makes of the Law of Moses. Of course Paul also referred to the Law of Moses especially in respect to this command (Gal 5:14; Romans 13:10; Lev. 19:18).

⁷ There have always been doctrines around that would deny the power of godliness. James is addressing one of them here in his Epistle. A doctrine that would claim that faith alone can save. The point that he makes is that there is no such thing as faith alone because faith always produces an action. The very nature of faith results in something being accomplished. Therefore, if there is no work, no evidence of obedience then faith is dead. There were those who only had a habitual empty boasting; who made faith some philosophical ideology that produced no change at all in their nature and behavior. These same doctrines and ideas exist today. Does the working of faith in any way violate the reality that, "the righteous live by faith" (Romans 1:17; 3:11; Hebrews 10:38)? No, because to live has movement and actions and speaks to

15- Now if a brother or sister be naked and be destitute of daily food,
16- and anyone said to them from among you, "Go in peace and be warmed and filled,"
but does not give to them the needful things for the body, of what benefit is it?
17- And so faith without works is dead, being by itself.⁸
18- But some will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from
your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.
19- You believe that God is one? You do well, even the demons believe and shudder.
20- But will you know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

everything that we do insomuch that we would say that "whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Romans 14:23). There are those who would attempt to argue this point by referring to what Paul said in Romans 3:28, "For we hold that a person is made righteous by faith apart from the works prescribed by the law." However, this has nothing whatsoever to do with the works that faith produces; these are two separate issues. In the new covenant the works prescribed by the law are dead and meaningless. Yet at the same time the idea that somehow faith would replace the practical daily walk of godliness wherein righteousness and holy living are no longer requirements is the false doctrine that James is addressing. Paul himself addressed those who would attempt to pervert the doctrine of faith by eliminating the works of faith in Titus 2:14 and 3:8. Faith is a fruit producing not an empty dead boasting that is not accompanied by evidence. Faith without works is as useless and meaningless as sympathy without giving help (James 2:15-17; 1 John 3:17). Jesus made it very clear that if we were to enter into the Kingdom then we would have to do the will of the Father (Matthew 7:21). The evidence of dead faith is observed in those who have all the right scriptures and concepts but their walk does not measure up to their talk. Those who think that their words are equal to their works are deceived and will discover that their house is built on the sand and not on the rock Christ Jesus (Matthew 7:26).

⁸ How many people have dead faith? In other words - their faith just does not work? Each person must realize that faith is inseparably linked to the word of God. Faith has its starting point and its beginning in the word of God. It is established, and then grows into all the glory-producing power that is contained within it. The word of God describes the blessings that we are to have in our life; and it is faith that lays hold of those blessings. The word of God describes the actions that must be taken; and it is faith that moves forward in those actions. Without those actions or works, then faith is dead. If the word of God does not move us to do something, then we are only hearers of the word; as such Jesus said we are not right with God (Matthew 7:21,24; Matthew 7:26; Luke 6:47,49). The word of God, that is living and powerful, empowers us to do extraordinary things. Like Peter, we must be willing to step out and begin to walk in the realm of impossibility when we hear the word of God (Matthew 14:28).

We must be careful that we obey God, and do the first things first. How can a person who is not willing to find the power to obey God in their conduct ever expect that they will find the power to walk on water? If we are not going to be faithful in the basic things related to our relationship with Jesus, then how do we expect to be entrusted by Him to do greater things? We must recognize that Jesus Christ is in us, and that He is the fountainhead of all faith. Paul says for us to test ourselves, to see if we are in the faith (2 Corinthians 13:5). The faith that flows from the Word of God, Christ Jesus, is going to produce the works of God - that are to be found only in the life of Christ Jesus.

The word of God says that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us (Philippians 4:13; Ephesians 3:16; Colossians 1:11; 1 Peter 5:10). Yet many shrink back, and with the confession of their mouths say the opposite; because they failed at one thing or another. Yet were they reaching for it in God, or were they reaching for it in self-interest? If we will start by reaching for the strength to walk in obedience in conduct, then we will find the strength to lay hold of all of the blessings and promises of God. For example, if a person reaches to lay hold on the wealth that God has promised His saints, but refuses to reach for the ability to walk in love - faith will not work (Galatians 5:6). There is a fellowship with Christ Jesus that produces the confidence and assurance that we need to function in all the great things that God has called us to do (1 John 3:21; 1 John 5:14; Ephesians 3:12; Hebrews 10:22). We must understand then that living and active faith functions out of a realm of fellowship with Jesus: a fellowship that is demonstrated by obedience.

21- Was not Abraham our father shown to be righteous by works, having offered Isaac his son upon the altar?

22- You see that faith worked with his works, and by the works⁹ faith was accomplished.

23- And the scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness," and he was called the friend of God.

24- You see then that a man is shown to be righteous by works, and not by faith only.

