

The Book of James

So How Am I Doing?

Chapter 1

Introduction (1:1)

The Test of Perseverance and Suffering (1:2-12)

The Test of Blame in Temptation (1:12-18)

The Test of Response to the Word (1:19-27)

Chapter 2

The Test of Partiality (2:1-9)

The Test of the Law (2:10-13)

The Test of Faith and Works (2:14-26)

Chapter 3

The Test of the Tongue (3:1-12)

The Test of Wisdom Applied (3:13-18)

Chapter 4

The Test of the World's Influence (4:1-12)

The Test of Dependence (4:13-17)

Chapter 5

The Test of Endurance (5:1-11)

The Test of Prayerfulness (5:12-20)

Chapter 1

Introduction (1:1)

4 James in NT / James ½ Brother of Jesus

There are four James mentioned in the New Testament; the James of this book is the half brother of Jesus. Same mother, different fathers. James' father was Joseph, Jesus Father is God: *(Galatians 1:19 KJV) But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.*

(Matthew 13:55 NKJV) "Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas?"

Of the four men named James in the NT, only two are candidates for authorship of this epistle. No one seriously considers James the Less, the son of Alphaeus (Matt 10:3, Acts 1:13), or James the father of Judas (not Iscariot) (Luke 6:16, Acts 1:13). Some have suggested James the son of Zebedee and brother of John (Matt 4:21), but he was martyred too early to have written it (Acts 12:2). That leaves only James the oldest half-brother of Jesus (Mark 6:3) and brother of Jude (Matt 13:55) who also wrote the epistle that bears his name (Jude).

This is quite possibly the first book written of the New Testament. It was written somewhere around 45AD, only a dozen or so years after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

First Didn't Believe / Then the Resurrection

James doesn't believe that Jesus is God when He walked this earth: *(John 7:5 NKJV) For even His brothers did not believe in Him.*

But after the resurrection Jesus appears to him, and everything changes:

(1 Corinthians 15:4 NKJV) and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,

(1 Corinthians 15:5 NKJV) and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve.

(1 Corinthians 15:6 NKJV) After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep.

(1 Corinthians 15:7 NKJV) After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles.

Imagine that Meeting

Imagine what that meeting must have been like: the two brothers sitting together like they had so many times as brothers, but this time Jesus is sitting, and there is no mistaking His nailed-scarred hands; He would no doubt say to His younger brother, it is true, I am God, I am everything that I said I was when I walked on this earth as your brother.

He Writes – As He Reflects / Love in a Sinful World

Now James is going to write us this letter, he will talk about everyday practical stuff. He will talk about trials in life, our works, our tongue, prayer, and other things; as he writes these things, he will be remembering how Jesus handled them, as James will reflect back on watching situations, and watching his oldest brother. He will reflect on a life of love, and a life of sinlessness, in a world that can be so hateful at times, and so full of sin.

Dad's Death / Financial Hardship / Midnight Prayers

James would reflect back on trials the family had faced, and he will remember how his older brother handled them. He would remember how Jesus handled dad's death (Joseph). Knowing the nature of Jesus he would have called them for prayer and comforted them with the promises of God. Maybe that caused financial hardship upon the family (they lacked food or clothing), and James would remember how Jesus would tell the family that God would provide. James after the resurrection meeting would remember back how Jesus always had the right word for the right time. He would remember all those times that he woke up early to get a drink of water and see/hear Jesus praying to the Father.

It All Makes Sense Now

After the resurrection meeting, James would say it all makes sense now, I can see clearly now. James who thought Jesus was out of his mind, would see that it was he who wasn't in the right mind.

(Matthew 12:46 NKJV) While He was still talking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and brothers stood outside, seeking to speak with Him.

(Matthew 12:47 NKJV) Then one said to Him, "Look, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, seeking to speak with You."

Leader In Church / Writes Hindsight / Everyday Life

James would become a leader in the church, a pillar in the church

(Acts 21:17 NKJV) And when we had come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.

(Acts 21:18 NKJV) On the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present.

(Galatians 2:9 NKJV) and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

So James will write these things based on hindsight, based on first hand witnessing of watching his older brother lived life, everyday. It has been said the problem with life, is that it is so daily. James watched Jesus handle everyday life, and that is what this book is about; it is about living everyday life as a Follower of God, in a fallen world. If James had written this book in the 19th century, he might have titled it, "Things I've Learned from God", or "30 years with Jesus", "Conversations with God", "Sharing a Bedroom with God", "My Brother can Beat Your Brother Up".

Jesus Rubbed Off / Nature Illustrations / Sermon on Mount

We can see how much Jesus rubbed off on James, for James style resembles his brother so much. Like Jesus used nature as illustrations for His teaching points, so does James some 30 times. He uses nature analogies such as the sea, flowers, sun, fire, horses and ships to name a few). It is obvious who James favorite teacher was, because this epistle covers almost every topic that Jesus covered in the Sermon on the Mount. There is amazing parallelisms between the two; James does not actually quote the Lord's words, but he obviously had internalized Jesus' teachings and reproduced them with spiritual depth. Jesus covered about 30 topics in the Sermon on the Mount, and we will see that James touches on every one of them in this epistle. The Book of James is the New Testament Version of the Old Testament Proverbs. It resembles Proverbs because it is almost poetic.

So We can Examine Self / How am I Doing

Jesus gave the Sermon on the Mount so that we might examine ourselves and ask the question, "so how am I doing in each of these areas?" James writes to the church, to us, and as we read, we have to ask ourselves, "so how am I doing in these areas?" This book is practical and applicable for us living in the year 2004, and the ultimate goal of this epistle is giving to us in verse 4 of chapter 1.

Theme of the Book of James:

(James 1:4 NKJV) But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

(James 1:5 NKJV) If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

As in school, we take tests to see how much of a handle and mastery we have on a subject, we will do the same in this book:

The Outline of the Book of James:

Chapter 1

Introduction (1:1)

The Test of Perseverance and Suffering (1:2-12)

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 - The Test of Prayerfulness (5:12-20)

So, lets see how we are doing?

(James 1:1 NKJV) James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad: Greetings.

What an Underestimate/ Bondservant / Has Your Ear been Pierced?

James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ - What an understatement. If it was me writing I'm sure I would have written something like, Ray the younger brother of the Creator of the Universe. I would have made sure everybody knew my special position, so my authority in the matters of God would never be challenged. But not James, he calls himself a bondservant, which means slave. In those days if a person in financial trouble could sell himself to someone in order to pay off a debit. It was usually for a determined time (7 years), now if at the end of seven years when he was to be set free, if he choose to he could say I love my master, I do not want to leave my master, my master treats me well and takes care of me, I want to serve my master for life. What would happen then would be that the master would take the slave to the door of the home and pierce his ear with an awl, and then put a gold earring in, and it was a sign that he was now his bondservant. So the bondservant had the responsibility to serve the master, and the master had the responsible to take care of all the slaves needs. Christian have you gone to the door, have you had your ear pierced by the hand of God?

Hosted Association of Churches

So he is James the bondservant. Last month we hosted a gathering of local churches, and it was so interesting, there were few Joe's and Bob's there. Everybody introduced himself or herself as Reverend, or Bishop, or Associate Minister to the Senior Development Council - what ever that was. In a world of titles and positions, James just says, James a bondservant. I'm the under-rower of the ship, I'm just keeping the ship moving forward so the passengers can get to their destination. I wonder what the churches would be like today if people introduced themselves as Ray the slave of Jesus Christ, maybe people would see they are here to serve others, and not others to serve them. James lost his will, into the will for the heart of God.

12 Tribes / You are Remembered

To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad: Greetings - These people were scattered for they were driven out of Jerusalem for their faith in Jesus. The twelve tribes represent the Jewish people. There were twelve tribes of Israel, and James is making a statement to them right off the top, this persecution has affected everyone of us, you are not alone. And just as God preserved the children of Israel for their 40 years in the wilderness, so will He preserve and protect you. Just as they entered into the Promised Land, so too will you.

2 Words / Scattered Unto Life Sermon Mount

Scattered, diaspora, is from two words....."dia" which means scattered about, and "speiro" which means seed. James starts by telling these people I know you are experiences hard-times, but you haven't been scattered upon not to death, but to life. For everywhere you now go, you take the seed of life unto others.

You are the fulfillment of go therefore:

(Matthew 28:19 NKJV) "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

(Matthew 28:20 NKJV) "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

Sermon on Mount Cross-Reference:

(Matthew 5:13 NKJV) "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.

(Matthew 5:14 NKJV) "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.

(Matthew 5:15 NKJV) "Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.

(Matthew 5:16 NKJV) "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

Left Behind / Cross

Do you remember the Left Behind Movie 2, they do the old switch on the anti-christ, and the Rabbi says Jesus is the Messiah? Then Nicoli starts screaming, no, not thy will, but my will. I love that because that it so the way it is. Satan was high-fiving on that Friday, that screaming in pain on Sunday. What he thought was victory was the ultimate loss. Here he scatters the Christians and he begins to high-five again, then it turns to screams of pain, for everywhere the Christians went, the Gospel went, and more people got saved. I love it.

Remember at Work Tomorrow

You are planting the word of God, the precious promises of God, everywhere you go. Christian when you go to that job you don't like, or to that school you don't like, know that the Lord is scattering you for His purposes. You may very well be the last link to God and eternity that those people ever will have.

Greetings

Greetings – This word in the Greek means "rejoice". I am writing to you for a reason to rejoice. This letter is taken by many to be a letter of correction, but James lets us know it is written, so that we may rejoice, be glad, for applying this letter to our lives will produce fruit in our lives, we will become more like Christ, and that is a reason to Rejoice!

The Test of Perseverance and Suffering (1:2-12)

Written by James / Didn't believe – to Leader / Hindsight / Everyday Living

The Book of James was written by none other than Jesus' brother James. James was a leader in the church, a pillar in the church (Acts 21). James didn't believe that Jesus was God when He walked this earth (John 7:5); but after the resurrection Jesus appears to him (1 Cor 15:4-7), and everything changed. James is going to write us this letter, he will talk about everyday practical stuff. He will talk about trials in life, our works, our tongue, prayer, and other things; as he writes these things, no doubt he will be remembering how Jesus handled them, reflecting back on watching situations, and watching his oldest brother. He will reflect on Jesus' life of love, and a life of sinlessness, in a world that can be so hateful at times, and so full of sin. James will write these things based on hindsight, based on first hand witnessing of how his older brother lived life, everyday. James watched Jesus handle everyday life, and that is what this book is about; it is about living everyday life as a Follower of God, in a fallen world.

Jesus Rubbed Off / Nature Illustrations / Favorite Teacher - Sermon on Mount

We can see how much Jesus rubbed off on James, for James style resembles his brother so much. Like Jesus used nature as illustrations for His teaching points, so does James some 30 times. He uses nature analogies such as the sea, flowers, sun, fire, horses and ships to name a few). It is obvious who James favorite teacher was, because this epistle covers every topic that Jesus covered in the Sermon on the Mount. There is amazing parallelisms between the two; James does not actually quote the Lord's words, but he obviously had internalized Jesus' teachings and reproduced them with spiritual depth. Jesus covered about 30 topics in the Sermon on the Mount, and we will see that James touches on every one of them in this epistle. The Book of James is Sermon on the Mount 2. The Book is also very quick and concise, moving from thought-to-thought quickly. So the Book of James is the New Testament Version of the Old Testament Proverbs. It resembles Proverbs because it is very poetic the way it flows its thoughts using illustrations and analogies.

So We can Examine Self / How am I Doing

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Theme of the Book of James:

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So, lets see how we are doing? The first test is the Test of Perseverance and Suffering.

Outline:

The Test of Perseverance and Suffering (1:2-12)

- The Perspective of Trials – 1:2
- The Purpose of Trials – 1:3-4
- The Power in Trials – 1:5-11
- The Promise from Trials – 1:12

The Perspective of Trials – 1:2

In order to endure a trial and suffering, we have to understand trials from God's perspective, and what He says about them. He says count them all joy, which is a way different perspective that we have on them.

(James 1:1 NKJV) James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad: Greetings.

(James 1:2 NKJV) My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials,

Sermon on Mount Cross-Reference:

(Matthew 5:10 NKJV) Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

(Matthew 5:11 NKJV) "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.

(Matthew 5:12 NKJV) "Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

15 Times / Camel Knees / Miss You Brother

My brethren - 15 times he will call his fellow believers "brethren". James is saying I'm with you, I know where you are at. I love this, James is calling them his flesh and blood in a sense. Tradition of early church writings say that James was called "camel knees" for he was such a man of prayer. Imagine, his prayer time, was communion with his brother. I can only imagine what that was like, like anybody who has lost a loved one, James prayer would be a wanton prayer, "I wish you were here Jesus, I miss you my brother, I feel scattered, you were always there for me, I need you today, I need to hear your big brother advice." I see James calling the fellow believers brethren, because he knows the pain of a separated family, and he longs for the time of family reunion.

Count it Joy

count it all joy when you fall into various trials - First thing he starts with is count it all joy. But not what for what we consider joyful things – Trials! Give me a commentary any day, I'd rather read about trials than have to go into one, but James who watched his own Brother endure the Cross, says count it all joy.

Sins of Fallen World / Not Sowing - Reaping

various trials - These trials are the result of sin in the world, not sin in you. Do you see the difference? Sin in you, your willful sin will bring repercussions upon you, it is the law of reaping and sowing. But the trials spoken of here are the result of sin in the world, of living in a fallen world, a world that is steadily deteriorating - daily I might add. The fallen world has brought cancer, hurricanes, earthquakes, unemployment, and car wrecks. Sin in other people is what has brought wars, religious persecution, and wrongful and unjustified attacks. As Christians we are subject to these things because we live in this world, salvation does not make us immune to them.

When – Not If / Golgotha / Why Me

when you fall into various trials - notice here brethren, that it says "when", not "if". Let me dispel an ancient Christian myth, the one of "don't pray for patience because then God will give you trials to produce your patience". It says when, you will get them because you live in this fallen world. Again, the difference here is that they have come upon you by no fault of your own. Don't think that God is mad at you, or that He is punishing you. Your Father in Heaven loves you more than you will ever know, and He did not leave the throne of heaven 2000 years ago, be mocked, beaten, whipped, spit upon, and then nailed to a cross to make your life miserable. He took our misery so that we might have His love. When I am faced with things I do not understand, I always go back to what I do understand, God loves me and came and died for me. I do not know why some people get cancer, and others live their whole life in perfect health. I don't know why, my ways are not His ways, but I do know He loves me and will be with me through them all.

Biceps Curls

His loves us and always does what is best for us. And just as curls are the best exercise to build up the biceps, trials are the perfect work to produce Christ-likeness in us. Trials are Christian bodybuilding. That brings us to the purpose of trials in our life.

The Purpose of Trials – 1:3-4

(James 1:3 NKJV) knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.

Bear-up Under Pressure

produces patience - Trials produce patience. It is ever so important to know what this word patience means. It means "the ability to bear-up while under pressure." Like a Lighthouse continues to in spite of the constant pounding of the waves. Patience is endurance under pressure. It means that the patience we get from trials, that we build-up in us, will let us react differently to future trials and pressures.

Today's Trials

It is amazing to me today, but there are trials today in my life that I am currently living through right now, that I really don't even realize are trials, but just accept as daily life. The same trial today that I thought was going to break me 10 years ago, is today, just an annoyance.

(James 1:4 NKJV) But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

Sermon on Mount Cross-Reference:

(Matthew 5:48 NKJV) "Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

Sermon on Mount Cross-Reference:

(Matthew 6:33 NKJV) "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

(Matthew 6:34 NKJV) "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

Airplane Testing

I am so thankful that the Boeing Corporation puts every airplane it produces through test flights before they turn it over to the airlines to fly you and I. After they design and build it, they test it. They see how fast it can go before the engines could overheat, how high before the engines could flame out, how far it can fly before it could run out of fuel, how sharp a turn it could make before the wings break off, how it responds to fowl weather, how often it needs repaired, multiple of tests to make sure it is ready to be used for what it was designed for and to be used to its fullest potential. They are proving out the design. I am glad that they do that, and so are you. I am glad that they don't buck the last rivet and say, tell Southwest Airlines to come get it. We expect it to be tested.

That's What God is Doing in Us / Comfort Zone

That is what God does with trials in our life, He allows these things to prove out the design. You see we really do not know how high and how fast we can soar. We get in a comfort zone and we cease to grow. God will bring, or allow, a trial to come to get us off the couch, and into the weight room. I notice how

much better my prayer life and study life is when things aren't in auto-pilot. God wants us to soar with the eagles, and not peck seeds with the chickens waiting to be Satan's dinner.

Trials produce Christ-likeness / That's the Joy / Firsthand Account / I Watched My Brother

God say I have a life for you so abundant that you have no idea. Trials produce Christ-likeness in us. James is speaking from a first hand account. I watched my brother Jesus react when hard times came upon Him, and never once did He react in the flesh, never once did he lose it. And now it is my turn to be like Him. What can we be thankful for, why can we count it all joy, because I am becoming more like the God I seek to draw nearer to:

(Romans 12:1 NKJV) I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

(Romans 12:2 NKJV) And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Take the trial and use to grow and become more like Christ!

What Changes is the Heart / Perseverance is Hanging on To

What changes in a trial is not the trial, but the heart, the attitude; Perseverance is not getting on through, but hanging on to - hanging on to Jesus Christ.

Don't Bail Out Until Completed

But let patience have its perfect work – Notice the word “let”. Here the author asks us to let patience have its perfect work; he is saying don't bail out of your trial, don't try to find a shortcut, don't quit on God, or the work that is being perfected in you, will not complete. How many times have we bailed out of a trial before God has completed what He wanted to-do in us. We bail out by complaining the whole time, attacking back, yelling at God, or bailing out at the bar or works of the flesh. How often we have bailed out before He brings us to a place where in this area of your life, you will be complete, lacking nothing. God will let you try to work your way out of a trial, so that you will run out of steam, reach the bottom, because at the bottom you will be ready to listen.

Football Practice / Day to Day Battle / Just Make it One More Day

The worst part of football practice was when we had to lay on our backs and hold our legs six inches in the air, which seemed like forever. Your abs would be burning, the pain was grueling, but the coach knew it was going to make our abs solid, and enable us to endure the blows in the game. He would say 30 more seconds, and you could always make 30 more seconds. I remember my most intense trial, 9 months of unemployment, God would ask me everyday, can you make one more day, and I'd say yes, because I could always make one more day. Our trial is a day to day battle, once you start looking at it from a distance it makes it so much harder. Take your trial day by day, and I'll you'll ever have to do, is make it one more day.

God Won't Let a Trial Go to Waste / So Don't You

God will not let a trial go to waste, hang in there, He will use it to draw you closer to Him, for a time of fellowship with Him. The worse thing to do is to let a trial go to waste. If you are in it, then get something out of it. A precious saint always said, Lord don't let this suffering go to waste.

Toothpaste / Perfection – Lacking Nothing

If you squeeze a tube of toothpaste, yes toothpaste comes out because you squeezed it, but truly toothpaste comes out because toothpaste was in the tube. The things that come out of us during trials are the things God wants to bring to the surface, bring to our attention so we can deal with them. You will never know what is in the tube until you squeeze. Next time you are going through a trial, every time you brush your teeth may it remind you of what God is doing, He is bringing you into perfection, so that you may be lacking nothing. So that you may become like your Jesus – and becoming like Him is something to count it all joy!

The Power in Trials – 1:5-8

Sometimes it feels as if God has abandoned us, but know that He is right there with you, I never leave you:

(Hebrews 13:5 NKJV) Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

The one thing the Lord promises to us in a trial, is Himself. You will never have to go through a trial alone, for He is always right there with you.

And He gives us power to endure, for He gives us His word to apply to the situation.

(James 1:5 NKJV) If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

Ask & He will Show

We are to ask, "Lord how am I to handle this pressure upon me." This verse says ask and the Lord will show you. Wisdom is "knowledge applied". The things I know, the things I have learned, wisdom is putting that knowledge in motion, into action, it is getting the knowledge from our minds into our walk. Wisdom doesn't just apply to trials, but to every area of our lives. We are given some 50 things we should be doing in this short 5-chapter book.

Lord how do I hang on in the storm, and He says come and I will tell you.

Moses Numbers 9

A great example of this is in the Old Testament. The children of Israel have been delivered from Egypt and they are now in their wilderness journey. One of the things the Lord commands them to do is to observe the Passover on the 14th day of the 1st month every year. Now everyone who did not keep the Passover were to be cut-off, which meant to be killed (Remember Hebrews the whole meaning of Passover). Well there is a problem, for it said also that if anyone had touched a dead body the week of the Passover, they were "ceremonially unclean". So these men come to Moses and say we have a problem, we touched a dead body and can't keep the Passover. Do you see the problem, by the Law, they were to be killed if they didn't keep the Passover, but by the Law they weren't allowed to keep the Passover either. Now what does Moses do, in this dilemma, in this trial? He says, be still (be quiet), let me hear what the Lord says to do:

(Numbers 9:6 NKJV) Now there were certain men who were defiled by a human corpse, so that they could not keep the Passover on that day; and they came before Moses and Aaron that day.

(Numbers 9:7 NKJV) And those men said to him, "We became defiled by a human corpse. Why are we kept from presenting the offering of the LORD at its appointed time among the children of Israel?"

(Numbers 9:8 NKJV) And Moses said to them, "Stand still, that I may hear what the LORD will command concerning you."

(Numbers 9:9 NKJV) Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

(Numbers 9:10 NKJV) "Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'If anyone of you or your posterity is unclean because of a corpse, or is far away on a journey, he may still keep the Lord's Passover.

(Numbers 9:11 NKJV) 'On the fourteenth day of the second month, at twilight, they may keep it. They shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.

When We Enter Be Still / The Written Word

When we enter a trial, are in a trial, we need to be still, be quiet, and say Lord how do I handle this. So, so many times you will hear the Lord bring a Scripture to your mind, and will answer you through His written Word. That is why it is so important that we study and stay in this word.

A Place of Tarrying

There is a place of tarrying, and waiting upon the Lord for a Word of Wisdom. How often when we don't hear from the Lord within the first moments of our asking that we get up and move on. There is a time to sit, ask, and be totally silent. It is a most wonderful thing to be still before the Lord (even if you're not in a trial) and just wait to hear from Him. You just sit, for it takes time for your mind to stop racing, for the world to fade away, and then the Lord starts to speak.

(Habakkuk 2:1 NKJV) I will stand my watch And set myself on the rampart, And watch to see what He will say to me, And what I will answer when I am corrected.

(Habakkuk 2:2 NKJV) Then the LORD answered me and said: "Write the vision And make it plain on tablets, That he may run who reads it.

(Habakkuk 2:3 NKJV) For the vision is yet for an appointed time; But at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; Because it will surely come, It will not tarry.

(James 1:6 NKJV) But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.

(James 1:7 NKJV) For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord;

(James 1:8 NKJV) he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

Believe He Answers / Sermon Mount

Now if we go to God, asking for wisdom, then we must go believing that he will give us what we ask for. He will answer us and direct us.

Sermon on Mount Cross-Reference:

(Matthew 7:7 NKJV) "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

(Matthew 7:8 NKJV) "For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

(Matthew 7:9 NKJV) "Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone?

(Matthew 7:10 NKJV) "Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent?

(Matthew 7:11 NKJV) "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!

Waves of Sea

like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. - When you ask the Lord for wisdom, believe that you will receive it, and once you receive it, keep it. Peter was walking on water, until what, until he took his eyes off of Jesus and looked at the waves.

(Matthew 14:28 NKJV) And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water."

(Matthew 14:29 NKJV) So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus.

(Matthew 14:30 NKJV) But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!"

(Matthew 14:31 NKJV) And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?"

God Allows It / Pierced Ear / His Problem

Anything that is going on in my life God is allowing it, therefore I need not panic, I know my problem is His problem, for I am His bondservant, my ear has been pierced through at the door, making me His responsibility. Therefore I keep my eyes fixed upon Him, waiting for Him, He will work in my trial. Since it is His problem, I now have unlimited power working for me.

double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. - Patience is consistency. A double-minded person is unstable. Instability and maturity go hand in hand.

(James 1:9 NKJV) Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation,

(James 1:10 NKJV) but the rich in his humiliation, because as a flower of the field he will pass away.

(James 1:11 NKJV) For no sooner has the sun risen with a burning heat than it withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beautiful appearance perishes. So the rich man also will fade away in his pursuits.

Sermon on Mount Cross-Reference:

(Matthew 5:3 NKJV) "Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Money Answers Some / Causes Others

Ohh if only I had more money, then this wouldn't be a trial. We think money can solve so many problems. It may solve some problems, but these verses tell us that it brings on a whole new set of problems that us not so rich people have no idea about.

