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Unless otherwise indicated, the text is in the New King James Version

Timeline of the book of James

The Church is established at Pentecost	AD 30
Paul's conversion	AD 33
James the son of Zebedee is murdered	AD 44
Paul's first missionary journey	AD 47-48
<i>The book of James is written</i>	<i>AD 45-50</i>
Paul's second missionary journey	AD 49-52
Nero becomes Roman Emperor	AD 54
Romans is written	AD 58
Paul's third missionary journey	AD 56-58
Paul is under arrest in Rome	AD 60-61
Peter and Paul Martyred	AD 67
Nero, the Roman Emperor dies	AD 68
Destruction of Jerusalem	AD 70

JAMES

A practical look at Faith and Conduct

INTRODUCTION

Author

It is suggested that the author of this letter is either James, the brother of John, the son of Zebedee, or the James we know as the half brother of Jesus. James, the brother of John was martyred in A.D. 44. So because of the suggested date that this epistle was written, it is unlikely that he is the author. After the death of the son of Zebedee, no other James seemed to have significance as far as a role in the New Testament church other than James the brother of Jesus. The latter was one of the most prominent individuals in the formation of the new church age.

In looking at the personality of the author, there is a tremendous resemblance between the tone of this letter and the speech of James the brother of Jesus, at the council of Jerusalem in Acts chapter 15.

Josephus “Ant.,” xix. Gives us a date for the death of James between the death of Festus and the arrival of his successor Albinus in the year A.D. 62.

“Caesar having learnt the death of Festus, sends Albinus as governor of Judea...Ananus...supposing that he had a favorable opportunity in consequence of the death of Festus, Albinus being still on the way, assembled the Sanhedrin, and brought before it James (the brother of him who is called Christ), and some others, and having charged them with breaking the law, delivers them over to be stoned. But those in the city who seemed most moderate and most accurate in observing the law were greatly offended at this, and secretly sent to the king, entreating him to send Ananus with the request not to do these things, saying that he had not acted legally even before this.”

Character of the author

James, the half brother of Jesus, was the first Bishop or pastor of the mother church at Jerusalem. (*Acts 12:17, 15:13*). As an actual member of Jesus family, it is thought provoking to compare this writing with his direct observation of the lifestyle, temperament and attitude of Jesus for his everyday life. He watched Jesus in the use of words and of wisdom. He watched how Jesus responded to every challenge in which he was faced. This brings legitimacy to the heart understanding of this book.

James seemed to be an individual who was very zealous of the law. In dealing with Peter concerning liberation of the gentiles concerning the law, it is James who moves toward more restrictive clauses of the decree.

Galatians 2:12 told of Judaizers that came “from James”

Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; 12 for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. 13 And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy. 14 But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, "If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews? NKJV.

Although they probably embellished James position on the matter, and through that put a great deal of pressure on Peter, it indicates that James was very attentive and zealous of the law.

Object of the Epistle

Persecution had scattered these Jewish Christians (“To the twelve tribes ... scattered abroad” 1:1) and they were faced with the challenges that came from

these new conditions in which they were now living. Not just on the outside, but also on the inside. James writes to explain the “whys” of trials and tests, and the character of “hands on” Christian living. This book is truly the working side of Christianity.

James starts by the general characteristics of the Christian life. James has addressed difference topics like temptation or the power and influence of the tongue. But the thread that runs through the letter is their conduct, mostly toward the poor in the midst of a new land and opportunities. It appeared that these people had become envious and self-seeking. They were overbearing and defrauding those whom they were dealing with.

Date

It is believed that this epistle was one of the earliest books written to the Jewish - Christian community. Probably before A.D. 50, but was certainly between A.D. 48-62.