25- And in the same way, was not Rahab the harlot also shown to be righteous by works, having received the messengers and sent them out by another way?

26- Just as the body is dead without the spirit, even so faith without works is dead.¹⁰

⁹ James reveals in his message about faith that it is the vital co-laborer with works. Using the same example that Paul did in Romans 4:2-4 he reveals how that although a man is saved by faith, faith is the vital force of the divine power of God that is active to accomplish the works of obedience. The works of faith are seen in Abraham when he offered up Isaac. In obedience to the command of God Abraham went to the place of sacrifice without hesitation. When he arrived at the place that he was commanded he demonstrated faith in his confession telling his servants that he and Isaac would go and worship and return again unto them. When Isaac asked his father where the lamb was for a sacrifice once again the power of faith that raises the dead was expressed through Abraham when he said, "the Lord will provide himself a lamb" (Genesis 22:8; Hebrews 11:19). James makes it clear that faith always has with it an outworking, an accompanying partner called works. Faith always produces an action otherwise it is dead (James 2:17, 20,26). Faith is the vital force of the Spirit of God behind the deeds of obedience. Whereas Paul was addressing the uselessness of the works of the law James reveals the essential reality of the works of faith. The works of the law depend upon human ability but the works of faith come only by the Holy Spirit. When faith comes by hearing the word it produces an action by the Spirit that goes beyond the works of the law or the works of human ability (Romans 10:17). If there is not an accompanying action then the faith is not activated (Matthew 14:28-29). When the outworking of faith is accomplished by the action then at that moment faith is complete. Faith is the power of God given to everyman to do something. If the action of faith (that is dictated by the word of God) is not followed through on then the empowerment of faith is meaningless and the hearer is disobedient. In that faith always comes as a consequence of the word of God it is either utilized as the ability to fulfill God's will or it becomes ineffective through disobedience (Hebrews 4:2; James 2:17-26). The kind of faith therefore that makes one righteous is accompanied by obedience to the word of God. As the works of the flesh are done by unsaved people who walk in the things of the old nature and the works of the law done by those who trust in their own ability the works of faith are done by those who have received the life of God and walk in the Spirit (Galatians 5:19; 3:21; Romans 8:9). There is a power active in everyone who has been born of the Spirit and that power is faith (Romans 10:8; 12:3-6). If we are willing to step out in obedience then nothing will be impossible for those who move in faith. Let faith be at work in your actions today!

¹⁰ Faith is the miracle working power of God that lives on the inside of us because Jesus lives on the inside of us. The word of God that produces faith was incarnated into flesh and the actions of faith was demonstrated for the whole world to see. That same Jesus now lives in us and from Him continues to flow the mighty deeds of faith and power (2 Corinthians 13:5; Colossians 1:27; John 17:23; 1 John 4:13).

James helps us to understand that there is a living faith and there is a dead faith. A living faith has action. A living faith participates in the things that the word of God describes. The word of God cannot help but to produce faith in those who will hear (Romans 10:8,17; Galatians 3:3; 1 Thessalonians 2:13). Those who will hear the word of faith will have a corresponding action. There will be a divine power and ability supplied by the Spirit of God to do those things that the word of God demands. However, if we are unwilling to come under the control and domination of the Holy Spirit then faith will have no action at all and the word will not be revealed in our lives. The purpose of the Holy Spirit is to reveal Jesus (John 16:14; 15:26; Galatians 1:16). Even as He was responsible for revealing the incarnate word with mighty signs and wonders He reveals the life of the word, Christ Jesus in us today (Acts 10:38; John 3:34; Luke 4:18; Acts 2:22; Matthew 12:28; Galatians 3:5). The Holy Spirit does this through the actions of faith. The actions of faith are the word made manifest in our lives.

Chapter 3

- 1- Let there not be many teachers among you, my brethren, knowing that they shall receive the greater judgment.
- 2- For we all stumble in many ways¹¹. If anyone does not stumble in word, this one is a perfect man able to bridle his whole body.
- 3- Behold, we put bits in the horse's mouth so that they obey us, and we guide their whole body.
- 4- Behold also the ships, being so large, driven under strong winds, are guided by a small rudder whenever the one who steers has an impulse.
- 5- So also the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. How large a forest is set ablaze by a little fire.

Faith that does not produce an action is a corpse even as the body without the spirit is a corpse. A corpse is nothing more than a rotting decaying body that is returning to its dust. The word of God that does not produce an action is the word that is not obeyed. When the word of God goes forth the Holy Spirit stands ready to produce the miracle of obedience in all those who will act (Romans 1:5; 16:26; 1 Peter 1:2). The gift of God has provided the measure of faith that is needed to do all that God has commanded. As soon as the word is heard faith comes but the faith that comes must be yielded to if the actions of the word are to be revealed. The Holy Spirit stands ready to supply all the faith that is needed to do all that God has commanded so that the life and nature of Jesus may be revealed in our lives today (Galatians 5:22; 2 Corinthians 4:13).