The Promise from Trials – 1:12

Each trial, every suffering, has to be put into its proper perspective, there is a precious promise of the “Crown of Life” for all those that endure.

(James 1:12 NKJV) Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

Sermon on Mount Cross-Reference:

(Matthew 7:14 NKJV) "Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

The word used here in NKJV is temptation, but it is the same Greek word, and it can mean both temptation and trial. Next study we will look at the test of temptation.

Crown of Life - Twice in Bible

crown of life – this phrase is only used one other place in the Bible, and it used for a group of people who are suffering and being persecuted:

(Revelation 2:8 NKJV) "And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write, 'These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life:

(Revelation 2:9 NKJV) "I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.

(Revelation 2:10 NKJV) "Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

Zoe / Life Intensive / Vines

This Greek word for “life” (Crown of Life) is “zoe”, It has a very wordy definition in the Greek dictionary, it sums up to “life intensive, life vigorous”

Vines Dictionary describes it like this: Life as God has it, that which the Father has in Himself, and which He gave to the Incarnate Son to have in Himself, which He gives to us to have in Ourselves.

Zoe Early Church / That is the Crown of Life

I like that, but I like how it has been summed up from the early Christian Church; “Life emanating from God, manifested by Christ”. We can only have this life through Jesus Christ. And Jesus is making you more like Him, as He manifest’s (makes clear) Himself in you. That is the Crown of Life, it is the Life of Christ in me, in you, coming to the surface, emanating from us. And it takes trials to bring that about.

Trials & Perspective of Crown

Beloved, put your “trials in life”, in perspective with your “crown of life”.

The Tube Squeezed

There will come a day that when the tube is squeezed, all that will come out is Jesus!

The Test of Blame in Temptation (1:12-18)

Written by James / Didn't believe – to Leader / Hindsight / Everyday Living

The Book of James was written by none other than Jesus' brother James. James was a leader in the church, a pillar in the church (Acts 21). James didn't believe that Jesus was God when He walked this earth (John 7:5); but after the resurrection Jesus appears to him (1 Cor 15:4-7), and everything changed. James is going to write us this letter, he will talk about everyday practical stuff. He will talk about trials in life, our works, our tongue, prayer, and other things; as he writes these things, no doubt he will be remembering how Jesus handled them, reflecting back on watching situations, and watching his oldest brother. He will reflect on Jesus' life of love, and a life of sinlessness, in a world that can be so hateful at times, and so full of sin. James will write these things based on hindsight, based on first hand witnessing of how his older brother lived life, everyday. James watched Jesus handle everyday life, and that is what this book is about; it is about living everyday life as a Follower of God, in a fallen world.

Jesus Rubbed Off / Nature Illustrations / Favorite Teacher - Sermon on Mount

We can see how much Jesus rubbed off on James, for James style resembles his brother so much. Like Jesus used nature as illustrations for His teaching points, so does James some 30 times. He uses nature analogies such as the sea, flowers, sun, fire, horses and ships to name a few). It is obvious who James favorite teacher was, because this epistle covers every topic that Jesus covered in the Sermon on the Mount. There is amazing parallelisms between the two; James does not actually quote the Lord's words, but he obviously had internalized Jesus' teachings and reproduced them with spiritual depth. Jesus covered about 30 topics in the Sermon on the Mount, and we will see that James touches on every one of them in this epistle. The Book of James is Sermon on the Mount 2. The Book is also very quick and concise, moving from thought-to-thought quickly. So the Book of James is the New Testament Version of the Old Testament Proverbs. It resembles Proverbs because it is very poetic the way it flows its thoughts using illustrations and analogies.

So We can Examine Self / How am I Doing

Jesus gave the Sermon on the Mount so that we might examine ourselves and ask the question, "so how am I doing in each of these areas?" James writes to the church, to us, and as we read, we have to ask ourselves, "so how am I doing in these areas?" This book is practical and applicable for us living in the year 2004, and the ultimate goal of this epistle is giving to us in verse 4 of chapter 1, to bring us into maturity, perfect and lacking nothing.

Theme of the Book of James:

(James 1:4 NKJV) But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

(James 1:5 NKJV) If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

As in school, we take tests to see how much of a handle and mastery we have on a subject, we will do the same in this book:

The Outline of the Book of James:

Chapter 1

- Introduction (1:1)
- The Test of Perseverance and Suffering (1:2-12)
- The Test of Blame in Temptation (1:12-18)
- The Test of Response to the Word (1:19-27)

Chapter 2

- The Test of Partiality (2:1-9)
- The Test of the Law (2:10-13)
- The Test of Faith and Works (2:14-26)

Chapter 3

- The Test of the Tongue (3:1-12)

- The Test of Wisdom Applied (3:13-18)
- Chapter 4
 - The Test of the World's Influence (4:1-12)
 - The Test of Dependence (4:13-17)
- Chapter 5
 - The Test of Endurance (5:1-11)
 - The Test of Prayerfulness (5:12-20)

Recap Trials

The last Test was the Test of Perseverance and Suffering (1:2-12):

- The Perspective of Trials – 1:2
- The Purpose of Trials – 1:3-4
- The Power in Trials – 1:5-11
- The Promise from Trials – 1:12

Which flows right into the next:

- The Test of Blame in Temptation (1:12-18)
- The Test of Response to the Word (1:19-27)

Today's Test

This is a test of who we blame in temptation. Do we blame ourselves, someone else, or do we blame God? You see if you blame anyone else when you fall, then you are destined to repeat this failure over and over, because you won't take the responsibility of your actions.

Sermon on Mount Cross-Reference:

(Matthew 5:8 NKJV) Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God.

(Matthew 6:13 NKJV) And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Outline

The Test of Blame in Temptation (1:12-18)

The Source of Temptation – 1:12-14

The Conception of Temptation – 1:14-15

The Deception of Temptation – 1:16-17

The Deliverance of Temptation – 1:18

The Source of Temptation – 1:12-14

(James 1:12 NKJV) Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

(James 1:13 NKJV) Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.

(James 1:14 NKJV) But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.

God Allows Trials / Doesn't Bring Temptation / Encouraged Fallen Nature / Progression of Trial

Regarding the entire arena of trials and temptations, understand this: God will allow a trial, but doesn't bring a temptation. Trials may be test sent by God, or they may be temptations sent by Satan and encouraged by our own fallen nature. We may ask why did James connect the two? What is the relationship between trials and temptations? When our circumstances/trials are difficult, we may find ourselves complaining against God, questioning His love, and resisting His will. At that point Satan provides our fallen nature an opportunity to escape the difficulty. This opportunity is a temptation/invitation to sin.

Not God's Sheltered People / Must Face to Grow

Certainly God does not want us to yield to temptation, yet neither can He spare us the experience of temptation. We are not God's sheltered people. If we are to mature, we must face testings and temptations.

Who Blame / 3 Forces

Who do we blame in temptation, when we fall to the sin that temptation brought. Do we blame ourselves, someone else, the world, Satan, or do we blame God? In every temptation to sin you must always recognize that there are three forces at work trying to lead us into sin. Our flesh, the world, and Satan.

The 3 forces at work in every temptation to sin:

Our Flesh

(Galatians 5:19 NKJV) Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, (Galatians 5:20 NKJV) idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, (Galatians 5:21 NKJV) envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

The World

(1 John 2:16 NKJV) For all that is in the world; the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; is not of the Father but is of the world.

Satan

(Ephesians 2:2 NKJV) in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience,

The Forces / Verse 14 Makes it Clear

Yes the world and Satan are at work trying to solicit us to sin, but verse 14 we see clearly that it "by his own desires". Blame anyone other than yourself and you have failed the test.

The 3 R's

Know the 3 R's in every temptation - Recognize - Resist - Rejoice. The importance of this is that we must Recognize where the attack is from, Resist it by what we will learn today, and then Rejoice, for the victory over that temptation, and the goodness of God in our lives.

The Resist part is all up to us. But know the Sources in temptations, Recognize them so that you may Resist them, and have reason to Rejoice, not have to Repent!

The Conception of Temptation – 1:14-15

We see the Sources of all Temptation, and now when that Source is yielded to.

(James 1:14 NKJV) But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.

(James 1:15 NKJV) Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

Has Conceived

has conceived - The Greek words for "has conceived" and "brings forth" likens the process to physical conception and birth. It is conceived, then it grows, then it is birthed.

The Track in Our Mind / Then It's Birthed

We have all been there, we play a track over and over in our mind. When I see that person again, I'm gona tell them a thing or two. Or we play it over and over what they did to us, how they wronged us; the thought has been conceived, and now it is just a matter of time before it is birthed – for the next time we see them, we play out what we have been thinking.

The Gatekeeper

To be tempted is not sin. Our mind, if you would, is a gatekeeper in that we can not stop who comes to the gate, but we do decide who we let in

Internet / Mags / TV / - Minds Like Computers

The dangers that are around us everyday. Thinking on the things of the Internet, images that come into the privacy of our bedroom, the magazines, the television shows, that co-worker. These images are planted into the mind, a person begin to think on them, and then when the time comes, a person plays them out. Our minds are like computers, and whatever you program them with, is how the computer will run. You can have the most powerful Pentium processing computer, but into you put an operating system on it, Windows or MacOS, it is worthless, it wont run.

Can't Dwell / Can't Entertain / Taking Captive – 2 Cor 10

There is a process to saying I can't dwell on these things, I can't entertain these things, for the warfare rages in the mind, and we must take every thought captive:

(2 Corinthians 10:3 NKJV) For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh.

(2 Corinthians 10:4 NKJV) For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds,

(2 Corinthians 10:5 NKJV) casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,

Play Over / Birthed / Satan Energized

It is when we play with that thought, entertain that temptation, that it is conceived (planted in our mind), then it is birthed. Satan sits there all the while energizing that thought. The "prince and power of the air", it is like he is a radio station and he is sending his signal out, and anybody that has their dial set to his station, receives his signal.

Drawn Away / Enticed / Hidden Under the Bait

Verse 14 says drawn away and enticed:

drawn away – Greek word used to describe wild game being lured into a trap

enticed – A fishing term that means to capture with bait.

The hunter and the fisherman have to use bait to attract and catch their prey. No animal is deliberately walks into an un-baited trap or hook, the idea is to hide the trap or the hook underneath the bait.

Brings Death / Relationships – Happiness – Health / Jesus Perfect Love

Verse 15 - when it is full-grown, brings forth death: It may only start as a thought, seem ever so harmless, but if you let it dwell within you, it will be birthed, and grown, and bring forth death. Sin always brings forth death. Every time! Sin will kill relationships. It will destroy happiness. It will ruin health. When you want to tell kids how serious sin is and what sin does, the best thing you can do is take them to the Cross of Calvary and say, "Look at this wonderful, perfect, loving Person and see Him on the Cross in agony and pain and blood. It was when Jesus became sin for us that He died, for sin always brings death."

The Deception of Temptation – 1:16-17

(James 1:16 NKJV) Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.

(James 1:17 NKJV) Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

Sowing & Reaping

do not be deceived - It is the Law of Sowing and Reaping, its that simple:

(Galatians 6:7 NKJV) Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.

(Galatians 6:8 NKJV) For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.

Deceived / The 3 R's

And don't be deceived, deceived of what, that this temptation is of the Lord. This temptation that comes upon you is directly a result of your flesh, the world, and Satan. The 3 R's to every temptation -

Recognize - Resist - Rejoice. The importance of this is that we must Recognize where the attack is from, Resist it by what we just discussed (taking every thought captive and asking the Lord for Wisdom), and then we Rejoice.

God Holding Back / Tactic in Garden / Only Good Gift

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above - Satan and the world wants to deceive us into thinking that God is keeping something good from us, holding something back. That God doesn't really love or care for us because He is withholding something from us. That was Satan's tactic in the garden, yea Eve God doesn't want you to eat the fruit because when you do you will be like Him knowing good and evil. Don't be deceived – my beloved brethren, Don't fall for this lie, God keeps nothing good back from us, only those things that will bring for death.

The First Gift from Above

If you ever think God is holding something back from you, then go back to the first gift that came from above, His only Begotten Son, and there you will see that God will not withhold anything good from you.

No Variation / The Rock

Not only is God good in the gifts He gives, but in who He is. In Him there is no variableness or shadow of turning. That is, He's not moody. He doesn't have bad days. He's not generous with me one day, but grouchy the next—as I can so often be. We're variable. We go up and down. God doesn't. He can be nothing but good. He doesn't react to me according to how I'm doing with Him. He is faithful when I am faithless (2 Timothy 2:13). He is good when I am grumpy. He doesn't change. He's locked into His nature. That's why I love the Lord so much. He's solid as a Rock. And I can just enjoy Him without worrying about Him being ticked with me or tired of me. He gives nothing but good gifts, for He is a good God.

The Deliverance of Temptation – 1:18

We are never in this alone in our temptation (I will never leave you nor forsake you). God always gives us a way out.

(James 1:18 NKJV) Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.

1 Cor 10

(1 Corinthians 10:13 NKJV) No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.

Ok then Lord, you say I can not be tempted beyond what I can handle, therefore I can escape this. Give me the wisdom and the strength to do so. I know that only pain is waiting for me in this trap.

If You Lack Wisdom / James 1:5

He provides a way out by giving us wisdom on how to get out (back to last weeks study)

(James 1:5 NKJV) If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

Ask & He will Show

We are to ask, "Lord how am I to handle this temptation upon me." Verse 5 says ask and the Lord will show you. Wisdom is "knowledge applied". The things I know, the things I have learned, wisdom is putting that knowledge in motion, into action, it is getting the knowledge from our minds into our walk. Wisdom doesn't just apply to trials, but to every area of our lives. We are given some 50 things we should be doing in this short 5-chapter book.

Leap Tall Buildings

God will speak to you, and He will give you the power to walk away from it (1 Cor 10:13). He will make you like superman, yes able to leap tall buildings in a single bound:

(Psalms 18:28 NKJV) For You will light my lamp; The LORD my God will enlighten my darkness.

*(Psalms 18:29 NKJV) For by You I can run against a troop, **By my God I can leap over a wall.***

(Psalms 18:30 NKJV) As for God, His way is perfect; The word of the LORD is proven; He is a shield to all who trust in Him.

(Psalms 18:31 NKJV) For who is God, except the LORD? And who is a rock, except our God?

Avoid Temptation / Bar / Couch

There is no temptation that can bring you down, only you can bring you down. Let me give you some real practical wisdom involving temptations; the best way to avoid temptation, is to remove temptation. If you put yourself in a bar, it will be a whole lot easier to fall to the temptations that come with the bar environment. You youth, go to a drinking party at a friends whose parents are away!!!!!! You hang around friends that smoke dope!!!!!!!!!!!!Lay down on the couch with that boyfriend or girlfriend!!!!!! The best way to avoid temptation is to remove it.

Be like Joseph when his masters wife tried to seduce him, runnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnn! Get away from that environment, every minute you stay, the harder it is to leave, get out – now!

Special Blessing

This passage ends like the passage on trials did, there in verse 12 we were promised the "Crown of Life", and here we are considered in a most honorable place before the Lord - we are His first fruits. Here is a blessing, notice the contrast of this passage? Falling to temptations birth sin and death, but through the Lord and the word of truth we become fruit. The Lord wants us to be fruit, not fruity, so that others may partake of us. Ahh, there is nothing like a good, crisp, shinny apple - you just bite into it and it is so refreshing. Fresh strawberries, cool melons, and juicy oranges, we are the fruits of God's goodness and mercy. There is nothing like it when the Lord uses us to be the nourishment to a brother/sister that is struggling, or the fruit that someone sees that leads them to eternal salvation.

We are the Apple of His Eye:

(Psalms 17:6 NKJV) I have called upon You, for You will hear me, O God; Incline Your ear to me, and hear my speech.

(Psalms 17:7 NKJV) Show Your marvelous lovingkindness by Your right hand, O You who save those who trust in You From those who rise up against them.

(Psalms 17:8 NKJV) Keep me as the apple of Your eye; Hide me under the shadow of Your wings,

The Test of Response to the Word (1:19-27)

Written by James / Didn't believe – to Leader / Hindsight / Everyday Living

The Book of James was written by none other than Jesus' brother James. James was a leader in the church, a pillar in the church (Acts 21). James didn't believe that Jesus was God when He walked this earth (John 7:5); but after the resurrection Jesus appears to him (1 Cor 15:4-7), and everything changed. James is going to write us this letter, he will talk about everyday practical stuff. He will talk about trials in life, our works, our tongue, prayer, and other things; as he writes these things, no doubt he will be remembering how Jesus handled them, reflecting back on watching situations, and watching his oldest brother. He will reflect on Jesus' life of love, and a life of sinlessness, in a world that can be so hateful at times, and so full of sin. James will write these things based on hindsight, based on first hand witnessing of how his older brother lived life, everyday. James watched Jesus handle everyday life, and that is what this book is about; it is about living everyday life as a Follower of God, in a fallen world.

Jesus Rubbed Off / Nature Illustrations / Favorite Teacher - Sermon on Mount

We can see how much Jesus rubbed off on James, for James style resembles his brother so much. Like Jesus used nature as illustrations for His teaching points, so does James some 30 times. He uses nature analogies such as the sea, flowers, sun, fire, horses and ships to name a few). It is obvious who James favorite teacher was, because this epistle covers every topic that Jesus covered in the Sermon on the Mount. There is amazing parallelisms between the two; James does not actually quote the Lord's words, but he obviously had internalized Jesus' teachings and reproduced them with spiritual depth. Jesus covered about 30 topics in the Sermon on the Mount, and we will see that James touches on every one of them in this epistle. The Book of James is Sermon on the Mount 2. The Book is also very quick and concise, moving from thought-to-thought quickly. So the Book of James is the New Testament Version of the Old Testament Proverbs. It resembles Proverbs because it is very poetic the way it flows its thoughts using illustrations and analogies.

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Jesus gave the Sermon on the Mount so that we might examine ourselves and ask the question, "so how am I doing in each of these areas?" James writes to the church, to us, and as we read, we have to ask ourselves, "so how am I doing in these areas?" This book is practical and applicable for us living in the year 2004, and the ultimate goal of this epistle is giving to us in verse 4 of chapter 1, to bring us into maturity, perfect and lacking nothing.

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- The Test of Dependence (4:13-17)

Chapter 5

- The Test of Endurance (5:1-11)
- The Test of Prayerfulness (5:12-20)

Flow From Trials / Response Determines How Much Like Christ / Man of the Word

Seems like we are moving into a new thought, but it really flows and applies to trials and temptations, our response to the Word, will determine our response to every trial and temptation. The test of the response to the Word, will determine how much, or how little we become like Jesus Christ. At work, one of my bosses always jokes and calls me a man of the cloth. I always correct him and say I am not a man of the cloth, I am a man of the Word, big difference. The Word is what makes me a man of God, for it is what conforms me into the image of Jesus Christ.

Self Deception / Written For Growth

The emphasis in this section is on the dangers of self-deception, deceiving your own selves:
(James 1:22 NKJV) *But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.*

This passage will have strong words for us, in some cases stinging words, but remember the whole purpose of James writing to us is so that we may grow and mature in our Christian walk. As for myself, I can never go back to this message enough, for I need to be reminded of this daily.

Deceived Salvation

James will say don't deceive yourself, examine the Word, and let the Word examine you. Many people can deceive themselves into thinking they are saved when they really are not.

(Matthew 7:22 NKJV) *"Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?"*

(Matthew 7:23 NKJV) *"And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!"*

(Matthew 7:24 NKJV) *"Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock:*

(Matthew 7:25 NKJV) *"and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.*

(Matthew 7:26 NKJV) *"But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand:*

(Matthew 7:27 NKJV) *"and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."*

Deceived Believers / Spiritual Reality – Right Relationship w/the Word

But there are true believers that are fooling themselves concerning their Christian walk. They think they are spiritual when they are not. God spoke against these types of people in Revelation 3:17, the church of the Laodiceans. We all can be this type of person, and must guard against it:

(Revelation 3:14 NKJV) *"And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, 'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God:*

(Revelation 3:15 NKJV) *"I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot.*

(Revelation 3:16 NKJV) *"So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.*

(Revelation 3:17 NKJV) *"Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'; and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked;*

(Revelation 3:18 NKJV) *"I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.*

(Revelation 3:19 NKJV) *"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.*

(Revelation 3:20 NKJV) *"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.*

(Revelation 3:21 NKJV) *"To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.*

(Revelation 3:22 NKJV) *"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." "*

This church (of Laodicea), which can be any of us on any given day or season in our walk can say the same, I'm doing fine, my walk is great, I'm in need of nothing, but the Lord says you are deceiving yourself. It is a mark of maturity when a person faces himself honestly, knows himself, and admits his needs. Spiritual reality results from the proper relationship to God through His Word. God's Word is truth (John 17:17), and if we are rightly related to God's truth, we can not deceive ourselves, nor be hypocritical.

Outline

The Test of Response to the Word (1:19-27)

- The Word as a Garden – 1:19-21

- The Word as a Mirror – 1:22-25
- The Word Reflected – 1:26-27

The Word as a Garden – 1:19-21

(James 1:19 NKJV) So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath;

(James 1:20 NKJV) for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

(James 1:21 NKJV) Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

Sermon on Mount Cross-Reference:

(Matthew 5:21 NKJV) "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.'

(Matthew 5:22 NKJV) "But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire.

Sermon on Mount Cross-Reference:

(Matthew 6:14 NKJV) "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

(Matthew 6:15 NKJV) "But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Garden / Weeds Overrun when Left to Self / Start Pulling Weeds

Verse 21 the implanted word - James saw the human heart as a garden, and if it were left to itself weeds would overrun it. So he says here to prepare the soil to receive the "implanted" word. He is urging us to "lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness", in other words, start pulling weeds, prepare the soil so the seed of the Word can grow and not be choked out Remember Jesus' teaching on the soil and the seed in Mark chapter 4).

Meekness / Don't Argue the Word / Just Cultivates Weeds

Verse 21 - and receive with meekness the implanted word - What does it mean to receive the Word with meekness, it means not to argue with the Word. Too many believers will read the word, hear a sermon from the word, and then say I really don't believe that. Meekness is the opposite of wrath. If we do not receive the implanted Word, then we are deceiving ourselves. Christians who like to argue various "points of view" may be only fooling themselves. They think their discussions are promoting spiritual growth, when in reality they may only be cultivating weeds. We recognize that these are weeds and they have to go, they must be rooted out.

Obey these Instructions

If the seed of the Word is to be planted in our hearts, then we must obey the instructions James gives us here to 1.) Swift to hear 2.) Slow to Speak 3.) Slow to Wrath. Anything contrary to these three, then we need to pull some weeds:

Swift to Hear / Rarely Regret

Swift to Hear - You know, I rarely regret the things, "I didn't say". But how many times I regret the things I did say. I find that I am rarely drawn into an argument for listening, but once my tongue engages, in I go. (Proverbs 23:19 NKJV) Hear, my son, and be wise; And guide your heart in the way.

Slow to Speak / 2 Ears – 1 Mouth

Slow to Speak - Two ears, and one mouth, by design. Read Proverbs, and you will see all the wisdom given on this matter.

(Proverbs 17:27 NKJV) He who has knowledge spares his words, And a man of understanding is of a calm spirit.

Slow to Wrath / Do – Say Stupid things / God will Defend You

Slow to Wrath - Temper is something we all struggle with. It causes us to say or do something stupid. People can and do lay all kinds of charges and accusations against us, but if we remain silent, walk away, we give them nothing for their cause. React with wrath and we prove them right, we justified their attack - they say see, I told you that's how they were, and they go tell everyone how you blew up, and lost it. (Proverbs 14:29 NKJV) He who is slow to wrath has great understanding, But he who is impulsive exalts folly.

Wrath often comes because we feel we have to defend a charge laid against us; some of the greatest advice one of the Pastors at Bible College gave me was: "You take care of your character, and God will take care of your reputation". Once you start defending yourself, then you have a lifetime career doing it, and guess what, then you waste all that time defending yourself when you could have been using that time to be God's Firstfruit of His Creation.

Read a Proverb a Day

I challenge you, and encourage you to read a chapter of Proverbs everyday as we go through this book. You will be amazed how often that Proverb for the day will be the Word that will help you hold your tongue on a matter, and then keep it from igniting into wrath.

Verse 20 - for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God. – Wrath is the opposite of righteousness. Wrath tears down, and righteousness builds up. There really is no in-between area, we are either building up or tearing down. Christian are we building up, or tearing down. In our homes, at our church, in all the areas of our lives?

(Proverbs 14:1 NKJV) The wise woman builds her house, But the foolish pulls it down with her hands.