1. Introduction	1:1
2. Faith works in times of trials and temptations	
A. Trials that we as believers face	1:2-18
1. <i>The force of patience during tests and trials</i>	1:2-4
2. <i>Receiving wisdom by faith</i>	1:5-8
3. <i>The vanity of life and riches apart from God</i>	1:9-11
A. <i>The reward from enduring and overcoming temptation</i>	1: 12-18
1. <i>The temptations people bring upon themselves</i>	1:13-18
2. <i>The true source of temptation</i>	1:13-15
3. <i>The true nature of God</i>	1:17, 18
4.	
3. Proper response to the Word of God through hearing and doing	
A. Hearing only is insufficient to save the soul	1:19-21
B. Making the decision to look into and act on the word	1:1:22-25
C. The tongue as the expression of the heart	1:26, 27
4. Faith working through impartiality	2:1-13
A. The exhortation to remain impartial	2:1
B. An illustration of partiality	2:2-4
C. The arguments against partiality	2:5-13
1. <i>Consideration of the rich over the poor</i>	2:5-7
2. <i>It violates the royal law</i>	2:8-11
3. <i>Partiality in God's judgment</i>	2:12-, 13
5. Working faith, instead of empty and dead faith	
A. An appeal to reason for faith with works	2:14-20
1. <i>An example of active and Inactive faith</i>	2:14-17

2. <i>The vanity of faith without works</i>	2:18-20
B. Examples of working faith	2:21-26
1. <i>Abraham's faith was perfected by works</i>	2:21-24
2. <i>Rahab's faith was demonstrated by faith</i>	2:25-26
6. Faith at work through the power and responsibility of the tongue	
A. A sober warning	3:1, 2
B. The power of the tongue	3:2-12
1. <i>The tongue sets life in motion</i>	3:2-5
2. <i>The power and potential of the tongue</i>	3:5-6
3. <i>The comparison to taming an animal</i>	3:7, 8
4. <i>The misuse of the tongue</i>	3:9-12
C. The nature of wisdom	3:13-18
1. <i>The wise teacher</i>	3:13
2. <i>The description of worldly wisdom</i>	3:14-16
3. <i>The nature of Heavenly wisdom</i>	3:17, 18
7. The effects of worldliness and strife	
A. The effects of strife and conflict	4:1-3
B. Thinking contrary to the heart of God	4:4-6
C. A call to repentance	4:7-10
D. The pitfall of judging a brother	4:11, 12
E. Rebuke for fleshly boasting and disobedience	4:13-17
8. Admonitions for enduring and confronting afflictions with prayer	
A. Faith during afflictions	5:1-12
1. <i>Denunciation for misuse in riches</i>	5:1-6
2. <i>An exhortation to patient endurance</i>	5:7-12
B. The behavior in sickness and the prayer of faith	5:13-18
C. The call to restoration	5:19-20

Confronting the Issues of Faith and Conduct

THE LETTER OF JAMES

Chapter One

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

Receiving the title as bondservant for yourself is a positioning statement and not just a title. James was saying that his heart and his mind were not his own. This was a position from which he could not just speak of his will, but the will God and the Lord Jesus Christ, apart from personal motive. It is clearly an official designation of which he was passionate. Paul addressed the opening of his letters in the same way. *Romans 1:1, Philippians 1:1, Titus 1:1. Also Peter used it in 2 Peter 1:1 and Jude in verse 1.*

Because of persecution that broke out after Stephen was martyred (*Acts 7:55-8:3*), the Jewish Christians were scattered throughout the Roman world. What seemed tragic about this developed into a blessing. God makes everything turn toward His purpose. Because these believers were scattered, the gospel went with them. Hence, the beginning of the Christian faith was established throughout the world. It is worth mentioning that the book of James is one of the earliest books written and the mindset of this book was still toward the Jewish nation and not to the gentiles. The gentile Christian is virtually unmentioned, and there are some shades of question between the Jew and Christian. Both are addressed equally as belonging to the twelve tribes. In James mind, there was not so much of a “*new dispensation*”, as much as a blending and developing to the next level of the old.

2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials,

The emphasis of this epistle was on Christian living and conduct. It seems the most important topic as test and trials and how it affects them in their

day-to-day life. Remember whom James was addressing. He was speaking to people who had undergone tremendous persecution, and telling them how to overcome in the midst of trials and tests. That is his context. Two things are obvious here.

1. *The fruit of the Spirit, which is joy, is available at anytime and should be the predominant feature in the midst of trials.*
2. *It appears we must initiate it; Count it all joy when everything is wrong.*

“Count” is the Greek word “*Hegeomai*”, and it means, “*To lead*” or “*command with official authority*”. This is done by faith. You speak with authority in the midst of various trials and make the command for joy and faith. Trials faced with joy bring you to maturity and full development. Trials and temptation should be confronted by joy. Temptation should be regarded as opportunity.