¹¹ Peter reveals to us how to walk so that we will not stumble (2 Peter 1:10)

6- And the tongue¹² is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. So is the tongue among our members that it causes the whole body to be defiled and sets on fire the course of human existence, and is set on fire of hell.

7- For every species of beast, and of birds, and of creeping things, and the things of the sea is subdued and has been subdued by the human species.

¹² It seems that few people understand how terrible it is to speak ill of others. There are so many reasons used to give justification to why someone should be spoken of in a negative way; but it is always nothing less than evil. A large majority of saints have been defiled by their tongues, and having never realized the evil that they participated in, did not repent; and therefore they remain unclean until this day. Just as a fire destroys things, the tongue commits acts of murder and destruction - even when the supposed most "honest and caring news" has been told about another person - and even worse, when there is outright slander. But the person attempting to justify themselves will say, "I know they did this or that; I heard it with my own ears." Has it been proved in the court of justice? Has God weighed in, passed judgment, and condemned them? (Romans 8:33; 1 Corinthians 4:5). If not, you are guilty of high treason against the Almighty, who hates the one who sows discord among the brethren (Proverbs 6:19).

James describes the unredeemed tongue that is not submitted to God as a world of unrighteousness. He makes it the sum total of all unrighteousness; as though it were the root cause of everything wicked. This kind of description by itself should cause us to realize how important this issue is, so that not a single saint should ever give their tongue to speaking evil and their lips to speaking guile. All backbiting, slander, evil speaking, and whispering should be treated for what they really are: a destructive power of iniquity which consumes all who are touched by it in a flame that burns forever. Such words will never come from a person who is led by the Spirit and who is walking in righteousness. Rather, the ungodly concocts evil; and in his lips is a burning fire (Proverbs 16:27). When a person speaks such things, they are under the influence of hell (or of demon spirits), and it is these unclean spirits that defile both the speaker and those who listen (Hebrews 12:15).

Pastors and church leaders suffer more of this kind of evil abuse than any other single group within the church community. Yet few have taken to heart why judgment fell upon the brother and sister of Moses so quickly. As soon as Miriam spoke evil against her brother, the uncleanness of her lips (that defiled her whole body) was manifested as leprous disease which set in to rot her whole being (Numbers 12:1-10). There have been many whose lives would have been developed into something great, but a slanderous word or a suspicious concern devoured their minds, and their hearts became evil affected against the leadership that God brought into their life; and they were consumed. Many have taken the seat of judgment - and said that they disagreed, or questioned the leadership for this reason or that - and have burned up and consumed the confidence of another, preventing them from what God had desired. All of these things will be brought out on a day of judgment, and many will die in their iniquity. There is never a justifiable reason for speaking evil against another person. If something is wrong and must be settled, then it is to be done behind closed doors face to face with the offender (Matthew 5:23-24; Matthew 18:15).

This devilish and demonic thing began when Satan (who is the chief slanderer) prepared within his tongue the first accusation ever spoken. His accusation was against God. He went throughout the world that then was, accusing God of not being good enough or fair enough (Ezekiel 28:15-18; Revelation 12:9). Even as the accuser told Eve, "God knows that you will be like Him if you eat of the fruit of the tree." He had convinced her that it should be desired to make her wise, and it was God who would withhold such a treasure (Genesis 3:4-6). The name "devil" means slanderer or accuser; and as such he is Satan, which means adversary. He is the adversary of God and of His anointed. He is also the adversary of all mankind. If you have spoken evil against anyone, and especially of someone anointed of God - repent and make it right. Never allow the flames of hell to burn within your mouth again. Do not yield your members to unrighteousness and take up those demonic and adversarial words created from the mind of Satan to devour the souls of men. Your tongue was created by God to praise. It was given to you to bless and to curse not! Never again join with Satan in his attack against Christ Jesus and His saints.

8- But the tongue, no man is able to subdue. It is an uncontrollable evil, full of deadly poison.¹³

9- With it we bless God and the Father, and with it we curse men, who are made in the likeness of God.

10- Out of the same mouth goes forth blessings and cursings. These things should not be, my brethren.

11- Does a spring bring forth from the same opening both sweet and bitter water?¹⁴

12- My brethren, a fig tree is not able to produce olives, or a vine figs. So a fountain is not able to produce sweat and bitter water.

13- Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show out of a good conduct his works in the meekness of wisdom.

¹³ This is the state of the unredeemed. It is not possible for a man to change his nature nor the things that a fallen nature expresses. The only one who can tame the tongue of man is God which He does through the change of spirit and heart that comes by the new creation.