(Luke 11:23 NKJV) "He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters.

In all the trials and temptations in life, we are not to react outwardly in the flesh, but receive inwardly the "implanted" word. This implanted word brings forth eternal life, and then brings to work the fruit of God in our lives.

The Word as a Mirror – 1:22-25

(James 1:22 NKJV) But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

(James 1:23 NKJV) For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror;

(James 1:24 NKJV) for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.

(James 1:25 NKJV) But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

Sermon on Mount Cross-Reference:

(Matthew 7:24 NKJV) "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock:

(Matthew 7:25 NKJV) "and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.

(Matthew 7:26 NKJV) "But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand:

(Matthew 7:27 NKJV) "and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."

Garden to Mirror / 3 Ministries of the Word

In the previous paragraph James compared the Word to seed in a garden; but here in this paragraph he compares it to a mirror. There are two other references in the Bible to God's Word as a mirror, and when we put all three together you discover the three ministries of the Word of God as a mirror:

- Examination
- Restoration
- Transformation

Not Just Hearing / Doing brings the Blessing / Being Marked / Don't be Deceived

Bible highlighters and memorizers, verse 22 should be engrained in all of us. It is not enough to hear the Word; we must do it. Many people have the mistaken idea that hearing a good sermon or Bible Study is what makes them grow and get God's blessings. It is not the hearing but the doing that brings the blessing. Too many Christians mark their Bibles, but their Bibles never mark them.. If you think you are spiritual because you hear the Word, then you are only kidding yourself, deceiving yourself, for it is hearing and doing.

Examination / Mirror shows What needs Fixed / The Real us

1.) Examination - This is the main purpose of owning a mirror, to be able to see yourself and make yourself look as clean and neat as possible. After working on the car, I wash up and check the mirror to make sure I got all the dirt off my face. Or maybe you use the mirror to make sure that the make-up goes on in the right places. We look at the mirror to make sure the hair is in the right place. We don't rub the mirror on us to clean the dirt or fix the hair, the mirror is just there to show us what needs to be fixed. As we look into the mirror of God's Word, we see ourselves as we really are.

(Hebrews 4:12 NKJV) For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

(Hebrews 4:13 NKJV) And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.

(Psalms 139:23 NKJV) Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties;

(Psalms 139:24 NKJV) And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.

Now James mentions some mistakes people make as they look into God's mirror of the Word.

We Glance / Routine / Xray

Verse 24 -for he observes himself, goes away. A person merely glance at themselves. They do not carefully study themselves as they read the Word. Many sincere believers read a chapter of the Bible each day, but it is only a routine, and they fail to profit from it. A cursory reading of the Bible will never reveal our deepest needs. It is the difference between a candid photo and an X-ray.

We Forget / Can't go Unchanged / John 1:1

Verse 24 - and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. They immediately forget what they see. If they/ I / we were looking deeply enough into their hearts, what they would see would be unforgettable. You can't look at the Word and go away unchanged. For: *(John 1:1 NKJV) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* The Word is God and every time we look at the Word, we are having a personal encounter with God Himself, that is why this Book is living and powerful.

We see people in the Bible that when they encountered Jesus Christ, they knew it (Isaiah, Job, and Peter):

(Isaiah 6:5 NKJV) So I said: "Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts."

(Job 42:5 NKJV) "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, But now my eye sees You.

(Job 42:6 NKJV) Therefore I abhor myself, And repent in dust and ashes."

(Luke 5:8 NKJV) When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!"

What did I Just Read

We can read the Bible, close the cover, and forget what we just read. Every time, after you are done reading always ask the question, now what did I just read. There is a time after you have read the Word, or heard the Word, to sit quietly and ask the Lord, "what does this mean to me?"

Hearer – Audio / College Credit

(James 1:22 NKJV) But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

So we are called not just to hear the Word, but to do the Word, apply the Word to our hearts and everyday lives. Hearer, is the word audio, and where we get our word "audit." In college you can take classes for credit, which can be applied to get your degree. Or you can audit a class, which is to sit in on the class, listen to everything the teacher says, but you don't have to take the tests, do the papers, and receive a grade. You would audit a class if you thought that sounds interesting, I'd like to know more about that subject, but I don't want the pressures and work that comes with taking it for credit. I just sit in and if it sinks in, great, if not, nothing lost. James says to take this class, the Word, for credit, and not for audit. Do the assignments, and work to pass the class. Don't glance at it, and don't forget it, apply it.

Are you a doer of the Word? What is the gospel according to you this week? If people were reading your life based on you application of the Word, what would have been communicated to them this week.

As you will soon see, 5 minutes in the Word won't be enough.

Restoration / Ex 38:8 / For Washing

2.) Restoration: The second ministry of the Word as a mirror, is for restoration. We use it to examine ourselves and correct and adjust, but God also uses it for restoration, for cleansing. In Exodus 38:8 when Moses built the tabernacle, Moses took the metal looking glasses of the woman and from them made the laver. The laver was a huge basin that stood between the brazen altar of sacrifices and the Holy Place (Exodus 30:17-21). The basin was filled with water, and the priest would wash their hands and feet before entering into the Holy Place to minister.

(Exodus 38:8 NKJV) He made the laver of bronze and its base of bronze, from the bronze mirrors of the serving women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle of meeting.

The Cleansing Power / The Bar of Soap / Reflection of God's Love

Water for washing is a picture of the Word of God in its cleansing power:

(John 15:3 NKJV) "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.

(Ephesians 5:26 NKJV) that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,

(Ephesians 5:27 NKJV) that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

1 John 1:9 is the Christians Bar of Soap:

(1 John 1:9 NKJV) If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

The mirror of the Word not only examines us and reveals our sins and failings, but it helps cleanse us as well. As we look into it, the love and grace of God reflects back to us.

Transformation / 2 Cor 3:18 / Definition of 2 Cor 3

3.) Transformation - As the Lord restores us, He wants to change us so that we will grow in grace and not commit that sin again.

(2 Corinthians 3:18 NKJV) But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

You may explain 2 Corinthians 3:18 in this way: When the child of God looks into the mirror of the Word of God, he sees the Son of God, and he is transformed by the Spirit of God to share in the glory of God.

Metamorphosis / Inside Out

The word "changed/transformed" in the Greek gives us our English word "metamorphosis" which is a change on the outside that comes from the inside. When an ugly worm turns into a beautiful butterfly, that is a metamorphosis. When a believer spends time looking into the Word and seeing Christ, he is transformed; the glory on the inside is revealed on the outside.

(Romans 12:1 NKJV) I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

(Romans 12:2 NKJV) And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Transformation Slow Process / All of God You Want

Transformation is a slow process, and of course 5 minutes in the Word isn't going to get us there. As I have said so many times before, you can have all of Jesus Christ you want, but not one drop more.

The Word and Counseling

Some people get so upset with us here, for when they come for counseling the first thing we ask is if they are in the Word, and in prayer with the Word - Jesus Christ. The Word is living and powerful able to divide spirit and soul. Are you depressed, upset, anxiety, marriage problems, in sin, then let the Word have its way with you. We believe, give a person Jesus, and we have given them everything they will

need for life; not just this trial or temptation, but the next million trials and temptations that will come their way.

(Jeremiah 33:3 NKJV) 'Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.'

The Law of Liberty

Verse 25 - But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does. - The more we bring our life in line with the word, the freer we are. We don't need the remedies of the world (booze, sex, drugs, etc) to get through the day for I have in all in Jesus. I am totally free when I live according to the Word, but when I live according to the world, then I am in bondage. I wake up everyday alive to Christ, and not dead to the world. I wouldn't trade my freedom in for anything.

(Psalms 119:45 NKJV) And I will walk at liberty, For I seek Your precepts.

(John 8:31 NKJV) Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.

(John 8:32 NKJV) "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Our first responsibility is to receive the Word, then we must be doers of the Word, and then the Word is reflected from us onto the world around us.

The Word Reflected – 1:26-27

(James 1:26 NKJV) If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless.

(James 1:27 NKJV) Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

As we allow the mirror of the Word to examine us, restore us, and transform us, the Word – Jesus Himself is then reflected from us.

The word translated "religion" means, "the outward practice, the service of a god." In Verse 27 James is saying, In other words, Let your walk match your talk.

We live this verse here at Calvary Chapel of Anne Arundel County, we seek to minister in as many Assisted Living Residences that we can possibly get into, and in July we will be going down to Nicaragua to work in the orphanage. That is what doers of the word do, the visit orphans and widows.

I pray it is a practical mission statement for our own lives as well.

Chapter 2

Written by James / Didn't believe – to Leader / Hindsight / Everyday Living

The Book of James was written by none other than Jesus' brother James. James was a leader in the church, a pillar in the church (Acts 21). James didn't believe that Jesus was God when He walked this earth (John 7:5); but after the resurrection Jesus appears to him (1 Cor 15:4-7), and everything changed. James is going to write us this letter, he will talk about everyday practical stuff. He will talk about trials in life, our works, our tongue, prayer, and other things; as he writes these things, no doubt he will be remembering how Jesus handled them, reflecting back on watching situations, and watching his oldest brother. He will reflect on Jesus' life of love, and a life of sinlessness, in a world that can be so hateful at times, and so full of sin. James will write these things based on hindsight, based on first hand witnessing of how his older brother lived life, everyday. James watched Jesus handle everyday life, and that is what this book is about; it is about living everyday life as a Follower of God, in a fallen world.

Jesus Rubbed Off / Nature Illustrations / Favorite Teacher - Sermon on Mount

We can see how much Jesus rubbed off on James, for James style resembles his brother so much. Like Jesus used nature as illustrations for His teaching points, so does James some 30 times. He uses nature analogies such as the sea, flowers, sun, fire, horses and ships to name a few). It is obvious who James favorite teacher was, because this epistle covers every topic that Jesus covered in the Sermon on the Mount. There is amazing parallelisms between the two; James does not actually quote the Lord's words, but he obviously had internalized Jesus' teachings and reproduced them with spiritual depth. Jesus covered about 30 topics in the Sermon on the Mount, and we will see that James touches on every one of them in this epistle. The Book of James is Sermon on the Mount 2. The Book is also very quick and concise, moving from thought-to-thought quickly. So the Book of James is the New Testament Version of the Old Testament Proverbs. It resembles Proverbs because it is very poetic the way it flows its thoughts using illustrations and analogies.

So We can Examine Self / How am I Doing

Jesus gave the Sermon on the Mount so that we might examine ourselves and ask the question, "so how am I doing in each of these areas?" James writes to the church, to us, and as we read, we have to ask ourselves, "so how am I doing in these areas?" This book is practical and applicable for us living in the year 2004, and the ultimate goal of this epistle is giving to us in verse 4 of chapter 1, to bring us into maturity, perfect and lacking nothing.

Theme of the Book of James:

(James 1:4 NKJV) But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

(James 1:5 NKJV) If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

As in school, we take tests to see how much of a handle and mastery we have on a subject, we will do the same in this book:

The Outline of the Book of James:

Chapter 1

- Introduction (1:1)
- The Test of Perseverance and Suffering (1:2-12)
- The Test of Blame in Temptation (1:12-18)
- The Test of Response to the Word (1:19-27)

Chapter 2

- The Test of Partiality (2:1-9)
- The Test of the Law (2:10-13)
- The Test of Faith and Works (2:14-26)

Chapter 3

- The Test of the Tongue (3:1-12)
- The Test of Wisdom Applied (3:13-18)

Chapter 4

- The Test of the World's Influence (4:1-12)
- The Test of Dependence (4:13-17)

Chapter 5

- The Test of Endurance (5:1-11)
- The Test of Prayerfulness (5:12-20)

Intensely Practical / In Your Face / Hebrews / Earthly Scene

This book is an intensely practical book that packs a powerful punch. James is the kinda book that is in your face, and get it right. In Hebrews we explored the heavenly scene, now James we explore the earthly scene. It was wonderful spending a few months in the heavenlies, I could have stayed in Hebrews for another year, but the fact is until heaven, we are living here (so the blessings of verse-by-verse studying). Studying this book will have a great effect on you, This book is that practical, God even promises us that as we saw last study:

(James 1:25 NKJV) But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

The Test of Partiality (2:1-9)

James is going to tell us that we need to change our perspective on how we look at other people, especially those that are well off and popular.

Sermon on Mount Cross-Reference:

(Matthew 7:12 NKJV) "Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

(Matthew 5:3 NKJV) "Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

(James 2:1 NKJV) My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality.

(James 2:2 NKJV) For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes,

(James 2:3 NKJV) and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, "You sit here in a good place," and say to the poor man, "You stand there," or, "Sit here at my footstool,"

(James 2:4 NKJV) have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?

(James 2:5 NKJV) Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?

(James 2:6 NKJV) But you have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts?

(James 2:7 NKJV) Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you are called?

(James 2:8 NKJV) If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you do well;

(James 2:9 NKJV) but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors.

There is something in us that we have to be aware of when it comes the rich and beautiful, famous and popular. God is no respecter of person, nor should we (as we see when Peter came to the Gentiles):

(Acts 10:34 KJV) Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:

(Acts 10:34 NKJV) Then Peter opened his mouth and said: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality.

Youth / Peer Pressure / 2 Fold Danger

You youth, this is a greater struggle for you as you are faced with peer pressure. If I can just be accepted by the Football Captain, or the Head Cheerleader. If I can just get in with the Cool Crowd, then life would be so much better. There is a two-fold danger there.

First / Compromise / Are They Doers of the Word / No Pedestal

First, you may compromise your Christian values to be accepted by them. Well if I am going to hang with the cool crowd, then I'm going to have to do what they do. Well are they going to Youth Group or parties? Are they into being Doers of the Word, or Doers of the World? Don't compromise or abandoned the blessings of God to be accepted. They are not better than you, don't put them on a pedestal. You lift

them up, and they will pull you down. Remember, you are sons and daughters of God, His own special people:

(1 Peter 2:9 NKJV) But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

Secondly / Missed Blessing / The Beggar

Secondly, seeking to be accepted and seen by them, can cause you to miss a blessing right before your eyes. Who am I talking about? I am talking about the kid in the corner, that nobody talks to, that other kids make fun, the unaccepted, the lonely, and possibly - the lost. The famous Russian author who wrote the novel, War and Peace, tells the story of walking down the street in Russia and a beggar asked him for change to buy bread. He truly didn't have any change, and he put his hand on the man's shoulder, looked him in the eye, and said, "friend, I am sorry I have nothing for you today." The beggar's eyes became filled with tears as he said, "you have given me more than a morsel, for you have given me a banquet, for you have called me friend." How long had it been for this man that someone had touched him in love, and someone called him friend?

Kids in School – Neighborhood / Want to Be Like Jesus

There are kids in your school and neighborhood who are dying for someone to call them friend. You don't have to preach to the multitude, or raise the dead to be like Jesus, all you have to do is go find someone who is just looking to be accepted for who they are, and accept them:

(Luke 4:17 NKJV) And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written:

(Luke 4:18 NKJV) "The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed;

(Luke 4:19 NKJV) To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD."

Our Church

It applies here, inside the walls of this church for all of us. I make this point over and over, this is OUR church. God puts structure and order to the church in order to meet His plans and purpose for the church, people are at different levels of maturity, but there are no levels of saints. God ranks no one over another, we are equally precious in God's eyes, no matter how well, or not so well we are doing spiritually. When you are not doing so well, don't let that lie of Satan keep you from coming – you know the one, ohh you are not worthy to fellowship.

Last Stop / My First Church / If They Only Knew

As for those coming into the church, for many people, this church will be their last stop, their last shot with God. They have gone to churches and been rejected, blown-off, or equally as bad, unseen. They leave and say never-again, I will never again allow myself to be put in this position again, I will never be vulnerable again, and they never try church, or God again. I've told you before, when I got saved, I went to a Calvary Chapel, somewhat large (about 1,000), but nobody talked to me. I would walk up to a group of singles and they would blow me off. If only they knew what God had done in my life, what He had saved me from. They looked at me as immature and unstable, and of course I was, I just got saved with 27 years of the world deeply rooted in me. You never know when you may be someone's last stop, last try for someone to call them "friend".

The Kid & The Elder

I am reminded of a story that I read some time ago. It was about a young man in college who had just gotten saved. He didn't have a car, didn't know anyone in the town, and all he wanted was to worship the Lord and learn the Bible. He finds this rather established church near the university, there was no youth his age by 20 years. He comes in that Sunday morning with his tattered blue jeans, wrinkled T-shirt, and flip-flops on. His hair not combed, nor face shaven. He comes a little late, they had already started worship, not knowing or just his style he walks all the way to the front of the sanctuary and sits down on the floor right in the front, closes his eyes and lifts his hands and begins to worship the Lord. The whole church sees him, and people are appalled by his attire and appearance, they mumble to each other, something must be done, we can't have this. He is a distraction, what if he stains the carpet. And then they see one of the elders making his way to the young man. The people are relieved that something is

going to be done. It take the elder a while to get there using his walking cane, but when he gets there all eyes are upon him, and they are amazed as they watch him work his way to the floor, and sits next to the young man, and lifts his arms and begins to worship the Lord. The Pastor gets up to preach, he says today I will give a sermon, but it will pale in comparison to the sermon you just saw.

So "The Test of Partiality", how are we doing?

Next, "the Test of the Law"; it is not just how we view people externally, but how we evaluate ourselves inwardly.

The Test of the Law (2:10-13)

(James 2:9 NKJV) but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors.

(James 2:10 NKJV) For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.

(James 2:11 NKJV) For He who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.

(James 2:12 NKJV) So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty.

(James 2:13 NKJV) For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

Sermon on Mount Cross-Reference:

(Matthew 5:17 NKJV) "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.

(Matthew 5:18 NKJV) "For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.

(Matthew 5:19 NKJV) "Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

(Matthew 5:20 NKJV) "For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

Sermon on Mount Cross-Reference:

(Matthew 5:7 NKJV) Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy.

Sermon on Mount Cross-Reference:

(Matthew 6:14 NKJV) "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

(Matthew 6:15 NKJV) "But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

No Partiality of People / Nor Sin / All Sin is Equal / The 10 Commandments

Along the same thought of showing partiality among people, is selecting levels of sin, for God says all sin is equal before Him for He is a Holy God. You remember the Law, the 10 Commandments:

(Exodus 20:1 NKJV) And God spoke all these words, saying:

(Exodus 20:2 NKJV) "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

(Exodus 20:3 NKJV) "You shall have no other gods before Me.

(Exodus 20:4 NKJV) "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth;

(Exodus 20:5 NKJV) you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me,

(Exodus 20:6 NKJV) but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

(Exodus 20:7 NKJV) "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.

(Exodus 20:8 NKJV) "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

(Exodus 20:9 NKJV) Six days you shall labor and do all your work,

(Exodus 20:10 NKJV) but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates.

(Exodus 20:11 NKJV) For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

(Exodus 20:12 NKJV) "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.

(Exodus 20:13 NKJV) "You shall not murder.

(Exodus 20:14 NKJV) "You shall not commit adultery.

(Exodus 20:15 NKJV) "You shall not steal.

(Exodus 20:16 NKJV) "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

(Exodus 20:17 NKJV) "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's."

(Exodus 20:18 NKJV) Now all the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood afar off.

(Exodus 20:19 NKJV) Then they said to Moses, "You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die."

(Exodus 20:20 NKJV) And Moses said to the people, "Do not fear; for God has come to test you, and that His fear may be before you, so that you may not sin."

Guilty 1 – Guilty All / No Ranking / All Wretched

God says if you can keep every one of them, yet stumble on one, then you are guilty of them. One lie, just one lie, makes you guilty of stealing, murdering, adultery, using the Lord's name in vain, and even bowing down to idols. Did you do those things, no, then what is God saying? He is saying that He doesn't rank sin. Before Him there are not different levels of sinners. He considers the liar as wretched a sinner as a murderer.

Why – He is Holy / A Consuming Fire

Why, because God is perfect, and that is His standard, perfection:

(Habakkuk 1:13 NKJV) You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, And cannot look on wickedness.....

God is perfect and pure, so perfect and pure that anything imperfect that comes into His presence, His holiness consumes it:

(Deuteronomy 4:23 NKJV) "Take heed to yourselves, lest you forget the covenant of the LORD your God which He made with you, and make for yourselves a carved image in the form of anything which the LORD your God has forbidden you.

(Deuteronomy 4:24 NKJV) "For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.

We Can Forget

We who have been walking with the Lord for a while can forget that He is Holy, we can take His grace for granted, and forget that He is a Holy and Pure God. At the throne of heaven there are creatures who do nothing but all day and night exult His Holiness:

(Revelation 4:8 NKJV) The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!"

Jesus Calls Us to Perfection / Sermon on Mount

Jesus came in love, yet He still calls us to be blameless/perfect:

(Matthew 5:48 KJV) Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

Positionally

Now "Positionally" those who have received Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior; you are perfect and nothing you do can will effect your "right standing" with God. You are His child, His heir, and He will never leave you nor forsake you:

(John 1:12 NKJV) But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:

(John 1:13 NKJV) who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Relationally

But "Relationally", our day to day communion and fellowship with Him, sin soils and spoils that sweet fellowship. It must be put away from us, so that we can draw closer to God. Again, you can have all of God you want, but not one drop more. Get the Christian Bar of Soap out:

(1 John 1:7 NKJV) But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

(1 John 1:8 NKJV) If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

(1 John 1:9 NKJV) If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Don't Stop Growing

Remember this book is written so that we might grow, and be mature. The Spirit is speaking to us right now and saying, "be ye perfect", don't think that because you have rooted out the "big" sins that you are to stop there. God standard is perfection, and that is what we are to be seeking:

(Philippians 3:13 NKJV) Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead,

(Philippians 3:14 NKJV) I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Don't Rank / Root them All Out

Don't rank your sins, and then think you are doing OK. God is saying all sin is wretched to me, allow no sin to be a part of your life. Be Ye Perfect! I encourage you to go back and study again last week's message in Being Doers of the Word, the Test of the Response to the Word.

The Message of Salvation / Sermon on Mount / Our Tutor

But hear this, the Law was given first so that we might see our need for a Savior, that our sins might be blotted out before the Holy God, so that we might not be consumed by Holiness due to our impurity. We have to become children of God, come into right standing before Him, and that can only be done through Jesus Christ and His sacrifice for us on the cross.

The Sermon on the Mount was given by Jesus that we might examine ourselves, and His ultimate purpose was that we would see a need for a Savior. That is what the Law still does today, it shows us we are sinners and have offended the Holy God. Jesus Himself quoted the Law on the Sermon on the Mount so that we might see how we have violated God's Holy Standard:

(Romans 3:19 NKJV) Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

(Galatians 3:24 NKJV) Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

The Gospel

What is the gospel? I will put it into 5 P's

1. Personal – God loves you and has a plan for your life

(Jeremiah 29:11) For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.

2. Problem – But there is a problem, and that is that your sin separates you from Him for He is Holy.

(Isaiah 59:1-2) Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.

3. Penalty – You have offended the Holy God, broken His commandments, therefore you can not come into His presence or fellowship with Him, for He is a consuming fire.

(Romans 6:23) For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

4. Provision – But God doesn't want to leave us separated from Him. God devised a plan that would allow Him to be merciful to us, while at the same time judging sin. Jesus Christ took our place, took our punishment.

(John 3:16) "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

5 Profession – Our response, we make a profession of Faith.

(Romans 10:9) That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

1. Recognize – Recognize we have offended the Holy God, and Jesus is the only way.

2. Repent – Be willing to Turn from our sin, and follow the Lord and all His ways

3. Receive – Ask Jesus to come into your life and be your Lord and Savior.

Celebrating Mercy

Verse 13 - For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment. Once we see God's mercy, His forgiveness of our sins, we are to be merciful to others. You are to be celebrating and showing mercy. We have all heard:

(Luke 6:38 NKJV) "Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you."

This is usually used when speaking about giving money, but that really isn't the context. The verse before it says to be merciful:

(Luke 6:36 NKJV) "Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.

(Luke 6:37 NKJV) "Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.

If you want mercy, and you will someday, then you must be merciful yourself. James is saying don't be legalistic. If you are going to be legalistic, then be legalistic with yourself, and gracious with others. Celebrate the law of Liberty.