One thing to remember is that godly Christians fall. (Greek *Geripipto*). We do not attain perfection in the sense of never making a mistake. Rather we encounter negative experiences and as we respond to them, they do a work in us depending on our response. If our response is negative, then the work it produces is negative. But if we respond with joy, it brings about a strength that empowers us, for the joy of the Lord is our strength (*Nehemiah 8:10*).

Various trials, (Greek *Peirasmos*), means to examine, to put to the proof. This may not necessarily be a temptation to sin, as we might know or think of sin. But rather something that reveals our boundaries of tolerance and impatience. If these boundaries are not expanded, then we do not grow. This takes us into the difference between tests from God and temptation to sin.

3 knowing that the testing of your faith works patience.

What is tested is what you believe. Your faith is tested. I don’t necessarily believe that trails and tests hurt your faith; rather they reveal the strength and substance of your faith. But make no mistake about it. When Satan is involved, it is your faith that is under attack. Not your finances, not your health. The spiritual battle is won or lost in the arena of faith.

He attacks faith with skepticism.
He attacks hope with cynicism
He attacks love with criticism

Jesus understood that it was our faith that was the object of attack. He said to Simon Peter in Luke 22:31-32:

*Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you that he might sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for you that your faith fail not.
KJV*

How many people today have dropped out of life, not because of sin but rather because they lost heart? The faith that once sustained their passion and drive was gone. They became discouraged. They couldn't see the goal anymore. Their faith failed.

1 John 5:14 said:

This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. KJV

You don't have a problem with victory. You have a problem with faith. This is why we are commanded to pray for those in authority over us.

According to this verse we face our trials with a sense of knowing. We know something. That is the anchor. That makes the difference in how we approach trials and tests. Faith is based on knowing.

Romans 10:17 "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God".

Knowing that "something" (God's word to you) ignites the fruit of patience to work in the midst of the test of your faith. Just as joy is, patience is also listed with the Fruit of the Spirit. You don't get more patience; you already have all that you will ever possess. It works like a muscle. It is strengthened. Trials and tests work patience. They turn patience on. Once patience is turned on it arrests every thought that comes against the Word of God. You recognize someone who is strong in patience by his or her consistency. They are not up one day and down the next. They are always the same. They know how it is going to turn out. Temptation here seems to be an opportunity, and is a cause for joy. Remember that Joy is not a result of your circumstances, or anything that comes from the outside. It is a part of your recreated human spirit and is listed among the fruit of the Spirit.

Although faith leaves your heart and goes to the mountain, patience is the garrison of the mind that stays home and protects or defends the city or the mind. It guards the mind from being run over with circumstances. This is very important in the time of trial or testing because you waver in your mind, and that is where the battle is won or lost. You must stay steady and consistent in your mind while your faith is gone to accomplish its task.

A misconception of this verse is that if you pray for patience, troubles and trials come. That is not true. When trials come, it turns on patience. Again, patience is already in you and is a part of the fruit of the spirit. When

trouble comes is when patience goes to work. What kind of work does it do? It is protecting your mind. The Greek word is *HUPOMONE* (5281 Strong's Greek dictionary). It means "cheerful (or hopeful), endurance, constancy, enduring". This is taken from a sister word, *HUPOMENO* (5278 Strong's Greek dictionary) that means, "to stay under (behind) to remain and undergo. To bare trials and have fortitude. To abide. To tarry behind". To look at patience in action we see its description in 2 Corinthians.

2 Corinthians 10:4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, 5 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, NKJV

Patience is the garrison of the mind, the soldier on guard that protects or defends the city. That is why Luke 21:19 says, "In your patience possess ye your souls". In this context Jesus was speaking of tribulation so severe that people were fleeing to the mountains for refuge, and in the midst of that he said, "In your patience possess ye your souls". You don't lose control of your mind, will or emotions when trials come.