¹⁴ James is dealing with the impossibility of anything producing something that is contrary to its nature. Even as Jesus made known that a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit James points out that bitter water and sweet water cannot come out of the same fountain (Matthew 7:17). Understanding that these allegories relate to what a person says with their mouth. Now the mouth speaks according to whatever is in the heart (Luke 6:45). As the saints of God that have been baptized in the Holy Spirit there should be a well spring of life and blessings coming out of our inner most beings. The inspirations of the life and blessings of God should pour forth like rivers of living water from our heart and mouth. Our words should be like the river of Ezekiel 47 that brought life to everything it touched. Out of our hearts and mouths should come forth the word of faith (Romans 10:6). Our words should always be full of praise and thanksgiving because of this river of living water on the inside. When we were baptized in the Holy Ghost God filled our hearts with His word and our mouth with His speech (Acts 2:4). He gave us the tongue of the learned so that we might speak His words of life (Isaiah 50:4). God set our tongues on fire with the Holy Ghost so that the utterances of God's life giving words would flow out of our mouth. Through the work of the Holy Spirit He made our lips righteous so that we might feed many (Proverbs 10:21; John 6:63). We need to consecrate our lips to speak only those things that pertain to life and blessings. There will be some practice involved especially if we have allowed envying and strife to operate in our lives and produce bitter water in our hearts. Because of Gods mercy and grace all we have to do ask God to forgive us and He will cleanse us from all unrighteousness. It is then necessary for us to learn to yield to the Holy Spirit in a greater way so that we do not repeat the same mistakes of the past. As we yield to the Holy Spirit He teaches us to sanctify Christ Jesus in our hearts (**1 Peter 3:15**). He instructs us and gives us revelation on how to keep our hearts with all diligence knowing that out of it comes the issues of life (**Proverbs 4:23**). Through yielding to the Holy Spirit the peace of God rules our hearts and we find ourselves being thankful (**Col 3:15**). God has given us a good treasure, which brings forth good things so that the excellent things of God's glory will flow out of our mouth (Matthew 12:35; 2 Corinthians 4:7). As we walk in the Spirit the words of our mouth will be as deep waters and the wellspring of wisdom in our hearts as a flowing brook (Proverbs 18:4). The things that we speak should be as a well of life and as a fountain of life (Proverbs 10:11; 18:4). Through the wisdom of God we come to realize that death and life are in the power of the tongue and we become very cautious about what we say (Proverbs 18:21; 12:18). God's word is like cleansing water that washes those who listen (John 15:3; Ephesians 5:26-27). If we will take hold of the importance and sacredness of what we say then we will be more mindful to speak as the oracles of God (1 Peter 4:11). As we give ourselves to the life giving words of God we will find ourselves continually increasing in the anointing of the Holy Spirit. We will discover an ever-increasing flow of the blessings of the Spirit coming out of our hearts and mouths. As a result all of the blessings that we have been blessed with will be realized as our inherited blessings through Jesus Christ our Lord (1 Peter 3:9; Ephesians 1:3).

14- But if you have bitter jealousy and strife in your heart, do not boast and lie against the truth.¹⁵

15- This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic.¹⁶

16- Where there is jealousy and strife, there is insurrection and every evil thing.

17- But the wisdom that comes from above is first pure, peaceable, kind, agreeable, full of mercy and good fruits, nonjudgmental, and without hypocrisy.

18- And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

Chapter 4

1- Where do wars and quarrels come from among you? Is it not from your pleasures which battle in your members?¹⁷

2- You desire and have not, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. And have not, because you ask not.

3- You ask, and do not receive, because you ask evilly, that you may consume it in your pleasures.

4- Adulterers and adulteresses,¹⁸ don't you know that friendship with the world is enmity against God? Whosoever will be the friend of the world makes himself the enemy of God.¹⁹

¹⁵ There are behaviors that prove that a person is not walking with God. Jealousy of others and the competition that is motivated by selfish ambition which is the cause of strife and contention are behaviors that misrepresent what it means to be born again.

¹⁶ Once again James underscores the difference between the fallen nature of those who have not been born again and the divine nature of those who are in Christ Jesus. Of course this does not prevent those who are born again from acting in the same manner as those who are unredeemed. The wickedness of this world and the influence of demonic powers can impose itself on the redeemed unless refused by submission to the Word of God and the Spirit of God.

¹⁷ This begins the altar call for salvation to the non-believing Jews that James is also addressing. .

¹⁸ Further evidence of the sinful condition of these Jews.