The Test of Faith and Works (2:14-26)

Written by James / Didn't believe – to Leader / Hindsight / Everyday Living

The Book of James was written by none other than Jesus' brother James. James was a leader in the church, a pillar in the church (Acts 21). James didn't believe that Jesus was God when He walked this earth (John 7:5); but after the resurrection Jesus appears to him (1 Cor 15:4-7), and everything changed. James is going to write us this letter, he will talk about everyday practical stuff. He will talk about trials in life, our works, our tongue, prayer, and other things; as he writes these things, no doubt he will be remembering how Jesus handled them, reflecting back on watching situations, and watching his oldest brother. He will reflect on Jesus' life of love, and a life of sinlessness, in a world that can be so hateful at times, and so full of sin. James will write these things based on hindsight, based on first hand witnessing of how his older brother lived life, everyday. James watched Jesus handle everyday life, and that is what this book is about; it is about living everyday life as a Follower of God, in a fallen world.

Jesus Rubbed Off / Nature Illustrations / Favorite Teacher - Sermon on Mount

We can see how much Jesus rubbed off on James, for James style resembles his brother so much. Like Jesus used nature as illustrations for His teaching points, so does James some 30 times. He uses nature analogies such as the sea, flowers, sun, fire, horses and ships to name a few). It is obvious who James favorite teacher was, because this epistle covers every topic that Jesus covered in the Sermon on the Mount. There is amazing parallelisms between the two; James does not actually quote the Lord's words, but he obviously had internalized Jesus' teachings and reproduced them with spiritual depth. Jesus covered about 30 topics in the Sermon on the Mount, and we will see that James touches on every one of them in this epistle. The Book of James is Sermon on the Mount 2. The Book is also very quick and concise, moving from thought-to-thought quickly. So the Book of James is the New Testament Version of the Old Testament Proverbs. It resembles Proverbs because it is very poetic the way it flows its thoughts using illustrations and analogies.

So We can Examine Self / How am I Doing

Jesus gave the Sermon on the Mount so that we might examine ourselves and ask the question, "so how am I doing in each of these areas?" James writes to the church, to us, and as we read, we have to ask ourselves, "so how am I doing in these areas?" This book is practical and applicable for us living in the year 2004, and the ultimate goal of this epistle is giving to us in verse 4 of chapter 1, to bring us into maturity, perfect and lacking nothing.

Theme of the Book of James:

(James 1:4 NKJV) But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

(James 1:5 NKJV) If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

As in school, we take tests to see how much of a handle and mastery we have on a subject, we will do the same in this book:

The Outline of the Book of James:

Chapter 1

- Introduction (1:1)
- The Test of Perseverance and Suffering (1:2-12)
- The Test of Blame in Temptation (1:12-18)
- The Test of Response to the Word (1:19-27)

Chapter 2

- The Test of Partiality (2:1-9)
- The Test of the Law (2:10-13)
- The Test of Faith and Works (2:14-26)

Chapter 3

- The Test of the Tongue (3:1-12)
- The Test of Wisdom Applied (3:13-18)

Chapter 4

- The Test of the World's Influence (4:1-12)
- The Test of Dependence (4:13-17)

Chapter 5

- The Test of Endurance (5:1-11)
- The Test of Prayerfulness (5:12-20)

Intensely Practical / In Your Face / Hebrews / Earthly Scene /Promised Blessing

This book is an intensely practical book that packs a powerful punch. James is the kinda book that is in your face, and get it right. In Hebrews we explored the heavenly scene, now James we explore the earthly scene. It was wonderful spending a few months in the heavenlies, I could have stayed in Hebrews for another year, but the fact is until heaven, we are living here (so the blessings of verse-by-verse studying). Studying this book will have a great effect on you, This book is that practical, God even promises us that as we saw last study:

(James 1:25 NKJV) But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

Sermon on Mount Cross-Reference:

(Matthew 7:21 NKJV) "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

(Matthew 7:22 NKJV) "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?"

(Matthew 7:23 NKJV) "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!"

Great Controversy

This passage has caused great controversy in the church. Martin Luther said this book should be excluded from the Bible, and it should be thrown into the Rhine River. Why did he say this? Because Martin Luther was the champion of "justified by faith". It was through Romans 1:17, that the just shall live by faith that started the Protestant Reformation.

(Romans 1:17 NKJV) For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."

Paul – James Contradiction / Balance of the Bible

At first glance it appears as if the Apostle Paul's teaching on faith is contradicted by James, but we will see that they don't contradict, but compliment. Paul writes to dispel that a person can earn their salvation through works, and James writes to dispel that just saying "I believe" will assure a person's salvation. The wonderful balance of the Scriptures; this Bible will afflict the comfortable, and it will comfort the afflicted.

Paul's Teachings – Faith

In Paul's teachings he makes it clear that salvation is by faith and not works:

(Galatians 2:16 NKJV) "knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.

(Ephesians 2:8 NKJV) For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,

(Ephesians 2:9 NKJV) not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Jesus even said:

(John 6:28 NKJV) Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?"

(John 6:29 NKJV) Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."

James Teachings – Works

We start this study in James with him saying:

(James 2:14 NKJV) What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?

31,102 / Faith Proven by Works / Examine Ourselves

James appears to be saying that faith alone can't save, but as we have said many times, there are 31,102 verses in this Bible and they are a woven unity, and the best interpretation of the Bible is the Bible. What James is ultimately going to sum up for us in these verses today is Faith that is real faith will be shown, will be proven by your works. Remember James writes to us so that we might examine ourselves. James is going to make a clear case and warning to the reader, don't think you are saved just because of your words. True faith will have the evidence of works to back it up.

Check Ourselves Inside & Out

Remember where we have been in this chapter, “The Test of Partiality”, and the Test of the Law”; it is not just how we view people externally, but how we evaluate ourselves inwardly. And in this test, James is saying for us to check ourselves both internally, and externally.

Outline

James shows us 3 types of Faith, and points out that only one Saves:

- Dead Faith – 2:14-18
- Demonic Faith – 2:19
- Dynamic Faith – 2:20-26

The 7 Churches / James / Jesus – He who has an Ear

I think it necessary to point out to you just what God thinks of our works, as they go along with our faith. In Revelation, seven churches, and seven letters, and in every letter God says to them, I know your works:

Church of Ephesus - *(Revelation 2:2 NKJV) "I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; (Revelation 2:3 NKJV) "and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary.*

Church of Smyrna - *(Revelation 2:9 NKJV) "I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.*

Church of Pergamos - *(Revelation 2:13 NKJV) "I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.*

Church of Thyatira - *(Revelation 2:19 NKJV) "I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and as for your works, the last are more than the first.*

Church of Sardis - *(Revelation 3:1 NKJV) "I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. (Revelation 3:2 NKJV) "Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God.*

Church of Philadelphia - *(Revelation 3:8 NKJV) "I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name.*

Church of Laodiceans - *(Revelation 3:15 NKJV) "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot.*

(Revelation 3:16 NKJV) "So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.

(Revelation 3:17 NKJV) "Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'; and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked;

James will close this subject out by saying;

(James 2:26 NKJV) For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

Jesus would close every one of those letters with:

(Revelation 2:11 NKJV) "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

Dead Faith – 2:14-18

People with Dead Faith substitute words for deeds. They know correct vocabulary for prayer and testimony, and may even be able to quote a Scripture or two. But their walk does not measure up to their talk. They think their words are as good as works, what they have is only an intellectual experience. In his mind he knows the doctrine of salvation, but has never submitted himself and trusted Christ for salvation.

(James 2:14 NKJV) What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?

(James 2:15 NKJV) If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food,

(James 2:16 NKJV) and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?

Sermon on Mount Cross-Reference:

(Matthew 6:4 NKJV) "that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly

James – Principle – Illustration

James is great! He gives, first of all sort of a principle, and then he will illustrate the principle. Just like he gave you the principle that we are not to have respect of person. And then he illustrates it by saying, if a guy comes in loaded with rings, and so forth. And now he gives another principle of this business of faith.

Words can't Warm Them / Faith isn't In Word Only

A person can't be warmed and filled by our words only, it takes action to make them warmed and filled. It takes me going to my closet to get a jacket for them; it takes me going to the cupboard to get them some soup and bread. Just words will still leave them cold and hungry. James is making the analogy that our faith must be backed by action, that it can't be in word only. We need to be Doers of the Word:

(James 1:22 NKJV) But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

(James 2:17 NKJV) Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

(James 2:18 NKJV) But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

Known by Fruit

Jesus said you will know them by their fruit, he isn't talking about judging them, just examining them:

(Matthew 7:20 NKJV) "Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

True Faith Produces a Changed Life / Don't be Deceived

You can show your faith in the things that you do. They are a demonstration of your faith. If there is no evidence, if there is not demonstration of faith, then that kind of faith is to be sorely doubted. True faith, will produce a changed life. It will produce works of love, kindness, goodness. If a person said I am a Christian because I went forward at a Billy Graham Crusade, or raised my hand at a church, but they just continue to live the same life they lived before, James says you need to examine yourself for you may be deceiving yourself.

Demonic Faith – 2:19

James wanted to shock his readers, and he does. It comes to a shock to people that demons have faith. What do they believe, they believe that God exists, and they believe Jesus is God (Mark 3:11-12 & Mark 5:1-13). This faith is an intellectual faith, and it even has emotion along with it as we will see.

(James 2:19 NKJV) You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe; and tremble!

James is banging on the Unbelieving Jews here a bit. The Jews would say what is called the "Shema" everyday, but they missed their Messiah:

(Deuteronomy 6:4 NKJV) "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!

Even the Demons Believe / Faith produces Righteousness

James is saying that's great that you believe there is one God, even the demons believe that; in fact they go one step further - They tremble (they have emotion along with the knowledge)! So just to say you believe in God, doesn't save you. It is Demonic Faith for it is a lie straight from the pit of hell. Unless there is a changed life, there is no real evidence of salvation. There is no real evidence of faith. True faith will produce in your life, works of righteousness.

Works Don't Save

Again, you are not saved by works of righteousness. People can do the work of righteousness and if they are trusting in those works of righteousness, they'll never be saved! You are saved by your faith in Jesus Christ, but a genuine faith in Jesus Christ, will produce works of righteousness in your life! You are not then looking to those for your salvation, but you're looking to them as the proof of your salvation:

(Ephesians 2:8 NKJV) For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, (Ephesians 2:9 NKJV) not of works, lest anyone should boast.

My Life / Disobedience

I make this point again, for this was my faith for 27 years of my life. I thought I was a good person, I went to church, I gave to the church, I never killed anyone. I said I believed in God, but besides a few crumbs here and there, there was no obedience to God. I lived as I chose, and mostly in rebellion to His Word: *(Titus 1:16 NKJV) They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.*

(1 John 2:3 NKJV) Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.

(1 John 2:4 NKJV) He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

Dynamic Faith – 2:20-26

Dynamic faith is faith that is real, faith that has power, faith that results in a changed life. Dynamic faith has the intellectual knowledge of God, attached with emotion, that is put into action.

James illustrates this dynamic faith in the lives of two well-known people of the Bible, Abraham and Rahab.

(James 2:20 NKJV) But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?

(James 2:21 NKJV) Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar?

(James 2:22 NKJV) Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect?

(James 2:23 NKJV) 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.

(James 2:24 NKJV) You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.

Sermon on Mount Cross-Reference:

(Matthew 5:6 NKJV) Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.

Verse 2:22 Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? – James gives us the key to this whole passage, the works proved out Abraham's faith.

Genesis 15 / Paul Quoted Also

Verse 23 - *Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness* - this passage (quoted from Genesis 15:6) is essential for understanding that it is faith that saves.

(Genesis 15:6 NKJV) And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.

Paul quoted this:

(Romans 4:1 NKJV) What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh?

(Romans 4:2 NKJV) For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.

(Romans 4:3 NKJV) For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."

(Galatians 3:6 NKJV) just as Abraham "believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."

Abraham Righteous the Moment he Believed / 50 years Prior

Abraham was declared righteous at that moment he believed God, not on Mount Moriah that day he was willing to offer Isaac. Abraham believed probably some 25 - 50 years before he went up to sacrifice Isaac. If you miss this point, then you will always be struggling with the faith and works argument:

Counted – Legal Term / Bankrupt / Justification

The word “counted” is a legal or financial term; it means to “put to one’s account.” As a sinner Abraham’s spiritual bankbook was empty, he was bankrupt! But he trusted God, and God put righteousness on Abraham’s account. Justification is an important doctrine in the Bible. Justification is the act of God whereby He declares the believing sinner righteous on the basis of Christ’s finished work on the cross. It is not a process but an act. It is not something a sinner does, it is something God does for the sinner when he trusts Christ. It is a once-for-all event. It never changes.

Transaction Completed / Withdrawals Being Made

James is making the point, that you can tell that Abraham was justified, that the transaction (accounted) was completed, by his changed life. There was something in Abraham’s account, in his check book, because he was making withdrawals from that account.

Mt Moriah Proved the Reality of Faith / Faith that Works

Abraham by his works proved the reality of his faith. He proved God’s work of grace took in his life. It is not **faith and works** that saves a person, but it is **faith that works**. All that Abraham did on Mount Moriah was to prove what took place in his heart years earlier. Think about the day you gave your life to the Lord, what were you doing? You were looking at your own sin, and seeing a need for a Savior. You were not out doing any works, you were broken and humbled.

Faith Show in Your Works / True Faith Works / No Action without Faith

Faith that is real faith will show up in your works. True faith works. No man will ever be moved to action without faith! And no man’s faith is genuine, unless it moves him to action!

Faith – Do things World can’t Understand / Doesn’t Make Sense

True faith will make you do things that people say are crazy. People must have asked Abraham, what were you thinking, why would you take your son up to Mount Moriah to plunge a knife through his heart? And Abraham would say God’s Word and directing had been given, and I trusted He would work all things out, even raise Isaac from the dead if necessary. Abraham trusted God with what was most precious to him, Isaac; His faith took on action. That is when you know a person is saved, when they obey the Word of the Lord, and following the leading of the Lord, even when it doesn’t make sense to them. Later on this would be proven to be a powerful picture of God sending His only Son to be offered as a sacrifice for the sins of the world.

(James 2:25 NKJV) Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way?

Story Rahab / Put Her Faith in Action

God told Abraham that the iniquities of the Amorites were not full yet.

(Genesis 15:16 NKJV) "But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete."

So God gave 400 years of grace for the people in the land to repent. Rahab had heard that this God of power, was also a God of love, a God so merciful, that He would accept her. And when it came time for God’s judgement to come upon these people, he sent spies into the land, Rahab hid the spies of Israel. Rahab heard the word and was affected. Rahab responded with her mind and her emotions, but she also responded with her will, and she did something. She exercised Dynamic Faith. She proved her faith by her works. Her father of the Jews, Rahab was a harlot.

The Contrast / Rahab & Abraham

James uses these two, and only these two for a specific reason. So that no one could deny that salvation was all the Lord. Abraham the great father of the Jews, Rahab was a harlot. Rahab risked life for her faith, Abraham risked his son. Abraham was called a friend of God, Rahab dwelled with the enemies of God. Abraham was a Jew, Rahab a Gentile, Abraham was a good man, Rahab was a bad girl, a harlot. Yet both were saved by faith, and that faith caused both of them to put that faith into action.

The letter to the 7 churches, I wonder if God wrote a letter to me today, what would it say.

The Test of Faith and Works, so how are we doing?

(James 2:26 NKJV) For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

Works brings Life to Faith / Abundant Life

The Spirit enlivens the body, so works enlivens our faith. Faith with works is life, abundant life is what Jesus said:

(John 10:10 NKJV) I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly

We are made for good works

(Ephesians 2:10 NKJV) For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Works of Obedience / Works in Action / Only God can Tell You

God demands our “works of obedience”, we have covered that in the Test of the Word, and the Test of the Law. Obedience will set you free from the bondage’s of sin so that you might have that abundant life of fellowshiping with your Creator. But you “works in action”, only God can tell you those, therefore He must have your ear, he who has an ear, let him hear.

Abraham Saw / Russia

Abraham was saved by his belief, but had he not put his faith in action, he would have missed out on seeing the preview of the greatest event that would happen in the history of man, God Himself sending His only Son to die for the sins of the world. God Himself becoming the Lamb. So too it is with you, let your faith lead you to action, and you will see and experience things that will make you fall deeper and deeper in love with your Savior. This sounds so simple, but it was so moving to me. My first mission trip was to Russia and we were doing a seminar, and while everybody was at lunch, we tidied up the room and put candy on everyone’s desk. When everyone came back in, they got all excited because the candy on their desk. Sounds trivial to us, but the walls had just fallen, these people lived paycheck to paycheck. I remember this older man, 70 years old, I remember watching him look at his candy, then look up to the heavens and raise his hands in praise. It are moments like that that will change you forever.

Faith that Works

It isn't faith and works, but faith that works.

So, again, be ye doers of the Word and not hearers only, deceiving yourself. If you have faith, it will be demonstrated. And you can demonstrate that faith, and it is demonstrated in the works that do. It demonstrates that that faith is genuine and that you are genuinely saved in because you have the faith to be saved, is demonstrated in the works that you do. Doing the works without faith is invalid! Doing the works in order to save yourself will never make it! Looking to your works to save you, they can never do it!

But the faith that will save you, will bring forth fruit, the fruit of righteousness, in your life. Remember Jesus said, by their fruits, ye shall know them. What kind of fruit is my life producing? Is it the fruit of the flesh? The fruit that demonstrates the flesh is in control? Or is it the fruit of the Spirit, that demonstrates the Spirit is in control of my life?

Paul said, therefore, let a man examine himself, for if will judge ourselves, we will not be judged of God. It's important that our lives bear fruit! It proves your faith is genuine.

Chapter 3

The Test of the Tongue (3:1-12)

Written by James / Didn't believe – to Leader / Hindsight / Everyday Living

The Book of James was written by none other than Jesus' brother James. James was a leader in the church, a pillar in the church (Acts 21). James didn't believe that Jesus was God when He walked this earth (John 7:5); but after the resurrection Jesus appears to him (1 Cor 15:4-7), and everything changed. James is going to write us this letter, he will talk about everyday practical stuff. He will talk about trials in life, our works, our tongue, prayer, and other things; as he writes these things, no doubt he will be remembering how Jesus handled them, reflecting back on watching situations, and watching his oldest brother. He will reflect on Jesus' life of love, and a life of sinlessness, in a world that can be so hateful at times, and so full of sin. James will write these things based on hindsight, based on first hand witnessing of how his older brother lived life, everyday. James watched Jesus handle everyday life, and that is what this book is about; it is about living everyday life as a Follower of God, in a fallen world.

Jesus Rubbed Off / Nature Illustrations / Favorite Teacher - Sermon on Mount

We can see how much Jesus rubbed off on James, for James style resembles his brother so much. Like Jesus used nature as illustrations for His teaching points, so does James some 30 times. He uses nature analogies such as the sea, flowers, sun, fire, horses and ships to name a few). It is obvious who James favorite teacher was, because this epistle covers every topic that Jesus covered in the Sermon on the Mount. There is amazing parallelisms between the two; James does not actually quote the Lord's words, but he obviously had internalized Jesus' teachings and reproduced them with spiritual depth. Jesus covered about 30 topics in the Sermon on the Mount, and we will see that James touches on every one of them in this epistle. The Book of James is Sermon on the Mount 2. The Book is also very quick and concise, moving from thought-to-thought quickly. So the Book of James is the New Testament Version of the Old Testament Proverbs. It resembles Proverbs because it is very poetic the way it flows its thoughts using illustrations and analogies.

So We can Examine Self / How am I Doing

Jesus gave the Sermon on the Mount so that we might examine ourselves and ask the question, "so how am I doing in each of these areas?" James writes to the church, to us, and as we read, we have to ask ourselves, "so how am I doing in these areas?" This book is practical and applicable for us living in the year 2004, and the ultimate goal of this epistle is giving to us in verse 4 of chapter 1, to bring us into maturity, perfect and lacking nothing.

Theme of the Book of James:

(James 1:4 NKJV) But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

(James 1:5 NKJV) If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

As in school, we take tests to see how much of a handle and mastery we have on a subject, we will do the same in this book:

The Outline of the Book of James:

Chapter 1

- Introduction (1:1)
- The Test of Perseverance and Suffering (1:2-12)
- The Test of Blame in Temptation (1:12-18)
- The Test of Response to the Word (1:19-27)

Chapter 2

- The Test of Partiality (2:1-9)
- The Test of the Law (2:10-13)
- The Test of Faith and Works (2:14-26)

Chapter 3

- The Test of the Tongue (3:1-12)
- The Test of Wisdom Applied (3:13-18)

Chapter 4

- The Test of the World's Influence (4:1-12)
- The Test of Dependence (4:13-17)

Chapter 5

The Test of Endurance (5:1-11)
The Test of Prayerfulness (5:12-20)

Works & Words / But Words are Important

In chapter 2, James stressed that mere words are not the issue. The proof of one's salvation is seen in works. Yet here in chapter 3, we'll see him plunge into a discussion about the tongue. Why? I suggest the reason is that, although it is true that it is our works and not our words that validate and verify our salvation, this does not mean words are not important in our spiritual life. The power of speech is one of the greatest powers God has given us. With the tongue man can praise God, pray to God, preach the Word of God, and lead a lost sinner to God. Yet with the same tongue a man can tell lies that ruin a man's reputation or break a person's heart. That takes us back to the theme of this book, the purpose of this book, that we might mature. In chapter 1 we were told to be Doers of the Word, and chapter 2 we saw that it is to be faith the works! Our words will effect or marriages, our families, and every relationship we have with another person. This study, this test, is vital to our Christian walk.

6 Pictures / Meaningful Classification

In order to impress the importance of controlled speech, and the great consequences of our words, James gives us six pictures of the tongue; as a bit, as a rudder, as a fire, as an animal, a fountain, and as a tree. You can put these six pictures into three meaningful classifications that reveal the three powers of the tongue.

Outline: The Test of the Tongue (3:1-12)

- Power to Direct: the Bit and Rudder - 3:1-5
- Power to Destroy: the Fire and Animal - 3:5-8
- Power to Delight: the Fountain and Tree - 3:9-12

Power to Direct: the Bit and Rudder - 3:1-5

Symbol of Power – Controlled by Small thing / Never Underestimate Power of Words

Our first two pictures of the tongue are a bit and a rudder. In those days horses were a symbol of power and strength. James is saying look at the powerful horse, so big, yet controlled by such a little thing - a bit. Look at huge ships, they are driven by fierce winds, but steered by such a small thing - a rudder. The bit and rudder have the power to direct, and James is making the analogy that the tongue effects the lives of others. Never underestimate the guidance you give by the words you speak, or do not speak.

(James 3:1 NKJV) My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.

(James 3:2 NKJV) For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body.

(James 3:3 NKJV) Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body.

(James 3:4 NKJV) Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires.

(James 3:5 NKJV) Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things.

Impact of Teachers

James begins his discussion by saying, "*let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.*" Look at the influence and impact a teacher has in the lives of those they teach. Teachers are a gift to the church from God. We studied in Titus that God makes His Word clear to people through teaching/preaching:

(Ephesians 4:11 NKJV) And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,

(Ephesians 4:12 NKJV) for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,

(Titus 1:3 NKJV) but has in due time manifested His word through preaching, which was committed to me according to the commandment of God our Savior;

More Insight – More Accountability

The more insight the teacher is given, the more accountability they have, they will have to give and account before God on every Word they said:

(Hebrews 13:7 NKJV) Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct.....

(Hebrews 13:17 NKJV) Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

Inevitable Offend / Sin in Multitude of Words

Now, it is inevitable that sooner or later we will offend people with the words we say, the more a person says, the greater his chances of offending someone. I wish I could say that all of the problems teachers encounter is due to the powerful messages we bring and the conviction they cause in the hearts of people. But that's not the whole story—not by a long shot! You see, greater condemnation comes to teachers because in the multitude of words there lacketh not sin (Proverbs 10:19). We who are always speaking inevitably say things we wish we hadn't said or in a way we wish we hadn't said them:

(Proverbs 10:19 NKJV) In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, But he who restrains his lips is wise.

Bema Seat / Judged for Every Word / Motive / Must Always be Prepared

Thus, condemnation comes not only from other people, but from within our own hearts when we realize our inadequacy to communicate the Word properly. "Be careful," says James. "Don't be too eager to be a teacher, knowing that you'll receive greater condemnation from within and without than if you sat quietly in a pew, taking it all in." This isn't judgment in terms of salvation, but the "Bema Seat of Christ" (2 Cor 5:10) where he will reward us for our works here on earth. (Note: The judgment of the believer's works, not sins, is under discussion here. His sins have been atoned for and are remembered no more forever (Heb 10:17); but every work must come into judgment (Mat 12:36; Rom 14:10; Gal 6:7; Eph 6:8; Col 3:24 - 25). The result is reward or loss of the reward, but "He himself [the Christian] will be saved" (1 Cor 3:11 - 15). This judgment occurs at the return of Christ for His Church (1 Cor 4:5; 2 Tim 4:8; Rev 22:12). For other judgments, see notes at Ezek 20:37; Mat 25:32; John 12:31; 1 Cor 11:31; Jude 6; Rev 20:12.). Teachers you are accountable for every word that you speak in the name of the Lord. We will be judged on the way we taught (in love or heavy-handed), our motive for wanting to teach (for mans applause or God's directing), and the content of what we taught (was it in spirit and truth). Teachers, we can never teach unprepared. James is making that point to us, be prepared before you teach so that you don't miss the mark, which may stumble or offend a brother.