Over and over, you find faith and patience mentioned together. You can be strong in faith and weak in patience and still fail in the time of trial and test. Look at the following scriptures and see where faith and patience are mentioned together. *Hebrews 6:12, James 1:3, Luke 8:15, Luke 21:19, Romans 5:3-4, Romans 8:25, Hebrews 10:36, Hebrews 12:1, James 1:4, 2 Thessalonians 1:4, 2 Corinthians 6:4.*

4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

This is a process, not a magic wand. Patience is working in you while in the midst that test. And what was meant for evil, God is working for good. Since we are to let patience do its perfect work, we must not obstruct nor hinder it through murmuring or complaining. How you respond to adversity determines the work it does in you. When he is talking about being "perfect and entire", he is saying, "that there may nothing lacking to develop and complete your character". Adversity is maturing and completing you. Just as the concept of the chicken inside the egg. What enables him to live in the outside world is the struggle on the inside of the egg. As he pecks at the wall of the egg, the struggle strengthens the neck of the baby chicken enough to live on the outside. The word "PERFECT" in the Greek text is "telelos" (5046 Strong's Greek dictionary). It means "Complete (In various applications of labor, growth, mental and moral character, etc) Completeness: - Of full age, man". This is why we count it

all joy. Joy strengthens you in the midst of your trial. The perfection attained here is for this life and not the life to come. Look at the following verse.

Hebrews 12:22-24: *But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, 23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, 24 to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel. NKJV*

This reference to men made perfect here in the now and not in a future state. It is here where men face trials and temptations. However, what they do here is a positioning tool that positions them for the life to come, otherwise stewardship and discipline loses its purpose. Like sand paper, patience is keeping you steady and strong while you are growing in faith and at the same time your life is developing by taking the rough edges off of you.

5 If any man lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

It is interesting that the previous verse says that we will lack nothing because of the work of patience, yet this verse says that if we lack wisdom, we should ask of God. Knowledge and hope comes from experience, but wisdom comes from God.

Romans 5:3-4 “And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; 4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope”:

Wisdom is not listed here. So in addition to being matured and perfected through your tests, ask God for wisdom. It's available! It is available to any man.

He gives liberally because He has abundantly.

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

Wisdom is as free and abundant as He who possessed it in the beginning. There is no reproach to asking for it because it only comes from Him. Wisdom is a gift from God. But notice that the text reads, “Any man”. Wisdom is available to any man who hungers for it. This is not just

speaking about Christians here. The first expression of wisdom is that God is revealed, that is why *Proverbs 9:10* reads,

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.”

When wisdom is revealed to a man’s heart, he will see God. The point here is that wisdom is available to any man, saved or not.

Another thought is that perfection comes through the avenue of wisdom. A man doesn’t mature or come to that complete and perfect state without wisdom.

God will not reproach you because of your past sins. He won’t mock, ridicule or scold you when you approach him in the petition for wisdom.

It is suggested here that the wisdom mentioned here is the specific wisdom to enable these people to endure their hardships and disappointments. Wisdom of this kind would enable us to discern the design and tendencies of our tests and trials so that we may submit to God in a proper manner. This scripture provide the assurance that God will absolutely provide wisdom to those who ask him. There is no partiality or withholding of His favor or wisdom because of your social standing or background. Listen to God’s heart as He implores His people to call upon Him for this kind of need.

Jeremiah 33:3

Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.’ NKJV

Jeremiah 29:12-14

12 Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. 13 And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. NKJV

6 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.

The condition to receiving anything from God is that it must be through faith. Therefore the battlefield is one of the mind. James gives a glimpse at what a man looks like that is weak, not only in faith but also patience. When patience goes to work, it guards the mind while faith is developing or working on the problem. Without the force of patience, this verse describes what you will look like when the storm arises. To doubt is to considering two things. You are a man of two minds. You will be tossed from one side to another depending on what direction the winds of

sickness, poverty or failure are blowing. You are tossed between belief and unbelief. Abraham is our example in Romans 4:20.

“He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;” KJV

7 For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord;

This is the sad result of being double minded in the midst of your tests and trials. Which is why many people today who love God, yet they seemingly pray and never get their prayers answered. God doesn't respond to problems, crisis or disaster. He responds to faith.

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

The Amplified version reads,

“For being as he is a man of two minds hesitating, dubious, irresolute he is unstable and unreliable and uncertain about everything he thinks, feels and decides.”