¹⁹ James writes to those saints who had begun to commit spiritual adultery by participating with the things of the world. The value system of the world and its delights rejects the presence of the Lord. There is no place for God and His ways in the midst of a crooked and perverse world. How had the saints of God become adulterers and adulteresses? They had become friends with the world. There is nothing good in the world. Although it appears that the world has the upper hand and sets the political agendas, decides what people should watch on TV and at the movies, determines what will be taught in school, and dictates the fashions that people should admire - there is nothing good in it. The world is only temporary; it will soon pass away with all its lust (1 John 2:15-17). But just as in the days of old, the people of God are charmed by its delights, and begin to compromise their souls for its lustful temporal pleasures (Hosea 1:2; Jeremiah 13:27; Isaiah 1:21; 57:3; Mark 4:19). Even when men choose religion over knowing God, then just like the Pharisees they depart from God into spiritual adultery: for religion that steals men's hearts away from God is also of the world (Mark 8:38; Matthew 12:39; 16:4).

God's people are to stand in stark contrast to the world, in which we are to shine as lights in the midst of its perverse and crooked practices. We shine as lights by being who we are in the presence of God filled with His love, joy, and peace. We are to be found living in another spiritual dimension, and that is the realm of the Kingdom in which there is righteousness, joy, and peace in the Holy Ghost (Romans 14:17). The world is a realm of darkness, and its days are numbered. We cannot be clothed with the world and shine with the light of the kingdom. We were not translated into the kingdom of the dear Son only to return and live in the darkness that we were called out of (Colossians 1:13). We cannot yield our members to the world and be

5- Do you think it meaningless that the scripture says, “The spirit which dwells in us²⁰ has intense envy”?

the servants of God (Romans 6:16). As the temple of God, the sacred dwelling of the Most High, we cannot be joined to a harlot.

We have been given an unspeakable gift and opportunity to not only be the friends of God but also the sons of God! How then could we return to the beggarly elements from which we were delivered? How could we possibly think that there would be any value in those things which Jesus died to set us free from? God in His passionate love came and rescued us from darkness so that we might enjoy the majesty and splendor of His life. How could we turn again and become intimate with the death and sin that are the enemies of the One who loves us so? God and his leaders are jealous over the people of God with a godly jealousy (2 Corinthians 11:2). The people of the Lord must heed the call of the Spirit through the mouths of His servants who speak to turn them back, when by deception they cross over the line.

Let us say today that the world is crucified to us and we are crucified to the world. Let us recognize it for the deception that it is. Its cares, pleasures, and riches are only traps to ensnare our affections away from a friendship with the Lover of our souls. God will not take a walk with you through the mire of the world. The Holy Spirit will not be your companion as you interact with a realm that is opposed to all that He is. The God who has redeemed you will love you freely. He will patiently perfect that which concerns you; but you have to decide whether you're going to go with Him or turn aside to all that despises the only true Friend that a person could ever have! God has made you His friend - don't run the risk of making yourself His enemy.

²⁰ This is further evidence of their sin. Before a man is born again and given a new spirit the spirit that is in him is full of envy. When we are born again God gives us a new spirit and puts his Spirit within us. When men are ruled by their fallen and depraved spirits then there is nothing but the continual warring. When the Holy Spirit moves in then a new kind of life begins in which the Spirit of God now passionately leads and guides our behavior if we remain yielded.

The Lord our God, who is in the midst of us, rejoices over us with great expressions of jubilant love and earnest care (Zephaniah 3:17). God's earnest love has sealed us with His Spirit, granting His people the goodness of heaven's treasure: the Holy Spirit whom He has placed within our hearts (2 Corinthians 4:7). Our God is a jealous God, who will not share us with the demons of hell and the evils of this world (Exodus 34:14; Deuteronomy 6:15). Those who would be friends with the world only provoke the One who has espoused them to Himself. He has made our spirits one with His Spirit so that we would refuse the spirit of this world (1 Corinthians 6:17). Through the devoted and tender care of the Spirit, we learn to refuse all worldly influences. The precious Holy Spirit, whose sensitive nature is like a dove, and whose presence we must not grieve, has come to love us and show us how to walk in the Father's love. Our heavenly Father watches over His Spirit with the most dedicated and jealous care, and demands the utmost reverence and respect for this sacred gift that He has given. Let us be careful not to wound Him, to grieve or quench the blessed presence of the Holy Spirit.

Reconsider God's great love for us, which compelled Him to become flesh to offer His body as a ransom for our souls. Consider His constant gaze of love upon us and deep affection for our companionship, for such great love must surely break our hearts and work an absolute surrender. As the Holy Spirit brooded over the dark deep void to bring forth new life, so He broods over us in a longing ambition. Just like a mother who brings forth a child and loves that child deeply, the Spirit of truth has given us this new life - and through that jealous and protective love would mentor us and train us in all those things that bring the Father pleasure. His commitment to us and His vision for our lives defy all imagination. The Holy Spirit would have us be valiant for the truth, and lead us in all the greatness of our inheritance. We must learn to be sensitive to His presence and His promptings, by cooperating with the Word and doing the Father's will. With every step of obedience we will find more grace to cooperate better still.