Stay in Word / Stay in Book / How's the Bible Study / Teachers Here / Don't be Afraid

That is why we need to stay in the word. I take consolation that I stay in this book. I will miss a verse here and there (I'm not perfect), but I stay in the book, and the Word speaks for itself. People ask me all the time, hey how's the church going. I say good for we study the Bible, and anytime you study the Bible it is a good thing. I make such a big point about this because there are so many of you that are here that teaches. It is a focus of our ministry. Probably over 50% of the people here teach, whether it be with the Youth Group, Children's Church, Assisted Living, or at home with your children, you guys teach - and Praise the Lord for that! May I note, we all get scared when we hear "judgement", but there is also rewards there, and we long to hear those words "well done", that is why we teach. Because we are becoming like Jesus and that makes us want to share His Word and love with others. Don't let the fear of making a mistake keep you from teaching. Remember Ephesians 4, you are a gift from God to the His Church. James is saying just make sure you are prepared to teach because the words from your tongue have a tremendous influence on those you teach. Just like steering a huge ship or powerful horse.

(Matthew 25:21 NKJV) "His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'

Being Lured / Never Go Beyond the Word / Giving a Piece of Jesus

Be careful about being lured beyond God's Word, into the latest movements out there (Holy Laughter, etc). Never go beyond God's Word and you will be safe. Even days when you feel like that was a painful study, always remember, you just gave out a piece of God to the people, for God will never give Himself apart from His Word, for Jesus is the Word (John 1:1):

(John 1:1 NKJV) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Represent Jesus / A Glimpse to Some

You represent Jesus Christ, for some you are the glimpse of God to the people. We must never misrepresent Him. Remember Moses at the Rock

(Numbers 20:11 NKJV) Then Moses lifted his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came out abundantly, and the congregation and their animals drank.

(Numbers 20:12 NKJV) Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them."

(Leviticus 10:3 NKJV) And Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the LORD spoke, saying: 'By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; And before all the people I must be glorified.'" So Aaron held his peace.

Bad Teachers / The Fall of a Teacher

When bad teachers come into the church, or people come in from a church of errant teaching, then that requires that all that errant teaching be corrected. The people are going back to zero, or fighting to get to zero, before they can grow in maturity. The fall of a teacher makes us feel greatly violated, for we put so much trust in them and then find that they didn't live the word they preached.

Good Bereans / Not a Challenge

That is why we must be "Good Bereans"

(Acts 17:10 NKJV) Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews.

(Acts 17:11 NKJV) These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.

Don't ever feel like you can't approach me and ask me about a something I said. Don't think that I will be offended or feel challenged. That is what you are suppose to do, Acts 17:11. It blesses me that you are searching the Scriptures and thinking these things through for yourself. If I can't answer you on the spot, I will always get back to you, and many times I'll be giving you a homework assignment to read something, then come back and talk to me, that is discipleship.

(James 3:2 NKJV) For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body.

If you are not offensive with your mouth, then you are a mature person. Will the tongue direct yu, or will you direct the tongue.

(James 3:3 NKJV) Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body.

(James 3:4 NKJV) Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires.

(James 3:5 NKJV) Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things.

Small In Themselves – Yet Powerful

James presents two items that are small of themselves, yet exercise great power, just like the tongue. A small bit enables the rider to control the great horse, and a small rudder enables the pilot to steer the huge ship. The tongue is a small member in the body, and yet it has the power to accomplish great things.

Words Direct / A Word in Season

The words we speak affect the lives of others. How important it is that our tongues direct people in the right way. You have no idea what the right word, at the right time, does for a person who is hurting or discouraging. Maybe it is a dry season, a time of confusion, a point of quitting, and you come with a Scripture verse, or just a word of encouragement from the heart, and then everything changes. A simple hello, a thank you, a how are you doing, or you really bless me. You people bless me, you really do, I just want to say that so that you hear that from me:

(Isaiah 50:4 NKJV) "The Lord GOD has given Me The tongue of the learned, That I should know how to speak A word in season to him who is weary. He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear To hear as the learned.

(Proverbs 15:4 NKJV) A wholesome tongue is a tree of life, But perverseness in it breaks the spirit.

DL Moody

On April 21, 1855, Edward Kimbel went into a Boston shoe store and led young Dwight L. Moody to Christ. The result was one of the greatest evangelists that ever walked this earth. The tongue has the power to direct others lives that can affect the whole world.

Power to Destroy: the Fire and Animal - 3:5-8

Tongue can be Wild / Just a Spark

The tongue also has the power to destroy. James likens our tongue to a fire and an animal. Our tongue can be wild at times as a wild animal, and our tongue can be a spark that turns into a raging fire.

(James 3:5 NKJV) Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles!

(James 3:6 NKJV) And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell.

(James 3:7 NKJV) For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind.

(James 3:8 NKJV) But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

Just a Spark / Chicago Fire

It is only about 10 ounces of flesh, yet the tongue is capable of massive destruction. A fire can begin with just a small spark, but it can grow to destroy a city. On October 8, 1871, a fire started in a small barn in Chicago, by the time the fire was put out 100,000 people were left homeless, 17,500 buildings were destroyed, 300 people died, and 400 million dollars in damage. Just from one barn fire.

Repairing Damage / Heated Moments / Tempers Flare

Our words start fire. We spend so much time repairing the damage the tongue has caused from gossip, hurting words in marriage, digging up the past, all to purposely hurt someone. Once the fire is lit, it is hard to put it out. It is in that "heated moment" of an argument or confrontation, that the tongue lets loose, and the words can never be returned. Then the pain and the hurt cuts and burns to the heart. Then later in the evening, when everything has cooled down, you your mind goes over everything you said, and everything said to you. The fire has been set. Run with the bucket of forgiveness, ask for forgiveness that the fire may go out. But many times we know it is only the beginning.

Gossip / Nicaragua

Then there is gossip, those of you going to Nicaragua will see a big sign with the word gossip on it, encircled with the line through it. It is that important to Pastor Dean, it has been that damaging, that he had to paint that on the wall, We can burn a brother or sister so subtly in the name of a sharing a concern, a prayer request, or giving background information - It is gossip. Gossip is the purposeful sharing of information, knowing that it will make the other person look bad. Gossip destroys people and even churches, we cannot have it. It must be crushed in its tracks, extinguished before the fire gets a chance to consume. I might note here, that the truth can also be gossip if it is used to hurt or tear someone down. Someone may be struggling with this or that, that is the truth, but sharing it with others will do nothing to help them.

Gossip Here in this Church / No Wood – No Fire

For those who like gossip, you won't like it here. For all that come into the church they have to know that whatever they share from their heart about what is going on in their lives, that it is safe, and it won't be spread throughout the body.

If you don't respond when someone is burning someone else, then the conversation flames out. The is true when they attack you:

(Proverbs 26:20 NKJV) Where there is no wood, the fire goes out; And where there is no talebearer, strife ceases.

For where there is no wood there is no fire. What do you do when someone starts to burn someone else or you, you can let the conversation end by not responding. Fire spreads, and the more fuel you give it, the faster and farther it will spread. Give it no fuel and it goes nowhere.

Why So Much Talk on Gossip / People get Hurt / Preconceived Ideas

Why am I talking about this so much? Because people get hurt, you get hurt. If people are talking negatively about me, then when a person meets me for the first time, they have all these preconceived ideas about me already, I have become to that person, what they said I was, before they even met me.

Know This / It is in Their Heart / Faith & Works

Know this, if someone will talk about someone else to you, you can guarantee that they will be talking about you when you are not there (probably to the person they just told you about), why, because it is in their heart, it is who they are, and out of the mouth proceeds the condition of the heart.

(Matthew 12:33 NKJV) "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit.

(Matthew 12:34 NKJV) "Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

(Luke 6:45 NKJV) "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

(Matthew 15:10 NKJV) When He had called the multitude to Himself, He said to them, "Hear and understand:

(Matthew 15:11 NKJV) "Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man."

James spoke of faith that works, he spoke of faith without works is dead, he spoke these things so that we might examine ourselves, for our tongues pour out what is in our heart. Your tongue gives you away.

(James 3:6 NKJV) And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell.

The Dump

Gahanna is the word used here for hell. At the time of this writing that is what they called the garbage dump that burned outside the city walls to the south of the city. Isn't that the way the tongue can be, like a continual burning garbage dump?

Hell – Heinous Things / Hitler

The tongue is set on fire by hell. The heinous things of hell are set in motion by the tongue. The holocaust of 6 million Jewish people killed was set in motion by the tongue, abortion, bigotry, the music and entertainment industries attack on Christian values. It has been estimated that for every word in Hitler's book, Mein Kampf ([my struggle], filled with anti-Semitic outpourings, worship of power, disdain for civil morality, and strategy for world domination. It became the bible of National Socialism), 125 lives were lost in WW2. All Satan needs was a willing tongue, and he can promote these things.

But Look at Great Things / Your Family / Assisted Living

But look at the great things it can do. Look at what it has done through Billy Graham, your family, at the Assisted Living, your marriage. It has the power to do great things. Ephesians 4, all the gifts given to the church are through the tongue. God knows the power of the tongue as it is fueled by the Spirit.

(James 3:7 NKJV) For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind.

(James 3:8 NKJV) But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

Shamu / Caged Lion

The guy who tamed Shamu the Killer Whale at Sea World with his tongue, takes that same tongue and goes home and gets in an argument with his wife. He can tame a killer whale with it, but can't tame himself.

A caged lion can't hurt you, but once you let it out you're in trouble. Keep the tongue caged. You would never let a tiger loose in your home or Children's Church, but the unruly tongue will do the same.

Unruly / Poisonous / God can Tame

Verse 8 - the tongue is Unruly: it is a restless evil, it just wants to get out there and shoot itself off.

Verse 8 - the tongue is Poisonous: used in reference to a virus or infection that would eat away at something. The deceptive thing about poison is that it usually works secretly and slowly. And then it kills. How many times has a malicious person injected a bit of poison into the conversation, hoping that it would spread and finally get to the person he or she wanted to hurt.

Verse 8 - *But no man can tame the tongue* - No man can, but God can.

Remember James is saying you need to show some evidence of the change God has made in your life. Is it Dead Faith, Demonic Faith, or is it Dynamic Faith. Your tongue will be one of your greatest indicators of your spiritual growth. Your tongue will define you.

Tongues of Fire - Peter

That very same tongue that can burn someone down, can also "catch them on fire". Look at the fire that was kindled by Peter's tongue on the Day of Pentecost. It says tongues of fire fall upon them, and 3000 were saved that first day, and then we read a chapter later that 500 were saved:

(Acts 2:1 NKJV) When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

(Acts 2:2 NKJV) And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.

(Acts 2:3 NKJV) Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them.

(Acts 2:4 NKJV) And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Power to Delight: the Fountain and Tree - 3:9-12

Life Giving / Build Up - Fruit

James uses two more pictures for the tongue, a fountain and a tree. Water is life giving, and our words can give life. Water is cleansing and our words can refresh someone else and restore them. Trees are used to build structures and to provide shade, and produce body nourishing fruit, our words can build another up, comfort them, and nourish them. This is what Jesus has given us through His words:

Jesus said:

(John 6:63 NKJV) "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.

(James 3:9 NKJV) With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God.

(James 3:10 NKJV) Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so.

(James 3:11 NKJV) Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening?

(James 3:12 NKJV) Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh.

James is saying what is true in nature should also be true in the human. Once we are born of the Spirit we should produce the things of the Spirit. But we know that doesn't happen overnight does it.

2 Sources in Us

There are two sources going on in us, the flesh and the Spirit. That isn't the case with nature, they only have one source to deal with.

People in My Life

Don't become a woodbin for someone else's fire. For where there is no wood there is no fire. Rather use your tongue for healing, for refreshing. Use your tongue for delight, let your tongue to bring forth grace, mercy, and truth – things that delight. There are certain people that I have in my life that when I

know I am going to spend time with them I get excited, why, because I know their tongue, the words that will come from their mouth will refresh me, encourage me, and give me a fresh perspective on whatever is going on in my life at that time. However, there are those that I really don't look forward to seeing (and I'm talking Christians right here), that I just know I am going to be drained, sometimes even feel soiled, after spending time with them. Why because their whole conversation is destruction and tearing down of others, and never of delight, of building up.

You've Grown / Still need Growth

Now, I examine myself, and I ask myself how about me? And in all honesty I have to say I am not where I want to be. I look at this teaching from James and it brings me to the remembrance of you have a long way to go, but it also shows me, look how far you have come. Therefore I can encourage you personally if you are struggling in this area, and I can tell you from personal experience that God is able. But I can also tell you don't ever settle and get comfortable in this area, for one slip, one spark, with the tongue can start a forest fire that can destroy.

Be Thankful for the Battle

Be thankful that there is a battle going on. As Spurgeon said, "dead men don't wrestle." I never saw my tongue and temper as a problem (for I always thought it was the other person who the problem) until I got saved. But now that there is a new fountain flowing in me, a new source, I wrestle, and I am thankful of that, for dead man don't wrestle.

Delight / Life

Again James is a mini Book of Proverbs, and we see in Proverbs this picture of a fountain. We see the tongue has the power to bring life:

(Proverbs 18:21 NKJV) Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit.

(Proverbs 10:11 NKJV) The mouth of the righteous is a well of life, But violence covers the mouth of the wicked.

(Proverbs 13:14 NKJV) The law of the wise is a fountain of life, To turn one away from the snares of death.

Give Tongue to God / Morning Time

No man can tame the tongue, but God can. Give God your tongue and your heart each day and ask Him to use your tongue as a blessing to Him and others. One reason our Lord was able to say the right word at the right time was because He communed with the Father and heard from heaven every day.

(Mark 1:35 NKJV) Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.

Again, listen to what Jesus said was His source for the tongue:

(Isaiah 50:4 NKJV) "The Lord GOD has given Me The tongue of the learned, That I should know how to speak A word in season to him who is weary. He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear To hear as the learned.

Recap

Outline: The Test of the Tongue (3:1-12)

- Power to Direct: the Bit and Rudder - 3:1-5
- Power to Destroy: the Fire and Animal - 3:5-8
- Power to Delight: the Fountain and Tree - 3:9-12

The Test of the Tongue, so how are we doing?

The Test of Wisdom Applied (3:13-18)

Written by James / Didn't believe – to Leader / Hindsight / Everyday Living

The Book of James was written by none other than Jesus' brother James. James was a leader in the church, a pillar in the church (Acts 21). James didn't believe that Jesus was God when He walked this earth (John 7:5); but after the resurrection Jesus appears to him (1 Cor 15:4-7), and everything changed. James is going to write us this letter, he will talk about everyday practical stuff. He will talk about trials in life, our works, our tongue, prayer, and other things; as he writes these things, no doubt he will be remembering how Jesus handled them, reflecting back on watching situations, and watching his oldest brother. He will reflect on Jesus' life of love, and a life of sinlessness, in a world that can be so hateful at times, and so full of sin. James will write these things based on hindsight, based on first hand witnessing of how his older brother lived life, everyday. James watched Jesus handle everyday life, and that is what this book is about; it is about living everyday life as a Follower of God, in a fallen world.

Jesus Rubbed Off / Nature Illustrations / Favorite Teacher - Sermon on Mount

We can see how much Jesus rubbed off on James, for James style resembles his brother so much. Like Jesus used nature as illustrations for His teaching points, so does James some 30 times. He uses nature analogies such as the sea, flowers, sun, fire, horses and ships to name a few). It is obvious who James favorite teacher was, because this epistle covers every topic that Jesus covered in the Sermon on the Mount. There is amazing parallelisms between the two; James does not actually quote the Lord's words, but he obviously had internalized Jesus' teachings and reproduced them with spiritual depth. Jesus covered about 30 topics in the Sermon on the Mount, and we will see that James touches on every one of them in this epistle. The Book of James is Sermon on the Mount 2. The Book is also very quick and concise, moving from thought-to-thought quickly. So the Book of James is the New Testament Version of the Old Testament Proverbs. It resembles Proverbs because it is very poetic the way it flows its thoughts using illustrations and analogies.

So We can Examine Self / How am I Doing

Jesus gave the Sermon on the Mount so that we might examine ourselves and ask the question, "so how am I doing in each of these areas?" James writes to the church, to us, and as we read, we have to ask ourselves, "so how am I doing in these areas?" This book is practical and applicable for us living in the year 2004, and the ultimate goal of this epistle is giving to us in verse 4 of chapter 1, to bring us into maturity, perfect and lacking nothing.

Theme of the Book of James:

(James 1:4 NKJV) But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

(James 1:5 NKJV) If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

As in school, we take tests to see how much of a handle and mastery we have on a subject, we will do the same in this book:

The Outline of the Book of James:

Chapter 1

- Introduction (1:1)
- The Test of Perseverance and Suffering (1:2-12)
- The Test of Blame in Temptation (1:12-18)
- The Test of Response to the Word (1:19-27)

Chapter 2

- The Test of Partiality (2:1-9)
- The Test of the Law (2:10-13)
- The Test of Faith and Works (2:14-26)

Chapter 3

- The Test of the Tongue (3:1-12)
- The Test of Wisdom Applied (3:13-18)

Chapter 4

- The Test of the World's Influence (4:1-12)
- The Test of Dependence (4:13-17)

Chapter 5

- The Test of Endurance (5:1-11)
- The Test of Prayerfulness (5:12-20)

Works & Words / But Words are Important

In chapter 2, James stressed that mere words are not the issue. The proof of one's salvation is seen in works. Yet here in chapter 3, we'll see him plunge into a discussion about the tongue. Why? I suggest the reason is that, although it is true that it is our works and not our words that validate and verify our salvation, this does not mean words are not important in our spiritual life. The power of speech is one of the greatest powers God has given us. With the tongue man can praise God, pray to God, preach the Word of God, and lead a lost sinner to God. Yet with the same tongue a man can tell lies that ruin a man's reputation or break a person's heart with harsh words. That takes us back to the theme of this book, the purpose of this book, that we might mature. In chapter 1 we were told to be Doers of the Word, and chapter 2 we saw that it is to be Faith the Works! And here in chapter 3, watch our words. Our words will effect or marriages, our families, and every relationship we have with another person. This study, this test, is vital to our Christian walk, our spiritual growth.

Tests Tied Directly Together / Chapter 3 flows Together

The Test of the Tongue is tied directly to the Test of Wisdom Applied. Chapter 3 just flows together, as it should, for it is only the Wisdom from above that can control our tongue. The outlines for these two tests are nearly identical, because they are nearly identical:

Outline: The Test of the Tongue (3:1-12)

- Power to Direct: the Bit and Rudder - 3:1-5
- Power to Destroy: the Fire and Animal - 3:5-8
- Power to Delight: the Fountain and Tree - 3:9-12

Outline: The Test of Wisdom Applied (3:13-18)

- Wisdom that Directs: 3:13
- Wisdom that Destroys: 3:14-16
- Wisdom that Delights: 3: 17-18

Wisdom Falls into 2 Categories Only

The wisdom that directs us will fall into two categories, and two categories only, there is no gray area; it will be wisdom that destroys or wisdom that delights, and that will result in a tongue that destroys or a tongue that delights. Although the tongue is specific, it reflects my life in general. We will look at these verses specifically in terms of the tongue, and generally in terms of our lives.

(James 3:13 NKJV) Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom.

(James 3:14 NKJV) But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth.

(James 3:15 NKJV) This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic.

(James 3:16 NKJV) For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.

(James 3:17 NKJV) But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.

(James 3:18 NKJV) Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

Wisdom that Directs: 3:13

Wisdom Directs Everything / Abundant Life – Wash Cycle / Life Today

My source for wisdom will direct my thoughts, my tongue, and my actions. Wisdom is knowledge applied. Wisdom is taking all the things I have learned and applying them to my life. It will determine if I live the "abundant" life Jesus spoke of in John 10;10. Or the "Romans 7 Wash Cycle" as I call it. I'm up and I'm down, I succeed and then I fail (Romans 7:15). Wisdom takes the knowledge I have learned and puts it into action in my life so I might live the abundant Christian life that Jesus so desires for me. Jesus didn't just die for my salvation upon death, but he died so that I might live here and now. There are too many people alive today who are not living:

(John 10:10 NKJV) "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

(Romans 7:15 NKJV) For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do.

(Romans 7:16 NKJV) If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good.

(Romans 7:17 NKJV) But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.

(Romans 7:18 NKJV) For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find.

(Romans 7:19 NKJV) For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice.

(Romans 7:20 NKJV) Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.

(Romans 7:21 NKJV) I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good.

(Romans 7:22 NKJV) For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man.

*(Romans 7:23 NKJV) But I see another law in my members, **warring against the law of my mind**, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.*

(Romans 7:24 NKJV) O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?

(Romans 7:25 NKJV) I thank God; through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.

(James 3:13 NKJV) Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom.

Who is Wise / Demonstrate It

Who is the one who has true wisdom and knowledge? He said, let him show (demonstrate or show it) out of a good conduct/conversation of his works Let him demonstrate it or show it out of his manner of living. Let it be demonstrated! True wisdom has one of its characteristics of meekness. It doesn't boast! It doesn't parade itself! It is always concerned with the others well-being. True Wisdom just does it, it isn't looking for recognition.

True Wisdom – False Wisdom / Destined to Fail

True wisdom comes from above, but false wisdom comes from below. In other words, there is a "heavenly wisdom" that comes from God, and there is a "man made wisdom" that does not come from God. Whatever does not come from God is destined to fail, no matter how successful it may seem at the time.

Examples of Man's Wisdom / Babel – Hagar - Loaves

The Bible contains many examples of the folly of man's wisdom. The building of the Tower of Babel seemed like a wise enterprise, but it ended in failure and confusion (Genesis 11:1-9). It seemed wise for Abraham to take his handmaiden Hagar to bear a child, but that ended in heartache and suffering (Genesis 16) and the pains of that wisdom are still seen today in the Mid-East turmoil. The disciples thought it wise to dismiss the great crowd and let them find their own food; but Jesus took a few loaves and fishes and demonstrated the power and glory of God (Mark 6).

Determines My Life

*****Where my wisdom comes from, which wisdom I apply to my life will determine my life.*****

God – Wisdom World

I'm always interested in what God thinks of something. God says the wisdom of this world is foolishness, and comes to nothingness:

(1 Corinthians 1:19 NKJV) For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, And bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent."

(1 Corinthians 1:20 NKJV) Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

(1 Corinthians 1:21 NKJV) For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

God – His Wisdom

But God says His wisdom is mighty and nothing is stronger:

(1 Corinthians 1:22 NKJV) For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom;

(1 Corinthians 1:23 NKJV) but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness,

*(1 Corinthians 1:24 NKJV) but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.
(1 Corinthians 1:25 NKJV) Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.*

How do I get Wisdom

Before we even get going into this study it is important to know “How do I get this wisdom”? James makes it so clear and easy, just ask the Father:

(James 1:4 NKJV) But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

(James 1:5 NKJV) If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

Now the Contrast / Context of Tongue

Now James is going to show the contrast of these two wisdom's, and we see also it is in the context of the use of the tongue. That is why the outline is the same as the outline we had for the tongue. Wisdom, like the tongue, directs, and it will direct unto destruction or delight.

The Grid for Every Conversation - Action

I have these verses underlined because it is a grid (rule of thumb) through which I can run any conversation, teaching, or any word of instruction, and action for my life. If there is envy and strife, tension and confusion in what I hear, then I know it's from hell. But if there is purity and peace, righteousness and mercy in what I hear, I embrace it as being from the Lord.

Why So much Time / Stamp these Verses / As a man Thinks

Why have we spent so much time on this subject, of the tongue, our conversation, our actions? First because it is right here in the verse-by-verse so we know it is God's perfect timing for all of us. But also, because these next 5 verses are life to any marriage, to any family, and to any church. If every believer could just stamp these verses on their mind, pull out these verses before every conversation, action, or thought, then the church and family would be ever so different. I say thought because as a man thinks, therefore he is. We must take every thought into captivity, so it doesn't take us into captivity:

(Proverbs 23:7 NKJV) For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.....