6- But he gives more grace²¹. For this reason He said, "God opposes the proud and gives grace to the humble."²²

7- Subject yourself therefore to God, resist the Devil and He will flee from you.

8- Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, sinners, and purify your hearts, you double minded.

9- Be miserable and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned into mourning, and joy into heaviness.

10- Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will lift you up.

11- Brethren, do not speak against one another. He that speaks against his brother and judges his brother speaks against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law, but a judge

12- One is the lawgiver who is able to save and destroy. Who are you that judges another?

13- Come now, you who say, "Today and tomorrow we will go to such a town, and spend a year, and we will do business, and make money,"

14- yet you do not know what kind of tomorrow you will have. What is your life? For your life is a mist that appears for a little while and then it vanishes.²³

²¹ James calls out their wicked state that they live in but calls them to a place of grace if they would only humble themselves and repent.

²² This is a very serious warning against all of those who choose to continue in pride and rebellion. Although, such behavior should only be observed by those who are in the world, many of God's people allow themselves to be influenced by the world. The saints of God are given the divine nature, which has the spirit of humility; yet there is an evil one who goes about seeking whom he may devour. The spirit of disobedience that is at work in the world attacks the saints with the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. The pride of life is the most subtle of all Satan's attacks. The pride of life seeks the interest of self, and always has with it a perfectly justified reason for its arrogant behavior.

The most important thing to pay attention to is that pride is the opposite of humility; so therefore is easy to spot. The rebellion and arrogance of pride usually manifest themselves at the point of correction. Therefore, many who have come under this demonic influence have a story to tell about how they were hurt or mistreated by someone - and especially those who were over the household of faith, like a pastor. Those who walk under the influence of the pride of life refuse to be governed by the Spirit of God and His ministers. Humility must be in our life if we are going to receive correction and respond in obedience. Otherwise one of the many things that will result from a prideful heart is a root of bitterness - that will spring up and defile many. Just as Satan began to slander God because of the prideful heart that was conceived in him, even so those who are influenced by him begin to defile many with their slanders.

It is easy to walk with the Lord and follow the Holy Spirit: all we have to be willing to do is to walk humbly (Matthew 11:29; Psalm 34:18; Psalm 51:17; Psalm 138:6; Micah 6:8). If we will walk humbly with our God, there will be nothing but grace and mercy. Those who have been born of the Spirit must be willing to continually keep themselves clothed with humility, lest they fall into the snare of the devil (1 Peter 5:5-6). We must be careful that we do not wander off in self-will, and begin to despise the authorities that God has placed in our lives to teach us to walk in the ways of God. God's gift of sustaining grace can only be received by those who are willing to recognize their need, and humble themselves under the might correcting hand of God. Most of the time our need is revealed in humbling situations; therefore it will take humility to respond properly. Those who respond in humility to correction lay a foundation for greater humility, and the grace and honor that it brings (Proverbs 15:33; Proverbs 18:12; Proverbs 22:4). Those who respond arrogantly only create for themselves a hard and impudent heart that leads to more trouble and rebellion (Psalm 18:27). If you oppose the government of God, you are opposing God!

²³ There is an hourglass of time set upon each person's life, no one knows when that hourglass will yield its last grain of sand. We boast of the great things that we will do but fail to realize that our lives are like a

15- Instead you should say, “If the Lord desires,²⁴ and we live, we will also do this or that.”

16- But now you pride yourself in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil!

17- Therefore, to know to do good and not do it, to him it is sin.

Chapter 5

1- Go now you rich and weep, cry aloud over the distresses that are coming on you²⁵.

2- Your riches have decayed, your garments have become moth-eaten

3- Your gold and silver has been eaten away and their corrosion shall be a witness against you and shall eat your flesh as a fire you have laid up treasure in the last days²⁶.

4- Behold the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you have kept back by fraud²⁷. The harvesters cry out, and their cries have come into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.²⁸

vapor that appear then quickly vanishes. The life of man is like the grass his glory like the flower no sooner does it spring up and suddenly it withers away and is no more (1 Peter 1:24; James 1:11). The length of our life compared to eternity is but a very small thing (Psalms 39:5-6). Yet we boast in the pride of our heart as though we will live forever, failing to realize that tomorrow may never come (Proverbs 27:1). Those who act like they will live forever and are in need of nothing will hear God say, You fool this day will your soul be required of you (Luke 12:20). Holy Spirit teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts to wisdom.

²⁴ We have been given the blessed opportunity of knowing the will of God. If we want to be followers of Jesus and enjoy the relationship with the Father that Jesus modeled for us and supplied to us then we must live only to do the will of the Father (John 4:34; 6:38). All of our plans and desires should center around the will of the Father our complete resignation to His purposes should constantly yield a commitment that says, “if the Lord wills” (1 Corinthians 4:19; 16:7; Heb 6:3; Acts 18:21; Romans 1:10; 15:32; Philippians 2:19, 24). The only way any plans that we have are going to be blessed is if God is in it. We are to take no thought for our life but rather seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness in everything we do. If we will make the purposes of the kingdom our primary interest then all of the blessings that only the Father can give will be added to us. Walking in the will of the Father is not a life of limitation rather it is the opportunity to walk in the liberty of God’s rich blessings. If we acknowledge Him in all of our ways He will direct our paths (Proverbs 3:6). We must no longer live according to the desires of men but according to the will of the Father (1 Peter 4:2). The Holy Spirit desires to fill us with the knowledge of God’s will in all wisdom and spiritual knowledge (Colossians 1:9). If we will take the simple steps of obedience that are right before us the Holy Spirit will train us to know and to understand how to walk by faith and not by sight in every dimension of life. We have two choices we can live out our own life and in the pride of life do it our way or we can recognize the absolute authority of God and allow Him to lead us. It is far better to live in the heavenly, the spiritual- being lead and guided by the Holy Spirit rather than to be imprisoned in the earthly, devilish and the sensual (James 3:14-16).

²⁵ Once again James returns to a plea to repent and turn from their wickedness. He makes certain that they realize that because of the way that they have lived a judgment awaits them.

²⁶ These Jews have obviously not yet come into the ways of the kingdom and begun to lay up for themselves treasure in heaven (Matthew 6:19)

²⁷ It should be obvious to everyone that James is not addressing those who are walking with God.

²⁸ One of the names of God is Yahoah Sabaoth, which means the Lord of armies. The Hebrew word Sabaoth is derived from ‘saba’, which means to fight. God has an archenemy that He will pursue down and destroy; and that enemy is sin. Unfortunately, people think their sin is not all that bad. Many today even act as though it is a virtue if you do not in any way speak against someone’s iniquity. As soon as you begin to point out sin and say that it is wrong and command them to repent; then you are branded as a harsh, uncaring, and judgmental lunatic. However, this is an accusation against God. God in His love has reached

5- You lived luxuriously and in self-indulgence upon the earth, you nourished your hearts as in the days of slaughter.

6- You have condemned, you have killed the righteous; he does not resist you²⁹.

beyond the ugliness of our sins, and commanded us to repent (Matthew 3:2; 4:17; Mark 1:15; 6:12; Luke 13:3,5; 16:30; 17:3,4; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 8:22; 17:30; 26:20; 1 Corinthians 7:8; Revelation 2:5,16,21,22; 3:3,19). The idea that somehow God is a push-over and will accept any kind of behavior from us is totally wrong. God is merciful, but he hates iniquity; and will destroy sin and all those who refuse to forsake it (2 Thessalonians 1:8; 2 Peter 3:11; Isaiah 24:19; 34:4; Matthew 3:7; Luke 3:7; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; Romans 6:23).

When the title Yahoah Sabaoth is used, it refers to the fact that God is the God of judgment, and will destroy His enemies (1 Samuel 1:11; 4:4; 17:45; 2 Samuel 5:10; Joshua 5:14-15; 1 Kings 18:15; Isaiah 2:12; 3:15; 6:3; 8:13; 29:6; 51:15; Romans 9:29). All who do iniquity are the enemies of God (Romans 1:28-30; 5:10; 8:7; James 4:4; Colossians 1:21). Although He did not deal with us after our iniquity and destroy us, but rather sent a redeemer to free us from sin, there is still a certain judgment against all who will not repent (1 Corinthians 3:17; Ephesians 5:6; Galatians 6:7-8; 1 John 3:7-8; James 1:22; Matthew 7:23). When men walk in sin, they are alienated from God by their wicked works. God in His mercy will forgive us; but to act like God is on your side while you partake of those things that His anger burns hot against is insanity. Be certain of this: the Lord will come with ten thousands of His saints to execute judgment on all the ungodly for the ungodly deeds which they have committed (Jude 1:14-15). Make no mistake; the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9; 3:17; Galatians 5:21; Ephesians 5:5; Romans 1:18). All those who commit sexual immorality of any kind, lying, hating, and strife (to name a few), have already been judged and condemned to eternal death. Homosexuality is sin, and it can never be made to be anything other than iniquity. Premarital sex is an offense against God, and He hates it and will fight against it (1 Corinthians 3:17). Every kind of injustice is sin, as those mentioned here in this verse - who refused to pay for the work that they hired someone to do. Christians talking bad about each other and living in strife and division is sin. God hates it, and will oppose it wherever He finds it. God will destroy all sin and the power of death in Hell. He will have His way and His will; it will be done in earth as it is in heaven. There will be a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwells only righteousness; and the God of battle, Yahoah Sabaoth, invites you to come turn from your sin and join together with Him in His righteous cause. The Almighty, the Lord of Sabaoth, invites you to take up arms against sin and iniquity; and destroy it by submitting yourselves to God and resisting the devil (1 John 3:8; 2 Corinthians 6:7; 10:3-5; Ephesians 6:10; Romans 6:13).