Marriages- Ministries / Memorization / Not a Favorite Study

I have watched it over and over in relationships, ministries, churches, mission trips, of ministries and relationships dying from within, and nobody can see the problem. We always have to be examining ourselves and asking why am I doing what I am doing, or saying what I am saying. Remember this book was written so that we might examine ourselves. These verses are vital for memorization. I know these types of studies are never a favorite. I notice that when we study passages like these, no one ever says to me, wow that was awesome, you could really feel the Spirit moving. I'd much rather be teaching a passage of God's grace and love, but these passages, these studies are ever so vital for our Christian maturity. We must ask the Lord to search us and show us what is in our heart.

So.....

Wisdom that Destroys: 3:14-16

Wisdom that Destroys: My tongue specific, my life in general.

(James 3:14 NKJV) But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth.

(James 3:15 NKJV) This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic.

(James 3:16 NKJV) For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.

True wisdom doesn't lead to envying and strife, but confusion and troubles – evils.

In Your Heart

*Verse 14 - But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking **in your hearts** - Again come to terms with the fact that if your words are bitter, then it is because your heart is bitter:*

(Matthew 12:33 NKJV) "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit.

(Matthew 12:34 NKJV) "Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

Out of My Mouth / Someone Else / Not of the Lord / Grid of the Heart

If I open my mouth and any of these things come out of mouth, or if any of these things are stirring in my heart and thoughts, (bitter envy, self-seeking) then I know they are being energized by Satan. If someone opens their mouth and these things come out, then I know they are being energized by Satan. Then I know, this is not of the Lord, this is not where I am suppose to be. I can quickly gauge every conversation or action in my life based on these verses, they are a perfect grid to examine the heart.

3 Sources / Ephesians

Notice the three sources here:

Verse 15 - This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic.

These are the three agents at work against, these are the three agents that we must battle every day.

We studied this in Ephesians 2:

(Ephesians 2:1 NKJV) *And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins,*

(Ephesians 2:2 NKJV) *in which you once walked according to the course of **this world**, according to the **prince of the power of the air**, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience,*

(Ephesians 2:3 NKJV) *among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the **lusts of our flesh**, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.*

Definitions

Earthly - The World: man's philosophies that are void of God's moral standard and Laws.

Sensual – The Flesh: our flesh wanting to be satisfied

Demonic – Satan, the prince and power of the air trying to energize to submit to these agents that want to destroy us.

Easy to be Drawn In / See it all Around Us / FM 66.6

It is so easy to be drawn into these things. We see it in the world every turn we make. Reality shows that are filled with man's wisdom and the works of the flesh – me, my way, I. Our old nature is always ready to feed off these things. And then there is Satan, he has his radio station FM 66.6, and for 24/7 he sending the signal out, saying receive ye these things. Anyone, who is tuned into his station, receives his signal, and the battle is on.

The Outcome

The outcome, bitter envy, self-seeking, confusion, and every evil thing:

Bitter / Undrinkable Water

Bitter – Greek term for undrinkable water. I have been served this drink many a times, and have served it many a times. God help me to change the menu.

Envy

Envy – a harsh resentful attitude.

Self-seeking / Selfish Ambitions / Politics / 7 Things / Rom 14

Self-seeking – also translated "strife". It is selfish ambition, for personal gain, regardless of the expense to others. The Greek word was used to describe someone who had entered politics for selfish reasons and sought to achieve his agenda at any cost (even if it meant trampling on others). This is very applicable in the area of gossip, gossip is the tearing down of others to build up oneself. Self-seeking causes divisions in the church and relationships. Proverbs and Romans have some clear words on God's position on these things. The combination of the three and how they come together for the harm or destruction of another. God says it is wrong, even if it is true. God says don't judge my servant, for I will deal with him, I will take care of him:

(Proverbs 6:16 NKJV) *These six things the LORD hates, Yes, seven are an abomination to Him:*

*(Proverbs 6:17 NKJV) A proud look, A lying tongue, Hands that shed innocent blood,
(Proverbs 6:18 NKJV) A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that are swift in running to evil,
(Proverbs 6:19 NKJV) A false witness who speaks lies, **And one who sows discord among brethren.***

*(Romans 13:10 NKJV) Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.
(Romans 13:11 NKJV) And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.
(Romans 13:12 NKJV) The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.
(Romans 13:13 NKJV) Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy.
(Romans 13:14 NKJV) But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.
(Romans 14:1 NKJV) Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things.
(Romans 14:2 NKJV) For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables.
(Romans 14:3 NKJV) Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him.
(Romans 14:4 NKJV) Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.*

Confusion, and Every evil thing / It will Fail

Confusion, and Every evil thing - The outcome of these things will be confusion and result in evilness. Evil here means "worthless". Man's wisdom energized by Satan causes confusion and chaos in our lives and the lives of others, and it ends in things that are worthless. Christian, even if it makes sense it is not going to work, it will fail.

3 R's

It is back to the three R's: Recognize, Resist, and Rejoice. We must recognize this wisdom that destroys, that it comes from the world, the flesh, and Satan. Then we must resist it, we can not let it into our mind so that it may start working within us, energized by Satan. Then we can rejoice for we did not allow it to destroy us or others.

Check the Grid / the Blessings

Ohh that we might check this grid, this rule of thumb, every time we are faced with an attack, or making a decision for an action to take, or getting to unleash the tongue, and our thought life. Your marriage will be blessed, your family will be blessed, your ministry will be blessed, and most importantly – God will be blessed. He would say, well done my child, you have grown so much, you are becoming just like Jesus. You are a man/woman of integrity, and that blesses me. That Delights me. Christian grab on to these things, take this study straight into your heart.

Wisdom that Delights: 3: 17-18

My tongue specific, my life in general.

(James 3:17 NKJV) But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.

(James 3:18 NKJV) Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

Back to Chp 1 / Good & Perfect

The wisdom form above, from the Lord. This takes me back to chapter 1:

(James 1:17 NKJV) Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

Good things will Result / Apply Them

Everything that comes from the Lord is good, it is perfect, it is Wisdom that Delights. Look at God's wisdom, look at what comes from Him to us. Apply these things to every conversation in your marriage, in your family, in your workplace, in the church, and not only imagine, but know the good things that will result. The Wisdom from Above is a mirror of the Sermon on the Mount.

The wisdom form above is:

Pure / undefiled / Clean to enjoy / Wisdom Below Drains Life

Pure – means free from defilement. I am clean, I am free to enjoy my relationship with the Lord and not have guilt or shame about the things I have said or did. The Wisdom the Destroys, leaves me dirty. I walk away after I let my tongue loose on someone, or entered into gossip, and I feel defiled, dirty, for the Holy Spirit is convicting me. The wisdom from below sucks the life right out of me.

Sermon on Mount Cross-Reference:

(Matthew 5:8 NKJV) Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God.

Peaceable / Peace with Fellow Man / Wisdom Below cause Wars

then peaceable – Purity and Holiness leads me to peace with God and peace with my fellow man. Whether that be my wife, child, brother in the Lord, or unsaved neighbor or co-worker. The wisdom from below causes competition, rivalry, and wars (as we will see in chapter 4).

Sermon on Mount Cross-Reference:

(Matthew 5:9 NKJV) Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God.

Gentle / Sweet Reasonableness / No Compromise / Not Revile Back

Gentle – gentleness has been called “sweet reasonableness”. It carries the meaning of moderation without compromise. The gentle person does not cause fights, but nor does he compromise the truth in order to keep peace. A gentle person will take all kinds of mistreatment (like Jesus did) without reviling back, seeking revenge, getting the last word in, without hatred in his heart.

Sermon on Mount Cross-Reference:

(Matthew 5:10 NKJV) Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

(Matthew 5:11 NKJV) "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.

Willing to Yield / Easy to Live With / Wisdom below Difficult / Lay Down Right to be Right

willing to yield – God’s wisdom makes the believer agreeable and easy to live with and work with. Man’s wisdom makes a person hard and stubborn. The person who is willing to yield is willing to listen, think, pray, and then obey whatever God reveals to them. As we have seen in the Sermon on the Mount cross-references, God asks us to lay our rights, and wants down, for the sake of the kingdom.

Sermon on Mount Cross-Reference:

(Matthew 5:3 NKJV) "Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

(Matthew 5:4 NKJV) Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted.

(Matthew 5:5 NKJV) Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth.

God’s Economy on Yielding

Christian, let me share a truth that I have learned from being willing to yield. The more I yield to others, the more I lay down my right to be right even when I am clearly right, the more I bite my tongue when I am reviled and attacked by others, and the more I let go my ministries, I find the result is the more God adds to me. It results in more insight He gives me into His Word, into the things of the Lord, and ultimately it all adds up to more peace in my life and a more intimate relationship I have with Him. I know this sounds crazy, but I actually get excited when a person slams me, and I remain silent, cause I truly expect God is going to bless me cause I was willing to yield. So I wait, anticipating, a blessing. I sit wondering ohh what is He going to do to bless me this time, I can’t wait, it is like Christmas time for me. However, I watch people who do the opposite, I watch Christians who apply the Wisdom form Below, wisdom that destroys, I watch them gossip, attack, be self-seeking, and I watch their lives dry up – spiritually. I watch their relationship suffer with the Lord, and it carries over into their marriage, their family, and the ministries they are involved in. It is sad to watch. Be willing to yield, be an Abraham and say you take the left and I’ll take the right, or you take the right and I’ll take the left, and watch God bless you, just like he blessed Abraham (Genesis 13).

Full of Mercy / Controlled By / Ability to Forgive Quickly

full of mercy – to be “full” of something means to be “controlled” by. The person who follows God’s Wisdom is controlled by mercy. Mercy is showing concern for those who suffer pain and hardship. Mercy is the ability to forgive quickly.

Sermon on Mount Cross-Reference:

(Matthew 5:7 NKJV) Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy.

Good Fruits / Full Life / John 15 / Wisdom Below Empty

and good fruits – to be full applies to good fruits. We are to be controlled by good works. The Wisdom from Above does not make a life that is empty, it makes it full. We quickly reflect back to Jesus teaching in John 15:1-16, and the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5. These are the things we are to be controlled by:

(John 15:5 NKJV) "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

(John 15:12 NKJV) "This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

(John 15:13 NKJV) "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.

(Galatians 5:22 NKJV) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

(Galatians 5:23 NKJV) gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

Partiality & Hypocrisy / Only Found Once / Unwavering / No Negotiations on Wisdom Below

without partiality and without hypocrisy – This Greek word for partiality is only found once in the whole New Testament, right here in this verse. It denotes a consistent, unwavering person who is undivided in his commitment and conviction and does not make unfair distinctions (remember our test of Partiality). This is how we must be about applying Wisdom from Above, the Wisdom that Delights against the Wisdom from Below, the Wisdom that Destroys. We must be unwavering, there must be no negotiations with the Wisdom of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil. To profess Christ, and submit to the Wisdom of the World is hypocritical, and Christian and Non-Christian will be able to tell the difference.

(James 3:18 NKJV) Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

The Wisdom from Above, produces the fruit of righteousness within us, and peace among us.

The Grid / Who is Wise Among You

So again, I have these verses underlined because it is a grid (rule of thumb) through which I can run any conversation, teaching, or any word of instruction. If there is envy and strife, tension and confusion in what I hear, then I know it’s from hell. But if there is purity and peace, righteousness and mercy in what I hear, I embrace it as being from the Lord. It is so easy to get involved in the conversation, but when we lay it against this test of wisdom, we know whether to walk away or not. If you can do these things, then God considers you a wise person:

(James 3:13 NKJV) Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom.

Theme of The Book / Satan wants to Divide

Remember the theme of this book that we might mature, and grow in wisdom. Satan wishes to divide the church, divide the body, divide the marriage, divide the family, so that he can get us alone, and when he does he can rip us to shreds and destroy us:

(1 Peter 5:8 NKJV) Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

Outline: The Test of the Tongue (3:1-12)

- Power to Direct: the Bit and Rudder - 3:1-5
- Power to Destroy: the Fire and Animal - 3:5-8
- Power to Delight: the Fountain and Tree - 3:9-12

Outline: The Test of Wisdom Applied (3:13-18)

- Wisdom that Directs: 3:13

- Wisdom that Destroys: 3:14-16
- Wisdom that Delights: 3: 17-18

How do I get Wisdom

How do I get this wisdom? James makes it so clear and easy, just ask the Father. I take a study like this, lay these things out before the Lord, let Him examine us, and then ask for the wisdom to apply them to our lives:

(James 1:4 NKJV) But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

(James 1:5 NKJV) If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

Power of Life / Power of Death

The power of life and death is in the tongue, and may there be life in all that we say. Wisdom from Above, the power of life in all we say and do, may there be life in our families, friendships, and all we do.

Chapter 4

The Test of the World's Influence (4:1-12)

Written by James / Didn't believe – to Leader / Hindsight / Everyday Living

The Book of James was written by none other than Jesus' brother James. James was a leader in the church, a pillar in the church (Acts 21). James didn't believe that Jesus was God when He walked this earth (John 7:5); but after the resurrection Jesus appears to him (1 Cor 15:4-7), and everything changed. James is going to write us this letter, he will talk about everyday practical stuff. He will talk about trials in life, our works, our tongue, prayer, and other things; as he writes these things, no doubt he will be remembering how Jesus handled them, reflecting back on watching situations, and watching his oldest brother. He will reflect on Jesus' life of love, and a life of sinlessness, in a world that can be so hateful at times, and so full of sin. James will write these things based on hindsight, based on first hand witnessing of how his older brother lived life, everyday. James watched Jesus handle everyday life, and that is what this book is about; it is about living everyday life as a Follower of God, in a fallen world.

Jesus Rubbed Off / Nature Illustrations / Favorite Teacher - Sermon on Mount

We can see how much Jesus rubbed off on James, for James style resembles his brother so much. Like Jesus used nature as illustrations for His teaching points, so does James some 30 times. He uses nature analogies such as the sea, flowers, sun, fire, horses and ships to name a few). It is obvious who James favorite teacher was, because this epistle covers every topic that Jesus covered in the Sermon on the Mount. There is amazing parallelisms between the two; James does not actually quote the Lord's words, but he obviously had internalized Jesus' teachings and reproduced them with spiritual depth. Jesus covered about 30 topics in the Sermon on the Mount, and we will see that James touches on every one of them in this epistle. The Book of James is Sermon on the Mount 2. The Book is also very quick and concise, moving from thought-to-thought quickly. So the Book of James is the New Testament Version of the Old Testament Proverbs. It resembles Proverbs because it is very poetic the way it flows its thoughts using illustrations and analogies.

So We can Examine Self / How am I Doing

Jesus gave the Sermon on the Mount so that we might examine ourselves and ask the question, "so how am I doing in each of these areas?" James writes to the church, to us, and as we read, we have to ask ourselves, "so how am I doing in these areas?" This book is practical and applicable for us living in the year 2004, and the ultimate goal of this epistle is giving to us in verse 4 of chapter 1, to bring us into maturity, perfect and lacking nothing.

Theme of the Book of James:

(James 1:4 NKJV) But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

(James 1:5 NKJV) If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

As in school, we take tests to see how much of a handle and mastery we have on a subject, we will do the same in this book:

The Outline of the Book of James:

Chapter 1

- Introduction (1:1)
- The Test of Perseverance and Suffering (1:2-12)
- The Test of Blame in Temptation (1:12-18)
- The Test of Response to the Word (1:19-27)

Chapter 2

- The Test of Partiality (2:1-9)
- The Test of the Law (2:10-13)
- The Test of Faith and Works (2:14-26)

Chapter 3

- The Test of the Tongue (3:1-12)
- The Test of Wisdom Applied (3:13-18)

Chapter 4

- The Test of the World's Influence (4:1-12)

The Test of Dependence (4:13-17)
Chapter 5
The Test of Endurance (5:1-11)
The Test of Prayerfulness (5:12-20)

Recap / Talk – Walk / Doers – Faith –Our Heart / Drawn to God or World / Simplest Definition

James is an in your face type teaching, he doesn't mix words, rather he just comes right to the punch. The book of James is a no time to waste type book, lets get growing, and lets get maturing, let's be doers of the Word. James is not interested in how great we talk, but how straight we walk, and that is the message all the way through this book. In chapter 1 it was be doers of the Word, in chapter 2 it was faith that works, chapter 3 it was our words are important for they show what is in our heart. Now chapter 4, no mixing of words, are you drawn to God, or to the things of the world? The simplest definition of worldliness is, anything that draws you away from God.

Outline: The Test of the World's Influence (4:1-12)

- The World's Influence – Watching Ourselves (4:1-3)
- The World's Influence – Watching Satan (4:4-7)
- The World's Influence – Watching God (4:8-12)

The World's Influence – Watching Ourselves (4:1-3)

First we will see how we are to examine ourselves, and how we can approach things just like the world does, and the results are always bad.

(James 4:1 NKJV) Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members?

(James 4:2 NKJV) You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask.

(James 4:3 NKJV) You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.

Sermon on Mount Cross-Reference:

(Matthew 5:21 NKJV) "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.'

(Matthew 5:22 NKJV) "But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire.

Sermon on Mount Cross-Reference:

(Matthew 5:38 NKJV) "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.'

(Matthew 5:39 NKJV) "But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.

Sermon on Mount Cross-Reference:

(Matthew 5:43 NKJV) "You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'

(Matthew 5:44 NKJV) "But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,

Why We Fight / Still Flowing Chp 3 / Going About it All Wrong – Like the World

What causes wars and fights between nations, marriages, families, brothers and sisters? Listen the reason we fight amongst ourselves is because we want something from that person. We want something whatever it may be; I lust/desire something for myself. Remember there really are no chapter breaks so we are still flowing from chapter 3 and the "Test of the Tongue", and the "Test of Wisdom Applied". James is saying if you use your tongue to destroy, or wisdom from below that causes bitter envy, or strife, which then causes wars amongst you. James is saying you are going about it all wrong, and it will end all wrong, because you are doing things as the world does them, and that is a guarantee to fail,

You Ask Amiss / James 3:17

The things you want, you are going about them all wrong, "you are asking amiss". This all ties into verse 17 of chapter 3:

(James 3:17 NKJV) But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.

God's Economy on Yielding / Wisdom Below Destroys

Again, Christian, let me share a truth that I have learned from being willing to yield. The more I yield to others, the more I lay down my right to be right even when I am clearly right, the more I bite my tongue when I am reviled and attacked by others, and the more I let go my ministries, I find the result is the more God adds to me. It results in more insight He gives me into His Word, into the things of the Lord, and ultimately it all adds up to more peace in my life and a more intimate relationship I have with Him. I know this sounds crazy, but I actually get excited when a person slams me, and I remain silent, cause I truly expect God is going to bless me cause I was willing to yield. So I wait, anticipating, a blessing. I sit wondering ohh what is He going to do to bless me this time, I can't wait, it is like Christmas time for me. However, I watch people who do the opposite, I watch Christians who apply the Wisdom form Below, wisdom that destroys, I watch them gossip, attack, be self-seeking, and I watch their lives dry up – spiritually. I watch their relationship suffer with the Lord, and it carries over into their marriage, their family, and the ministries they are involved in. It is sad to watch. Be willing to yield, be an Abraham and say you take the left and I'll take the right, or you take the right and I'll take the left, and watch God bless you, just like he blessed Abraham (Genesis 13).

Fear Behind Anger

Also, understand this, most every fight has anger behind in it (some more clearly to see than others – but anger still there); but what is really behind anger, is fear. That person who fights, and has anger, they fear something. They may fear that they aren't in control of the situation, that you want do it their way, or they may fear the lost of possessions which can be materially or a person. But behind anger is fear. This is where the power of willing to yield comes in, when you can be peaceable, gentle, when you can recognize that they fear something, so how can I calm their fear. How can I bring assurance that they have nothing to fear. That is what wisdom from above does, it is so opposite the worlds "I'll yell back at your face twice as loud and long.

Look at verse 3 again:

(James 4:3 NKJV) You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.

Tired of Complaining

Are you tired of complaining, tired of fighting, tired of trying to manipulate the situation? Then ask the Father:

(James 1:4 NKJV) But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

(James 1:5 NKJV) If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

Prayer Reporting for Duty / Seeking Direction

Praying is not giving the orders, but reporting for duty. Prayer isn't you giving God directions, but you seeking direction from the Lord. Lord what is it that you want me to do in this situation, in my life, in my family. Lord I know this is how the world handles these things, but how do you want me to handle it:

(Matthew 6:10 NKJV) Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.

(Matthew 26:39 NKJV) He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will."

God's Will Always Verse 17

God's will, will always, always be verse 17 of chapter 3:

(James 3:17 NKJV) But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.

What If they Are Verse 14 / Intercede / Imagine if Both Applied

What if the other person is the complete opposite of verse 17, what if they are verse 14:

(James 3:14 NKJV) But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth.

Then pray for them, intercede on their behalf, and be that light to show them out of their darkness. You will at least have peace that you are in God's will. And next study we will look at the "Test of Endurance" and God's Word will encourage you greatly if you are struggling in this area. Imagine if two Christians, whether is be brothers in the Lord, husband and wife, of parent and child, applied this wisdom at the same time, fights would be very short, if at all, and peace would reign.

The World's Influence – Watching Satan (4:4-7)

Secondly, we need to watch Satan's influence in our lives as he tries to draw us into the things of the world. We must watch for him, and then resist him

(James 4:4 NKJV) Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

(James 4:5 NKJV) Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"?

(James 4:6 NKJV) But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."

(James 4:7 NKJV) Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

Sermon on Mount Cross-Reference:

(Matthew 5:27 NKJV) "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.'

(Matthew 5:28 NKJV) "But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

(Matthew 5:29 NKJV) "If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.

(Matthew 5:30 NKJV) "And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.

Sermon on Mount Cross-Reference:

(Matthew 6:24 NKJV) "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

Not Messing Around / Where do you Fall / The World is Contrary

Verse 4 - Adulterers and adulteresses! The adultery spoken of here is not marital adultery but spiritual adultery. James isn't mixing words here, he is saying God isn't messing around, you need to examine yourself and see where you fall in at. The things of the world are so contrary to the things of the Lord.

And if I am intrigued with the things of the world, then I am on a different side of where the Father is:

(1 John 2:15 NKJV) Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

(1 John 2:16 NKJV) For all that is in the world; the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; is not of the Father but is of the world.

(1 John 2:17 NKJV) And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

How Much Does God Have of You

The "Test of Worldliness" is how much of the world has you, or how much does God have you.

Spirit is Jealous / We can Grieve Him

Verse 5 – the Spirit yearns jealously – The Spirit guards us jealously, the Spirit wants the very best for me, for you. We can grieve the Holy Spirit:

(Ephesians 4:30 NKJV) And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

He is God – not Mystical Power / Vulnerable / Grieves Over Our Pains

The Holy Spirit is a person, not some mystical power, for you can not grieve a mystical power, only a person. He is the third person of the Trinity, He is God. God has put His Spirit in us, He has taken up residence within us, and that makes God vulnerable. God puts Himself in a place, in a position, where He can be hurt. The Spirit hurts for us, not because of us. The Spirit doesn't say, "ohh you didn't call me today", "you went to the picnic without me", my feelings are hurt. Rather the Spirit hurts/grieves because He knows the actions we are taking or following will lead us into an area that will hurt us, and that hurts Him. Seeing us suffer, suffers Him.

Parents Grieve / Holy Spirit – Formed You – Walk with You – PLEASE Don't

Parents you know the story as you see you child heading towards danger (by the way kids, that is why your parents gets so angry, because of Fear, they fear what can or could of happened to you). My heart breaks when I see someone going the way of the world. It grieves my heart because I know the world will chew them up. The Holy Spirit grieves, you are my child, I formed you in your mothers womb (Psalm 139), I have been with you every step you have taken, please please, don't do this. I love you, I can't bear to see the pain that this will cause you, yes sin is fun for a season, but like summer gives way to fall so will the fun give way to the pain and hardship.

(James 4:6 NKJV) But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."

(James 4:7 NKJV) Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

Go Not Mad – But Hurting / Pours His Grace Out

God isn't mad at you, but is hurting for you, yet even when we are veering off, asking amiss, God gives us grace, more grace to be specific. He gives us grace to resist temptation, and/or recover from the situation;

(Romans 5:20 NKJV) Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more,

Resist the Proud – Free-will / Can't Change Heart Until you Change your Mind

God gives grace to those who are humble, but God resist the proud, the person who says I can take care of it myself, I'll figure the way out, I am fine on my own – just like the world that says we have no need for you here God, move along. Pride is your free-will, and God will never violate your free-will. God can't change your heart until you change your mind about that something. The humble person says I need you Lord, help me. Humility submits to God, Pride submits to the Devil.