²⁹ It is possible that James is referring to their consent in the crucifixion of Jesus, similar to what Peter said (Acts 3:14). However, James could also be referring to the persecution of the Jews against the Christian Jews.

7- Therefore, brethren be patient unto the coming of the Lord,³⁰ behold the husbandman awaits the precious fruits of the earth³¹, being patient for it until it receives the early and the latter rain.

8- You also be patient, establish your hearts because the coming of the Lord draws near.

9- do not grumble against one another brethren, so that you may not be condemned, behold the judge stands at the door.

10- As an example of suffering and patience my brethren consider the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

11- Behold we consider them blessed who endured. we have heard of the endurance of Job and we know the end of the Lord, that the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

12- Above all things my brethren do not swear neither by heaven or earth, nor any other oath. But let your yes be yes, and your no be no, that you do not fall into hypocrisy.

13- Is anyone among you suffering hardship? Let him pray, is anyone cheerful let him praise

14- Is anyone sick among you? let him call for the elders of the assembly, and let them pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord.

15- And the prayer of faith will save the sick and the Lord will raise him up and if he has committed sins it shall be forgiven.

16- Confess your offenses one to another and pray for one another that you may be healed. The supplications of a righteous man has great power at work.

17- Elijah was a man subject to the same kind of feelings we have, and he prayed the prayer that it would not rain, and it did not rain upon the earth for three years and six months.³²

³⁰ James makes a shift from addressing those Jews who are not walking with the Lord to those who certainly have suffered at their hands.

³¹ There are many ideas proposed concerning what the "precious fruit" of the earth means. Yet, there are enough scriptures that have this tone that allows us to consider that James is referring to the full manifestation of the life of the Spirit in the life of the redeemed. We know that the end will not come until this gospel of the kingdom is preached in all of the world. When we consider that Jesus was referring to the gospel being preached with the same signs and wonders and demonstration of the power of the Holy Spirit, this would be precious fruit in the life of His people. Furthermore, the desire that God has for us to do the same works of Jesus and greater works would also be a precious fruit that was purchased for us in Christ Jesus (John 12:14; 2 Thess. 1:12). Jesus referred to the fruit that we should have in our lives, which is the kind of faith and relationship that results in whatever we ask coming to pass (John 15:16). The early and the latter rain is mentioned in several places in the context of revival and the blessings of God being realized by his people (Deut 11:14; Jeremiah 5:24; Hosea 6:3). However, one of the more significant places to consider the meaning as it would relate more perfectly to the context of James, would be in Joel 2:23. The context of Joel 2:23 brings us to the Pentecostal message of Peter in Acts 2:14-21). Once again, this would refer to the full expression of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit that was poured out on the day of Pentecost and the blessing that it would bring both to the people of God and to the bringing in the harvest of the lost through the great demonstration of the power of God through His people.

³² James connects the working of miracles to a person's prayer life. Elijah was a man like everyone else, subject to fears and doubts; the only difference was he took hold of the power of God through prayer. Paul and Barnabas said something similar about themselves after the working of a miracle: when the people tried to make gods out of them Paul said, "We are men just like everyone else" (Acts 14:11,15). The power of God is not displayed because a man is someone special, but because of the power of faith functioning in that man. Peter and John declared to the people that it was not because they were devout and religious that

18- And again he prayed and the heavens gave rain and the earth sprouted its fruit.
19- Brethren if any among you err from the truth and anyone brings him back,
20- let him know that anyone who brings back a sinner from the error of his ways shall save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.

miracles took place, but because of the name of Jesus and the faith that exists in His name (Acts 3:11-12,16).

The efficacy of a prayer life is revealed by the answer to those prayers that are prayed. God the Holy Ghost is dedicated to teaching us how to pray the prayer of faith. Prayer hones our senses to the operation of the Holy Spirit, who fills us with faith for those things that God has declared He will do if we will only believe. The Father has called us and ordained us to come into a place of prayer in which whatever we ask in the name of Jesus will take place (John 15:16; Mark 11:24). It is the prayer of faith that makes the difference. The prayer of faith is the prayer that the Holy Spirit breathes through our hearts and mouths. We can be certain that Elijah was concerned about the peril that his life was in when he was standing against Jezebel and the prophets of Baal. The difference was made in that he had a direct line of communication with God; and he had learned that through prayer, the faith of God was released through his life (1 Kings 17:1; 18:42-44). Let the Holy Spirit teach you how to pray the prayer of faith by the fiery fervent prayer of the Spirit that He desires to fill you with (James 5:16; Ephesians 6:18; Jude 1:20; 1 Corinthians 12:9; 14:15; Matthew 21:21).