Satan Watching You – What Works Against You / work – gal – kids – wife / Thursday Bible Study

We are told to "Resist the Devil", and he will flee from you – Satan is watching you, and he watches what it is that works against you. What is it the keeps you out of the Word, out of fellowship, out of prayer, and then that is what he will continually come with against you. It has to be something of the things of the world, Is it more money? If so you can be sure the Prince and Power of the Air will energize the world around you to make it happen. Is it that guy or gal? Then you can be sure they will be calling you at church time or prayer time, just about anytime to draw you away. Do the kids act up right before church and then you say that's it we are staying home. Do you and your wife get into fights right before church and say we are staying home. Whatever it is, Satan always goes to the well, he always grabs that things that has worked in the past against you. Christian it is not until you resist him that it will stop. When Renee and me first got married, and we had the Thursday night Bible Study in the house, I dreaded Wednesday nights in our house. I mean it never seemed to fail that something would come up in the house that night, and the tension in the house would be unbearable. This went on for weeks until we realized this is Satan working us, we must resist him. Once we did, the same things would happen, but we would both just go, its Wednesday night, and eventually the Word came to pass – Satan fled.

The 3R's Again / Test of the World

Again that brings us back to those 3 R's, Recognize, Resist, and Rejoice. Gang, many people are bringing unnecessary spiritual warfare upon themselves because they won't resist the devil, they won't battle him, they won't deal with these things. The test of the world is do I live and go along in the world, or do I rise up and out and live in the spiritual realm:

(Ephesians 6:12 NKJV) For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

(Ephesians 6:13 NKJV) Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Ultimate Test / Playground or Battleground / Will Change Forever

Christian, the ultimate "Test of the World's Influence" is do I see that the earth is not a playground, but a battle zone. We are battling the Prince of Darkness as he tries to draw us away from God, as he is trying to draw our children, coworkers and neighbors away into the world, and then into destruction. When we

do see and realize that, your life will be changed forever. For me, I must be reminded of this daily for it is so easy to get distracted from this.

Resist him / Keep Dad Between Us

Resist the devil, but first have to submit. As long as I am close to my Dad, I don't have anything to worry about with Satan. Keep Dad between us and the enemy and everything will be fine.

The World's Influence – Watching God (4:8-12)

We must just keep our eyes on our Dad, and everything will be fine. We must draw near to God and He will draw near to us.

(James 4:8 NKJV) Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

(James 4:9 NKJV) Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom.

(James 4:10 NKJV) Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

Sermon on Mount Cross-Reference:

(Matthew 5:3 NKJV) "Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

(Matthew 5:4 NKJV) Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted.

(Matthew 5:5 NKJV) Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth.

Draw Near – Get Serious / Cut Loose the Distraction

Notice that it says He will draw near to you, not that He might. The moment you draw near, there He is. Cleanse your hands, purify your hearts, means get serious about drawing near to Him. You can't be double-minded. James is saying turn off the television, logoff the computer and take the time to meet with Him. We clean ourselves up in that we cut loose the distractions of the world and focus our attention solely upon Him, so that we may be properly tuned into the right frequency. God loves you, He yearns jealously for you, he is always sending out His waves of love to us, but it is the things of the world that disrupts our radio frequency.

Cleanse – Purify - Lament

Cleanse your hands, you sinners; - The OT priest had to ceremonially wash their hands before approaching God (Exodus 30:19-21)

and purify your hearts – refers to inner thoughts and motives of the heart.

Lament and mourn and weep – be broken over your sin, be serious about your sin:

(Psalms 51:16 NKJV) For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering.

(Psalms 51:17 NKJV) The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart; These, O God, You will not despise.

No Casual Attitude / God is Holy / Careless about Sin – Offensive – Tremendous Love / Robs Us

The whole point was not to have a casual attitude about God and sin, but to be serious about God's Holiness. Again I must say this, Christians can not have a lack of reverence of God's Holiness, His awe, His majesty. For if we do then that leads to a careless attitude about sin, sin loses its seriousness, its offensiveness to God, which in turn diminishes Christ work upon the cross. That robs of greatly, for we then lose sight of His tremendous love for us. How precious we are to Him, so much so that He would send His Son as to cover our guilt and shame.

Nothing Can Touch Me / Tongue

Bring me into a clear focus on that, and nothing, but nothing, can touch me nor draw me away from my Lord. Nothing in this world can even get my attention, everything pales in comparison to His love for me:

- My tongue will always have a word of love for all season.
- The Wisdom from above will be preeminent in my mind.
- I'll have faith that works, for love will be my motivation factor.
- I will be a Doer of the Word, because I will be in the Spirit, and the Spirit reigning in me.

(James 4:11 NKJV) Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge.

(James 4:12 NKJV) There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another?

Sermon on Mount Cross-Reference:

(Matthew 7:1 NKJV) "Judge not, that you be not judged.

(Matthew 7:2 NKJV) "For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.

We covered this subject in chapter 3. Our job is to love people, not judge people. God will do the judging we are just to love them. We are to be Doers of the Word, not a doer of the Law as a judge. Judging others sucks the life of Christ right out of us, it truly quenches the Spirit of God in us.

The Test of Self-Dependence (4:13- 5:6)

Directly Effected by Test of Worldliness / More Self / More God

The "Test of the Worldly Influence", pass or fail, directly effects our "Test of Self-Dependence". The more into the world we are, the more self-dependent we will be. The more we are drawn near to God, the more self-dependent on Him we will be. The more worldly, the more I trust in myself and the things of the world; the more I say, I will, I will. But the more godliness, the more I am drawn to Him, the more I say, your will, help me.

(James 4:13 NKJV) Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit";

(James 4:14 NKJV) whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.

(James 4:15 NKJV) Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that."

(James 4:16 NKJV) But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.

(James 4:17 NKJV) Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.

Sermon on Mount Cross-Reference:

(Matthew 6:9 NKJV) "In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.

(Matthew 6:10 NKJV) Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.

(Matthew 6:11 NKJV) Give us this day our daily bread.

(Matthew 6:12 NKJV) And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors.

(Matthew 6:13 NKJV) And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Life is a Vapor

Have you ever noticed how rapidly vapor vanishes? Next time you get out the vaporizer, as the steam comes off the vaporizer or you put on the teakettle and the steam comes out, notice how quickly the steam evaporates into the air—five seconds, seven seconds? What is life? It's like a vapor, it's just there for a moment and then vanishes. Seven seconds compared with eternity! It's just as there, we're us here just a moment. But then there's eternity

If the Lord Wills

So we ought to say, if the Lord wills, we shall live and we'll do this or that—if the Lord wills! And we should always take that factor into all of our planning. If this is the will of God, this is what we hope to accomplish. These plans are subject to the will of God. My life is subject to the will of God—if the Lord wills.

Proper Planning / Life is a Vapor

There is definitely a place for proper planning, the Book of Proverbs teaches us that, but trusting in my planning is evil. Our hope must be in the Lord, we are not to have tremendous confidence in the things we are planning for it can, like life, be a vapor. To watch people invest their whole life into something that

is apart from the Lord, and then to watch it, or their marriage, go down into a vapors is such a waste of life:

(Matthew 6:19 NKJV) "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal;

(Matthew 6:20 NKJV) "but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

(Matthew 6:21 NKJV) "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

(James 4:17 NKJV) Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.

There are those who say, "I'm going to do this. I'm going to retire there. I've got my future all worked out." But when asked if they're going to church on Sunday or if they'll have devotions tomorrow, they say, "If the Lord wills." Do you see the irony? "I'm going skiing next week, or on vacation in July," we say. But regarding church tomorrow night, we say, "We'll see what God has in store." We have it backward! We should be saying, "I may go skiing next week if God wills. Or, I may take a vacation in July if that's what the Lord has for me. But as for going to church on Sunday? I'll be there absolutely!" That's why James says, "If you know what's right, but hide behind the excuse of waiting for God's leading before doing it, it's sin."

This is what we call the sin of omission. Now there are many sins of commission. I commit an evil. But there are also many sins of omission. Things that I should do that I don't do are just as sinful as things that I do that I shouldn't do. And as a child of God, there are many things that are required of me. And if I know to do good and I have the opportunity to do good, and I don't do it, it is just as sinful as doing something I should not have done—sins of omission. And we're all of us, guilty of both. Sins of omissions, sins of commission

(James 5:1 NKJV) Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you!

(James 5:2 NKJV) Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten.

(James 5:3 NKJV) Your gold and silver are corroded, and their corrosion will be a witness against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have heaped up treasure in the last days.

(James 5:4 NKJV) Indeed the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.

(James 5:5 NKJV) You have lived on the earth in pleasure and luxury; you have fattened your hearts as in a day of slaughter.

(James 5:6 NKJV) You have condemned, you have murdered the just; he does not resist you.

Sermon on Mount Cross-Reference:

(Matthew 6:19 NKJV) "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal;

Jesus gave a picture of this in His teachings:

(Luke 12:16 NKJV) Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully.

(Luke 12:17 NKJV) "And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?'

(Luke 12:18 NKJV) "So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods.

(Luke 12:19 NKJV) 'And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry."

(Luke 12:20 NKJV) "But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?'

The Great Tribulation

Revelation 18, shows the ultimate culmination of this on the earth, and God judges swiftly, in one hour, he crushes man's economic center, and man's self-dependence, He leaves them weeping:

(Revelation 18:1 NKJV) After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory.

(Revelation 18:2 NKJV) And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird!

(Revelation 18:3 NKJV) "For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury."

(Revelation 18:4 NKJV) And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues.

(Revelation 18:5 NKJV) "For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.

(Revelation 18:8 NKJV) "Therefore her plagues will come in one day; death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her.

(Revelation 18:9 NKJV) "The kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning,

(Revelation 18:10 NKJV) "standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come.'

(Revelation 18:11 NKJV) "And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore:

God says to rejoice, for man's self-dependence on riches has lead many to the pit of hell:

(Revelation 18:20 NKJV) "Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her!"

(Revelation 18:21 NKJV) Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "Thus with violence the great city Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall not be found anymore.

Remember Abraham and Lot / Destruction of Sodom

Refer back to our studies on the life of Abraham and Lot (Revelation 19). Lot and wife were devastated over the destruction of Sodom, but as for Abraham I am sure He was sad for the people, but not for the material loss, for Abraham's life was defined by two things, he pitched tents and built altars. Abraham had not invested a dime in Sodom, and when judgement came it did not disturb him because there was nothing in Sodom that attracted him.

The Test of the World's Influence, and the Test of Dependence, so how are we doing?

Chapter 5

The Test of Endurance (5:1-11)

Producing the Person through the Process of the Promise

Written by James / Didn't believe – to Leader / Hindsight / Everyday Living

The Book of James was written by none other than Jesus' brother James. James was a leader in the church, a pillar in the church (Acts 21). James didn't believe that Jesus was God when He walked this earth (John 7:5); but after the resurrection Jesus appears to him (1 Cor 15:4-7), and everything changed. James is going to write us this letter, he will talk about everyday practical stuff. He will talk about trials in life, our works, our tongue, prayer, and other things; as he writes these things, no doubt he will be remembering how Jesus handled them, reflecting back on watching situations, and watching his oldest brother. He will reflect on Jesus' life of love, and a life of sinlessness, in a world that can be so hateful at times, and so full of sin. James will write these things based on hindsight, based on first hand witnessing of how his older brother lived life, everyday. James watched Jesus handle everyday life, and that is what this book is about; it is about living everyday life as a Follower of God, in a fallen world.

Jesus Rubbed Off / Nature Illustrations / Favorite Teacher - Sermon on Mount

We can see how much Jesus rubbed off on James, for James style resembles his brother so much. Like Jesus used nature as illustrations for His teaching points, so does James some 30 times. He uses nature analogies such as the sea, flowers, sun, fire, horses and ships to name a few). It is obvious who James favorite teacher was, because this epistle covers every topic that Jesus covered in the Sermon on the Mount. There is amazing parallelisms between the two; James does not actually quote the Lord's words, but he obviously had internalized Jesus' teachings and reproduced them with spiritual depth. Jesus covered about 30 topics in the Sermon on the Mount, and we will see that James touches on every one of them in this epistle. The Book of James is Sermon on the Mount 2. The Book is also very quick and concise, moving from thought-to-thought quickly. So the Book of James is the New Testament Version of the Old Testament Proverbs. It resembles Proverbs because it is very poetic the way it flows its thoughts using illustrations and analogies.

So We can Examine Self / How am I Doing

Jesus gave the Sermon on the Mount so that we might examine ourselves and ask the question, "so how am I doing in each of these areas?" James writes to the church, to us, and as we read, we have to ask ourselves, "so how am I doing in these areas?" This book is practical and applicable for us living in the year 2004, and the ultimate goal of this epistle is giving to us in verse 4 of chapter 1, to bring us into maturity, perfect and lacking nothing.

Theme of the Book of James:

(James 1:4 NKJV) But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

(James 1:5 NKJV) If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

As in school, we take tests to see how much of a handle and mastery we have on a subject, we will do the same in this book:

The Outline of the Book of James:

Chapter 1

- Introduction (1:1)
- The Test of Perseverance and Suffering (1:2-12)
- The Test of Blame in Temptation (1:12-18)
- The Test of Response to the Word (1:19-27)

Chapter 2

- The Test of Partiality (2:1-9)
- The Test of the Law (2:10-13)
- The Test of Faith and Works (2:14-26)

Chapter 3

- The Test of the Tongue (3:1-12)
- The Test of Wisdom Applied (3:13-18)

Chapter 4

- The Test of the World's Influence (4:1-12)

The Test of Dependence (4:13-17)
Chapter 5
The Test of Endurance (5:1-11)
The Test of Prayerfulness (5:12-20)

Their Going Through It / A Message to Endure

We started this book out with:

(James 1:1 NKJV) James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad: Greetings.

(James 1:2 NKJV) My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials,

These people are going through it, no doubt many are ready to hang it up. Have you, or are you there? Well this is a message, a passage, for us to endure, to continue on, to hold on to the promises that God has given us. In this passage of James God gives encouragement, and a promise to hold on to.

(James 5:7 NKJV) Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain.

(James 5:8 NKJV) You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

(James 5:9 NKJV) Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!

(James 5:10 NKJV) My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience.

(James 5:11 NKJV) Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord; that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.

Sermon on Mount Cross-Reference:

(Matthew 7:1 NKJV) "Judge not, that you be not judged.

(Matthew 7:2 NKJV) "For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.

Sermon on Mount Cross-Reference:

(Matthew 5:12 NKJV) "Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Sermon on Mount Cross-Reference:

(Matthew 7:15 NKJV) "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.

(Matthew 7:16 NKJV) "You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles?

(Matthew 7:17 NKJV) "Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.

(Matthew 7:18 NKJV) "A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit.

(Matthew 7:19 NKJV) "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

(Matthew 7:20 NKJV) "Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

Sermon on Mount Cross-Reference:

(Matthew 5:6 NKJV) Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.

(Matthew 5:7 NKJV) Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy.

Potato Sacks / 5 – 10 – 25 – 50 - 100

An email had come out some time ago, maybe you got it. I thought it funny, not hysterically funny, but funny. It was written to keyboard jockeys, those who live behind a computer, who are getting a little soft. So a training program was designed and developed for them that consisted of getting potato sacks, one in each and holding them out to their sides. You would start with a 5-pound sack in each hand and hold them out for one minute at a time, doing this 3 times a week. As you would get in better shape you would change to a 10 pound sack and do the same, then eventually if you stayed faithful you would graduate to a 25-pound sack, then a 50, and then ultimately a 100 pound potato sack, holding one in each and out to your side for one minute. Then the instruction said once you have achieved this level, it was time to actually start putting potatoes into the sack.

That's How God Works / A Verse – Promise – Call – Word / For Our Life – Home –Family - Ministry

Funny but in a way that is how God works with us in a sense, in that God gives us something to hold on to; He gives us a verse, a promise, a call, some word from heaven about our life, what He wants for our life, desires for our life, about our home, our family, our marriage, our ministry. He says hold on to this, grab on to this promise, this potato sack, believe me and trust me for it.

Empty Promise / Hasn't Happened / Strength Just to Take It

Initially it takes all the faith in the world just to hold on to it, its empty, its just a promise, it isn't real, it hasn't happened, we are so far from it in a matter of fact that just to believe that it could ever be so takes all the strength in us just to claim it. Just to take that verse and put it in our pocket, or post it on the refrigerator, or tack it to the mirror and say I believe it God. It almost seems ludicrous to even claim it for it seems so unattainable. Just to believe it and hold it out for a few moments at a time takes all we got.

Learn Twice / 1st Hear it's a Wonderful Concept / Now Try It Out

So often that is how God works, for everything we learn, we have to learn twice. The first time we hear it we say ohh yes, that is wonderful, it rings true in our hearts once we read it, or hear it preached. We say yes, this is true. But it isn't yours yet for you haven't learned it yet, for all you got was the concept. God has a way of giving something to us and then he comes and says do you believe it? Then lets try it out. That is when we so often say ohh no Lord, not me, I just wanted to subscribe to it, I don't actually want to try it. I don't want to endure all that comes with it, all that it is going to take to make it come to pass. I just want it to come to pass, I don't want to go through the testing and endurance it will take to get there.

Sharing with Others / Words Mock Us / Trouble Holding on to them Myself

How many times in our lives we have preached or shared things with others, things I believe theologically to be true, but experientially I am still struggling with personally. At the very same time I am sharing these things with others, those very promises are mocking me for they have not yet be fully claimed by me. I am having trouble holding on to these things myself, they are just empty potato bags.

God gives and Says Hold on to Them / But They seem so Far Away

God has a way that He works with us; He gives us a promise about our marriage, finances, children, health, or ministry where He calls us and gives it to us and says claim these as your own. But at the time it is given to us it may be far far away.

Our Family

He gives us a word for our family like:

(Psalms 128:3 NKJV) Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine In the very heart of your house, Your children like olive plants All around your table.

(Isaiah 44:3 NKJV) For I will pour water on him who is thirsty, And floods on the dry ground; I will pour My Spirit on your descendants, And My blessing on your offspring;

(Isaiah 54:13 NKJV) All your children shall be taught by the LORD, And great shall be the peace of your children.

(Isaiah 54:14 NKJV) In righteousness you shall be established; You shall be far from oppression, for you shall not fear; And from terror, for it shall not come near you.

Israel in Shambles / Empty Sacks / Maybe That's You

When these promises were given to the people of Israel their nation was in shambles and chaos. Yet these promises were given to be claimed. Imagine what it must have been for Isaiah to have to preach this promise. It was like an empty potato sack, it was just a promise, the people would want to claim it, but how. Maybe that is your family today, God has given you a promise about your family, but it is in shambles and you ask how could that be God, it seems so far away. Yet God says take these sacks and hold on to them.

Our Salvation

He gives us a word about our salvation:

(James 5:7 NKJV) Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain.

(James 5:8 NKJV) You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

People Dispersed / Empty Sacks / Maybe that's You

These people James was writing to were dispersed, they were spread out from family and home, everything seemed so far away, especially the coming of the Lord. But the Lord says hold on to your sack, hold on to these promises. Maybe your walk has become dry, lifeless, like the Lord seems so far away, God says hold on to your promise, hold on to your sack, it will come to pass

Our Provisions

He gives us a word for our daily provision:

(Psalms 147:14 NKJV) He makes peace in your borders, And fills you with the finest wheat.

(Joel 2:26 NKJV) You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, And praise the name of the LORD your God, Who has dealt wondrously with you; And My people shall never be put to shame.

Making Ends Meet – How / God says Claim It

You are just trying to make ends meet and you hear this word and you say Lord how could it ever be. Yet God gives us a promise and says claim-it. Now I'm not talking name it claim it, you know that. But we are to take God at His word, His promise, and know they will come to pass.

Our Marriage

He gives us a word for our marriage:

(Genesis 2:24 NKJV) Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

(Proverbs 5:18 NKJV) Let your fountain be blessed, And rejoice with the wife of your youth.

Not Much Rejoicing / Not Much Unity

You may say there isn't much rejoicing going on in our marriage, there isn't much unity, but God says claim this, take it, trust and rely on me and me only.

Our Protection

He gives us a word for His protection upon us:

(Psalms 27:1 NKJV) The LORD is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid?

David in a Cave

David at the time he writes this was in a cave surrounded by 3,000 men of Israel, no way out, waiting to kill him, yet he writes you light and my protection. Is there is something you are afraid of today? Has God given you a word and a promise not to fear, then He says hold on to your promise.

Our Ministry

He gives us a word for our ministry:

(Acts 9:15 NKJV) But the LORD said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel.

To Use You

Maybe God has given you a word, a Scripture, a Vision of using you for His glory, but right now you seem to be stuck in neutral, or maybe you have blown it and you question if that was really from the Lord. That the promise seems so impossible that it couldn't be from the Lord.

That is How God Is

God gives us a word, a promise, and then there is a a period between it being given, to it comes to pass. That is how God is.

Think of Abraham / Genesis 12

Think of when He came to Abraham at age 75, and gave him a 100-pound sack and said hold this. In Genesis 12 he said get thee out of thee county and go to a land I will show you, and I will make you a great nation, a nation that will bless the whole world, and I will give you a land to be your own. What an empty sack to hold on to. A promise to tell others this is what God is going to do, and I trust that He will.

Famine / Hagar – Tries to Fill the Sack / Gen 22 – Isaac / The Bag is Full – Over the years

Immediately after the promise to Abraham comes a famine in the land. He drops his sack and goes down to Egypt. But he returns and God gives him his sack back, and says hold on to this and don't let go of it. We see Abraham tries to fill his sack with his own potatoes, Hagar, but that didn't work. What he didn't realize that year after year, decade after decade, God was dropping potatoes into his sack, truths about his God, maturing him. Then in Genesis 22, almost 50 years later, it appears that the promise was his, in the son Isaac born to him. But then God says take thy son, thy only son, and offering him to me. When Abraham raised the knife God says stop, now I know that you fearest (reverence) me. But not only do I know, but now you know, you know that your bag is full. You haven't realized it, but over the years I have been dropping potatoes in your sack, you have been growing, and it's true, you've held on to the bags, and all the promises have come to pass.

We Don't Realize / 100-200 / Accomplished over the years

So often what I do not realize is that as I am waiting for the promise God is at work strengthening and maturing me. It is like weight training; I can remember in the 6th grade how my arms had quivered and struggled to push that 100 pounds up. But 6 years later benching 200 pounds my arms quivered and struggled the same as they did 6 years prior, but this time I am pushing twice the amount. Amazing what had been accomplished over that period of time. We see in Abraham's life, the person had been produced through the process of the promise. And so too will God do that in our lives.

Trust Me – Marriage – Kids – Finances – Ministry / They will come to Pass

God says trust me in your home, trust me in your marriage, trust me with your kids, trust me with your finances, trust me with your ministry, and these promises will come to pass, hold on to your sack.

Think of Joseph / The Dreamer

Then there is Joseph, young and innocent. He comes and tells his brothers of the dream God has given him, a potato sack, a promise. You guys are going to bow down before me, mom and dad too.

100 lb Sack / His Story / Stupid Sacks / 20 Years Later it Comes to Pass

God gives him a 100-pound sack, and says hold it, believe it. You know the rest of the story, thrown into a pit, then sold into slavery, then into a prison. I wonder at which point he said to himself what am I doing with these stupid sacks, these promises, how can they be true, why am I holding on to them, yet he does. He sticks with the Lord; he lived a life of integrity, he lived uprightly before the Lord. Imagine, when he was in prison he interpreted others' dreams, and he watched them come to pass, yet they forget him. I wonder if he ever thought God had forgotten him, but God never did. He is freed, and becomes second in all the land, then finally after some 20 years, the promise comes to pass as his brothers come to the land to buy food in the famine.

If Bowed Down 1st – Nothing Accomplished – Nobody Saved

Twenty years, imagine if they would have bowed down to him right after he told them the dream, the word, the promise from the Lord, nothing would have been accomplished, nobody would have been saved, the whole nation Israel saved through him.

Person – Produced – Process – Promise / Inside = Outside / Same in Our Lives

What is most important about the story is that the man, the person had been produced through the process of the promise. What was on the inside of the sack measured up to what the outside said. That is what God is doing in our lives through the promises He gives us, He never changes, as He worked in Abraham and Joseph, so is He working in us. God is producing the person through the process of the promise.

Think of Moses / The Deliverer

There is Moses, drawn out of the water, preserved for a future work of God. He too rises to second in the land, yet at the age of 40 God puts a promise in his heart that he would be the one to free God's people from their bondage.

The Promise – Moses Plan / 40 Years Desert / God Reminds him of the Promise

God gave him a promise, but that promise didn't come together as Moses had planned it out. He tried it his way, he killed an Egyptian, then spends 40 years on the backside of the desert hiding from Pharaoh, pushing sheep around, leading sheep rather than people. But God comes and reminds him of what was in his heart 40 years ago, to free the people of Israel. God says remember the promise I gave you, those potato sacks, its time.

Who Am I – Exactly / Bury the Egyptian Army

Now Moses says "ohh who am I". God says exactly, who are you, it is not who you are, but who I am, and what I can do in you. In your strength you couldn't bury one Egyptian without running out of fear for your life from the Pharaoh, but in my strength you will bury the Pharaoh's whole Egyptian army. You ran from him, but today you will stand before him and not quiver, but proclaim the power of your God.

Inside = Outside / 40yrs Earlier Too Arrogant / Person – Produced – Process – Promise

Now for Moses those sacks, that promise, now measures up on the inside of what it said on the outside. Had God used him 40 years he would have been too arrogant, but 40 years later, 40 years of carry these sacks around, God had been working in him (dropping potatoes into his sack), and now he is the most humble man on the earth, and the vessel was ready to be used by the Lord. He held on to those sacks as God worked in him to bring him into maturity and dependence upon God and God only. God prepared the person through the process of the promise.

David, Nehemiah, and Daniel / Person – Produced – Process – Promise

We could go on and talk about David, Nehemiah, and Daniel as we see over and over in the Scriptures God preparing the person through the process of the promise.

Some Dropped – Saul - Samson

But we also see in the Scriptures and the world around us today people who couldn't hold on to the sacks, people that dropped them, and dropped the promises. There was Saul promised a to be a great king, but ended in defeat and humiliation, there was Samson promised to be a great leader of Israel but he too ended in defeat and humiliation. God had given them a promise, the gifts, yet they couldn't hold on to the sacks.

What is the Difference

What is the difference between them and the heroes of the Bible we read about, those men and woman that we draw so much strength and encouragement from for our lives today? They saw the promise all the way through. Yes they may have dropped the sack, but they came back to pick it up. You may have let go of your promise sometime ago, but God is always waiting, and God is always saying here, take your sack again, carry it again. Others drop their sack and never come back for them, they don't endure, they fail the test of endurance.

What Sack Has God given you to Hold

What sack, what promise has the Lord given to you to hold on to/ Is it your kids, your marriage, your finances, your health, a ministry? Maybe the bag is empty, maybe there is a potato or two in it, maybe your bag is full and it is time for you to realize that, hold on to it, don't let go, hold on to God's promise to you no matter how tough it is.

Person – Produced – Process – Promise

God produces the person through the process of the promise. Christian don't ever let go of God's promise, hold on to those bags.

The Test of Endurance, so how are we doing?

The Test of Prayerfulness (5:12-20)

Written by James / Didn't believe – to Leader / Hindsight / Everyday Living

The Book of James was written by none other than Jesus' brother James. James was a leader in the church, a pillar in the church (Acts 21). James didn't believe that Jesus was God when He walked this earth (John 7:5); but after the resurrection Jesus appears to him (1 Cor 15:4-7), and everything changed. James is going to write us this letter, he will talk about everyday practical stuff. He will talk about trials in life, our works, our tongue, prayer, and other things; as he writes these things, no doubt he will be remembering how Jesus handled them, reflecting back on watching situations, and watching his oldest brother. He will reflect on Jesus' life of love, and a life of sinlessness, in a world that can be so hateful at times, and so full of sin. James will write these things based on hindsight, based on first hand witnessing of how his older brother lived life, everyday. James watched Jesus handle everyday life, and that is what this book is about; it is about living everyday life as a Follower of God, in a fallen world.

Jesus Rubbed Off / Nature Illustrations / Favorite Teacher - Sermon on Mount

We can see how much Jesus rubbed off on James, for James style resembles his brother so much. Like Jesus used nature as illustrations for His teaching points, so does James some 30 times. He uses nature analogies such as the sea, flowers, sun, fire, horses and ships to name a few). It is obvious who James favorite teacher was, because this epistle covers every topic that Jesus covered in the Sermon on the Mount. There is amazing parallelisms between the two; James does not actually quote the Lord's words, but he obviously had internalized Jesus' teachings and reproduced them with spiritual depth. Jesus covered about 30 topics in the Sermon on the Mount, and we will see that James touches on every one of them in this epistle. The Book of James is Sermon on the Mount 2. The Book is also very quick and concise, moving from thought-to-thought quickly. So the Book of James is the New Testament Version of the Old Testament Proverbs. It resembles Proverbs because it is very poetic the way it flows its thoughts using illustrations and analogies.

So We can Examine Self / How am I Doing

Jesus gave the Sermon on the Mount so that we might examine ourselves and ask the question, "so how am I doing in each of these areas?" James writes to the church, to us, and as we read, we have to ask ourselves, "so how am I doing in these areas?" This book is practical and applicable for us living in the year 2004, and the ultimate goal of this epistle is giving to us in verse 4 of chapter 1, to bring us into maturity, perfect and lacking nothing.

Theme of the Book of James:

(James 1:4 NKJV) But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

(James 1:5 NKJV) If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

As in school, we take tests to see how much of a handle and mastery we have on a subject, we will do the same in this book:

The Outline of the Book of James:

Chapter 1

- Introduction (1:1)
- The Test of Perseverance and Suffering (1:2-12)
- The Test of Blame in Temptation (1:12-18)
- The Test of Response to the Word (1:19-27)

Chapter 2

- The Test of Partiality (2:1-9)
- The Test of the Law (2:10-13)
- The Test of Faith and Works (2:14-26)

Chapter 3

- The Test of the Tongue (3:1-12)
- The Test of Wisdom Applied (3:13-18)

Chapter 4

- The Test of the World's Influence (4:1-12)
- The Test of Dependence (4:13-17)

Chapter 5

- The Test of Endurance (5:1-11)
- The Test of Prayerfulness (5:12-20)

Intensely Practical / In Your Face / Hebrews / Earthly Scene /Promised Blessing

This book is an intensely practical book that packs a powerful punch. James is the kinda book that is in your face, and get it right. In Hebrews we explored the heavenly scene, now James we explore the earthly scene. It was wonderful spending a few months in the heavenlies, I could have stayed in Hebrews for another year, but the fact is until heaven, we are living here (so the blessings of verse-by-verse studying). Studying this book will have a great effect on you, This book is that practical, God even promises us that as we saw last study:

(James 1:25 NKJV) But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

Test of Prayer / Power Source / Disciples Ask Teach us to Pray

Finally we close this wonderful book with the "Test of Prayerfulness". Prayer is our power source. The disciples came to Jesus and said teach us to pray. I find that so interesting that they didn't say master teach us how to preach, teach us how to perform miracles, teach us how to walk on water, but they asked teach us to pray. They knew the power in it, for they observed by personal observation that Jesus power came through His prayer time with the Father. They saw it in His preaching, evangelism, miracles, loving on the kids to the compassion on a sick woman. They could see that all those things tied back to His prayer and commune with the Father. That all success and fruit flowed from his prayer life.

(Luke 11:1 KJV) And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

Outline

Outline: The Test of Prayerfulness (5:12-20)

- The Prayers for the Mind – (5:12-13)
- The Prayers for the Body – (5:14-15)
- The Prayers for the Soul – (5:16)
- The Prayers of the Righteous – (5:16-20)

The Prayers for the Mind – (5:12-13)

(James 5:12 NKJV) But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. But let your "Yes," be "Yes," and your "No," "No," lest you fall into judgment.

Sermon on Mount Cross-Reference:

(Matthew 5:33 NKJV) "Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.'

(Matthew 5:34 NKJV) "But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne;

(Matthew 5:35 NKJV) "nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.

(Matthew 5:36 NKJV) "Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black.

(Matthew 5:37 NKJV) "But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.

Slipped in Here

This verse is kind of slipped in here between the Test of Endurance and the Test of Prayerfulness. But it is really something that we need to have consistency and endurance in, and we need to continually be praying that the Lord would make us man and woman of our Word. We need the power of God to do that.

But Above All

Interesting, all the things that James has said (glance at the book outline), yet he says "but above all", let your yes be yes. Why, because our words are important, as we have studied they either delight or they destroy, they communicate what is truly in our hearts, what type of person we really are.

In Accordance of All we have Studied

James says do what you say, say what you will do, all in accordance with what we have studied, in the integrity of what we have studied, do it in accordance to what we have studied and you will never have to promise, just says what you are going to do and people will believe that is what you will do, you will never have to promise because your words are promise enough.

Teaching Our Kids This

Letting your yes be yes, and your no, no, is one of the most powerful witnesses a Christian has. I go through this a lot with my 10 year old. He will say something to a friend, but then a better deal comes along in the meantime and he wants to change. I tell him that he has to let his yes be yes, for even at 10 your friends will see it. Parents develop this in your child, let them see the importance of their words, and their promises.

God Honors Your Yes

Know this believer, God honors your yes - yes. He will bless it because you submitted to His Word, and not your emotions or flesh.

(James 5:13 NKJV) Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms.

Sermon on Mount Cross-Reference:

(Matthew 6:6 NKJV) "But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

(Matthew 6:7 NKJV) "And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.

(Matthew 6:8 NKJV) "Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.

Sermon on Mount Cross-Reference:

(Matthew 6:17 NKJV) "But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face,

(Matthew 6:18 NKJV) "so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

Emotional Troubles / Go to the Lord First

Verse 13 - Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Suffering - other translations say afflicted or tormented. It is speaking of emotion troubles, not physical ailments (that's next verse). Is there something eating away at your emotions, then pray! Go to the lord first:

(Jeremiah 33:3 NKJV) 'Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.'

Don't turn on the television, or go to the bar, but pray. Also, don't go tell everyone; don't email everyone on your distribution list; those things are fine; don't do them until after you pray. We have a tendency to pray after we have done all the other things.

Only God can Straighten Out / Always Point People to Jesus

God is the only one that can straighten it out, go to Him first. Here is an important ministry key, always point people to the Lord. Never try to be their sole place of comfort, let's face it we can't stand seeing our loved ones suffer, and we want to fix it, and get them out of their pain. Again that is fine, but only as an extension of God's love and comfort. This is important for you parents, start early and start young, bringing your kids to Jesus for their comfort. Teach them to come to Jesus, teach them to seek their Heavenly Father in times of needs, so that when they grow and mature it will be a way of life for them. That is hard for a parent because a parent wants to be wanted and needed.

We are so Complicated / God not a Force – Shepherd – Father – Groom - Savior

Here is what I have come to realize after years of ministry, human beings are so complicated, who can understand them. How can I fully understand someone when emotions come into play. I even don't understand myself a lot of times, but God always does, and He will speak to me, and minister to me. Emotions sometimes effects our health, or sometimes health effects our emotions, or the weather, lighting in a room, we are so complicated, so dynamic, that I can not understand all that is going on, all the questions, but I do understand the answer - Jesus Christ. He is not a cosmic-force, He is the Shepherd, a Father, the Groom, He is the living Savior and He calls us who are afflicted into fellowship with Him. It is by His power we are or will be comforted, delivered, and given peace. Call unto Me and I will show you great and mighty things which you do not know.

Sing Psalms / Valleys and Mountains

Verse 13 - *Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms.* Are things going well for you, then sing unto the Lord, give Him praise. When you are in the valley seek God, when you are on the mountain sing to God. In either case God has allowed the situation for you. Why did James put this here? Because when we are afflicted in the valley we pray with fervency for the Lord's presence, but on the mountaintop we so easily forget Him.

Worship is Prayer

Do you realize that worship is also prayer? If you haven't realized this, or haven't tried this, then take your praise and make it a prayer from your heart. Think of a worship song, then think of it as a prayer unto God:

- More Love: *More love, more power, more of you in my life, and I will sing your praise, with all of my heart*
- Simple Song of Love: *My heart is glad, that you call me your own, there is no place I'd rather be, than in your arms of love, holding me close, holding me near, in your arms of love.*
- Your Love oh Lord: *And I will lift my voice, to worship you my king, and I will find my strength, In the shadow of your wings*

4 Areas of Prayer – Worship Too

Prayer falls into one of these four areas, and all worship songs will too (See Study – Acts the Prayer):

- Acknowledgment - Acknowledging Him for all that He is, Creator, Savior, all-powerful, all loving.
- Confession - confessing all things that break and disrupt our communion and fellowship with Him
- Thanksgiving - thanking Him for all that He has done for us, from salvation to daily provisions.
- Supplication - Coming to Him as our Father, seeking Him to supply all our needs and the needs of others.

Your Worship Will never be the Same

Pray your worship, in good times and hard times, all the time, and your worship will never ever be the same.

The Prayers for the Body – (5:14-15)

(James 5:14 NKJV) Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.

(James 5:15 NKJV) And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.

Sick - *astheneo*, as-then-eh'-o; to be feeble (in any sense):--be diseased, impotent folk (man), (be) sick, (be, be made) weak. This sickness means to be laid down and unable to get up. We see this word used in the following Scriptures;

Lazarus

(John 11:1 NKJV) Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.

Sick man at pool of Bethesda,

(John 5:5 NKJV) Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years.

(John 5:6 NKJV) When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been in that condition a long time, He said to him, "Do you want to be made well?"

Dorcas (Tabitha) in Acts that Peter came to:

(Acts 9:36 NKJV) At Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas. This woman was full of good works and charitable deeds which she did.

(Acts 9:37 NKJV) But it happened in those days that she became sick and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in an upper room.

Person Without Strength / Request Elders / Humble Thyself – Lay down Pride

This is a situation where the body is without the strength or response to move on its own. These people are to request the elders (plural) and the elders are to come to them. Notice it is the responsibility of

those who are sick to call upon the elders, not the elders to call upon them. People say I was sick and nobody came to visit me, possibly nobody knew. But what the Lord is saying here is that the sick person is to call for prayer, because asking for prayer is a very humbling thing, it is a place of I can do nothing in and of myself, I need help:

(James 4:10 NKJV) Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

A person who won't call for prayer, isn't humble, but proud

(James 4:6 NKJV) But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."

Elders Plural

Notice that it is elders plural. It is plural so that if God should heal, no one person can take the credit. God is protecting the elder from their flesh and ego. God is so wise.

Oil Symbolic of Holy Spirit

Verse 14 - anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: They are to anoint the sick person with oil. Oil in the Scriptures is symbolic of the Holy Spirit, God Himself coming upon the person. In Mark 6 we saw the disciples anointed with oil before they were sent out for ministry, it was symbolic of being empowered by God for the work of the ministry. In Luke 10 we see oil was used medicinally to heal the sick. In both cases it represents God moving and working in the person's life. God empowering, or God healing, for He is a God that is personally and intimately involved in every persons life whether they are doing miracles in His name, or need a miracle in His name.

(James 5:15 NKJV) And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.

Sick – Everyday / Repercussion of Sin

Verse 15 - And the prayer of faith will save the sick - This word for sick is different from the one in verse 14, it is your everyday illness. kamno, kam'-no; appar. a prim. verb; prop. to toil, i.e. (by impl.) to tire (fig. faint, sicken):--faint, sicken, be wearied.

Verse 15 - And the prayer of faith will save the sick – In a moment we will talk about the prayer of faith when we talk about the prayers of the righteous.

Verse 15 - And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. - the idea here is if that the sickness could be a repercussion of a sinful lifestyle. Sexually Transmitted Diseases, Drugs, Alcohol. But the God of grace says He will forgive their sins.

Wrong to Put Trip on People / We Live in a Fallen World

Now all sickness is not the result of sin. We live in a fallen world and it is wrong to put that trip on someone with cancer, leukemia, blindness, etc, that they are sick because there is an unrepentant sin in their life. People thought this in Jesus day, but Jesus set them straight in John 9:

(John 9:1 NKJV) Now as Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth.

(John 9:2 NKJV) And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

(John 9:3 NKJV) Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him.

Because sin came into the world with Adam and Eve, we are all subject to it's effects. It has been said that "Time is the rate of decay, and the clock started ticking in the garden". We live in a world that has rejected Christ as Supreme Ruler, and this world will continue to pass away until Jesus comes back to establish His Kingdom forever. Beloved, if you have an illness such as cancer, blindness, etc, don't beat yourself up and think it is something you have done, or that God doesn't love you, rather know that we live in a fallen world and are subject to the circumstances of living in a fallen world. (Also, if life just seems to be a constant trial or suffering, don't think it is because God is mad at you and punishing you, just know you live in a fallen world.)

The Prayers for the Soul – (5:16)

(James 5:16 NKJV) Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

Not Telling Everyone Our Sin / Accountability

Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another - Now I do not see this verse meaning that we are to go tell everyone in the congregation our sins. What I believe we have here is accountability. I read this more as share your faults one to one. Sharing with everyone, leads to too much gossip. We saw in chapter 3 that people this letter was written to had to be rebuked for their tongue, so be careful who you share your secrets with.

Story - 3 Pastors

Three pastors had gone on a retreat. As they were rooming together, they decided, here in James, confess your faults one to another. Pray for one another that you might be healed. The first pastor confessed to a problem with alcohol. And how that he kept a bottle even stashed in his desk at the church. The second pastor confessed to a problem with stealing. They turned to the third and they said, what about you brother? He said, well, I have a real problem with gossip and I can't wait to get out of here! So be careful who you confess to!

Story – Church that Practiced This

I remember a church that practiced this verse as such, and a man confessed that he had desires for another man's wife in the church. So they had him confess that before the whole church, and guess what, 30 days later the two of them ran off together. The thought was planted in her mind, and Satan energized it, glamorized it, and she bought into started to play it in her mind. In the end everybody was wrecked.

Trusted Brother / Shared Struggles / That Phone Call

The finding of that trusted brother that you can share your struggles with, and that you can pray with each other, pray for each other, and then when needed, call that brother and say how are you doing in that area my brother. I can't tell you how many times it has happened for me, or for a brother, where the Lord lays it on my heart to pray for a brother that I am holding accountable, and the Lord leads me to call him, and he says man I am glad you called, I struggling right now. Or they may say, I was about to blow it the other day, but I knew you would be calling and asking how am I doing in that area and I didn't want to have to say lousy. If you don't have a "one to a one" in your life, then pray and ask the Father to bring one into your life. It is power, it brings healing as it says here in verse 16, it brings victory.

The Prayers of the Righteous – (5:16-20)

(James 5:16 NKJV) The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

(James 5:17 NKJV) Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months.

(James 5:18 NKJV) And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.

I like the NIV translation better:

(James 5:16 NIV)The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

Count Me Out / Righteous in Christ

Right away we can say this counts me out, I can't measure up to this, the fervent prayers of a "righteous man" avails much. I'm not very righteous; I've blown it too many times. Remember as we have studied we are no more righteous today, then the day we first got saved. We may be more spiritually mature, but not more righteous. Do you believe that your sins separated you from God, and that Jesus took your place of guilt and shame, the punishment that was due you, have you professed Him as Lord and Savior and repented (turned) from a life of habitual sin? If so then you are righteous because of Jesus, not anything you can do:

(2 Corinthians 5:21 NKJV) For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Prayer From the Heart / Elijah Our Proof / Bible Guy

Verse 16 – effective fervent prayer - means sincere prayer, The prayer that's from the heart. The prayer that often rises out of desperation, out of tremendous need. We don't have to be perfect for God to hear our prayers, and James uses Elijah as proof of that. He points out to us that Elijah was a man with a nature just like ours. You remember his story (1 Kings 17-19), he prayed that it would not rain for 3 1/2 years, and it didn't. Yet afterwards he had periods where he was a big wimp, hiding from a woman Jezebel in a cave. Elijah was just a plain, ordinary person like us. He wasn't anything special. He was just an ordinary person, like passions that we have. Christian, Elijah never knew he was going to be a Bible guy (well I am a Bible Guy therefore I know my prayers are special), no he was just like us, and when he prayed, God worked.

Prayer Closet Not in Vain / Rev 5:8 / G Morgan

Verse 17-18 are for us, God is saying your prayers in the prayer closet are not in vain, that things do change and things are effected, look at Elijah, he was just a person of flesh and blood like you, yet God answered his prayers. Christian not one prayer ever goes unheard before God; believe that (Rev 5:8). Some woman said to G Campbell Morgan, I only bring the big things to God for prayer. He said, ma'am, nothing you bring to God is a big thing, to Him all things are little. Nothing is too difficult for Him, so bring everything to Him:

(Revelation 5:8 NKJV) Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

(Jeremiah 32:27 KJV) Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me?

Pray So Satan can Feel It / Why it is a Struggle to Pray

NIV translation, powerful and effective. Christian Pray so that Satan feels the pressure. Satan will let you get away with a lot of things, but one things he hates, and that is when you pray, because he knows the power behind it, he knows it changes things. That is why there is always a struggle for us to pray, a distraction, because he doesn't want us in contact with the power source, God the Father. I think, quite often, we're rather cavalier in our prayer; ok I said it, that's it for that prayer. But it's the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man, availeth much! Read the story of Elijah and we see he prayed seven times before the rain came:

(1 Kings 18:44 NKJV) Then it came to pass the seventh time, that he said, "There is a cloud, as small as a man's hand, rising out of the sea!" So he said, "Go up, say to Ahab, 'Prepare your chariot, and go down before the rain stops you.'"

(1 Kings 18:45 NKJV) Now it happened in the meantime that the sky became black with clouds and wind, and there was a heavy rain. So Ahab rode away and went to Jezreel.

I might also point out that prayers that are in accordance to the Word are always powerful, for they are backed by the breath of God. Elijah could pray that it would not rain, because God's Word backed that. God said if the nation would turn from Him and follow after false idols, God would bring a drought:

(Deuteronomy 11:16 NKJV) "Take heed to yourselves, lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them,

(Deuteronomy 11:17 NKJV) "lest the Lord's anger be aroused against you, and He shut up the heavens so that there be no rain, and the land yield no produce, and you perish quickly from the good land which the LORD is giving you.

Pray the Scriptures, and you pray the most powerful prayer (again, read the study- Acts: the prayer).

Why Doesn't God Heal All The Time

The question has to be asked, why doesn't God heal all the time, and for that I do not know the answer, other than His ways are above my ways.

(Romans 11:33 NKJV) Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!

(Romans 11:34 NKJV) "For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor?"

Don't Rely on Miracles / Finite Mind / Forget God / Word Endures Forever

One thing I have recognized over the years of walking with the Father is that he doesn't want people relying on the miracles, but His Word. Line by line, here a little, there a little, and it will change us. The miracles may change the circumstance, but it the Word that changes our lives. My finite mind can not comprehend a miracle, but my mind can comprehend His Word, and it is through His word that I come to

know Him, and be transformed into His image. I've watched people get miraculously healed, and then walk away from the Lord. I watched people cling to God during the hard times, eventually have victory over that disease, to get healed through modern medicine, only to walk away from the Lord. Miracles wear off, but His Word endures forever

(1 Peter 1:25 NKJV) But the word of the LORD endures forever." Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.

Pray Believing / Remember the Ultimate Healing

There is no reason not to pray believing God will close the heavens up, or open them up. But if God chooses not to heal, never forget His ultimate healing, the wiping away of sin and eternal death from you through the cross. If you ever doubt God's love, then look to the cross.

(Romans 5:8 NKJV) But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

(James 5:19 NKJV) Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back,

(James 5:20 NKJV) let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.

Go to that Brother

Don't be afraid to go to that brother or sister and seek to turn them away from their sin. This verse is still flowing from the previous verses, and I believe it is a reference to saving them from a physical death that sin will bring them. This isn't about saving their soul from damnation, for Jesus covers all of our sins with one drop of His precious blood, but here it says from a multitude of sins, so it can't be referring to salvation.

No Ending – it Never Ends

I like how this book ends, no closing, no benediction, no closing prayer and farewell, it just ends. James is pretty much saying, now go and do it, continue doing it, for these things never end, we are to keep doing all of them.

So how are we doing?

The Outline of the Book of James:

Chapter 1

Introduction (1:1)

The Test of Perseverance and Suffering (1:2-12)

The Test of Blame in Temptation (1:12-18)

The Test of Response to the Word (1:19-27)

Chapter 2

The Test of Partiality (2:1-9)

The Test of the Law (2:10-13)

The Test of Faith and Works (2:14-26)

Chapter 3

The Test of the Tongue (3:1-12)

The Test of Wisdom Applied (3:13-18)

Chapter 4

The Test of the World's Influence (4:1-12)

The Test of Dependence (4:13-17)

Chapter 5

The Test of Endurance (5:1-11)

The Test of Prayerfulness (5:12-20)

Our Hope

We look at the world around us, those who are hurting, the spiral decay of the world, the hopeless they have. But we have hope, hope in him, and hope in His soon return. That soon we will see and be in His presence, beholding His beauty, enraptured in His love. The world can offer us no remedy to the ails of this world, our only hope is in the Lord, and while we wait, may we pass all these tests.