Again, this is what a man looks like who is weak in patience. He is a man of two minds. (dipsuchos) He is a man with two souls. This is only used here and in James 4:8. The pressure gets on him and he folds. He becomes a man of divided allegiance. See James 4:8 *“purify your hearts, you double-minded.”*

9 Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation,

The Greek text for the word “glory” is “KAUCHAOMAI” (2744 Strong's Greek Dictionary) *to vaunt or make a boast, to joy and rejoice.* This is to boast in spite of being lowly. This is a bigger than life perspective that we must all see. In verses 9 and 10 it is evident that there has been a great shift in the position of affluence and possession. He was encouraging them that those who have undergone a change on the outside should not follow the pattern of the world on the inside. Although the lesson of trials applies to all believers, he is specifically speaking to the kind of a trial where the circumstances of life have turned their life upside down, from affluence to poverty and from poverty to affluence. Exalted in the Greek is “HUPSOS” (5311 Strong's Greek Dictionary) *“Attitude and dignity: Be exalted (on) high. Elevation.”* Although this seems a departure from the theme, it actually solidifies it. Both the poor and the rich are affected by temptation and tests. And the inward reflections of ones heart must be right because whether high or low, your heart is and will be revealed.

Low degree (tapinos) speaks of humble circumstances. It could mean poverty or great dependence on others. It means low rank or employment. He mentioned the poor becoming rich because that many times is a greater temptation than the opposite. Many times those who have been poor cannot handle suddenly becoming rich. That is a greater concern to him.

10 but the rich in his humiliation, because as a flower of the field he will pass away.

The KJV says "*the rich in that he is made low.*" "Low" in the Greek is "*TAPEINOSIA*". It means "*Condition of the heart, abase, humble (self), Low estate, vile.*" Both verse 9 and verse 10 are still speaking of tests, trials and temptations. If you humble yourself before God, he will exalt you, but if you exalt yourself, He will humble you, and so will the tests and trials.

How can either of these two positions potentially serve as a trial, something that leads to perseverance and maturity? Because each person has their own trials and tests because of their position in life.

1 Corinthians 1:26 For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. 27 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; 28 and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, 29 that no flesh should glory in His presence. 30 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God--and righteousness and sanctification and redemption-- 31 that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the LORD." NKJV

This did not say that God does not use the rich, but they have their own unique temptations that they fall into. So the subject remains the same. Tests and trials come to all men because their hearts are revealed, and we must rejoice in the midst of them if we are to grow and mature.

One interpretation :(*From The Pulpit Commentary,*

(1) "But let the brother of low degree glory in his high estate [i.e. his Christian dignity]; but let the rich [brother glory] in his humiliation" (i.e. in being poor of spirit, Matt 5:3).

There are reasons for rejoicing as mentioned in these verses. One is that it is a declaration of your faith. You rejoice because of who you believe God

to be in your life. I rejoice because I believe He is God and no matter what my circumstances, He is more than enough. Listen to this verse.

Habakkuk 3:17-19

*17 Though the fig tree may not blossom,
Nor fruit be on the vines;
Though the labor of the olive may fail,
And the fields yield no food;
Though the flock may be cut off from the fold,
And there be no herd in the stalls--
18 Yet I will rejoice in the LORD,
I will joy in the God of my salvation.
19 The LORD God is my strength;
He will make my feet like deer's feet,
And He will make me walk on my high hills.
NKJV*

Rejoicing is the war cry of the believer. It is a declaration in the midst of the battle what we believe.

(As the flower of the grass, he will pass away) This is a fact for all of man kind. The rich man must understand, and most usually do understand, how fragile and passing wealth can be. So he should rejoice because he understands it, and rejoice in the midst of it. .

11 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.

This is the danger of pursuing wealth and position apart from God. Mark 4:19 talks about the deceitfulness of riches. Riches become deceitful when they become your source and you put your trust in them. No matter whom you are or what you do in this life it will wither and parish. This is the end of worldly pursuits. It lasts for a while, but doesn't sustain you when the heat comes up. Mark tells us that this mindset is what chokes the Word and makes it unfruitful. 1 Peter 1:23-25 gives the better description, which is taken from Isaiah.

*24 because "All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and its flower falls away,
25 But the word of the LORD endures forever." NKJV*

The real point to this verse is borne out in verse 25. If your life is built on anything other than the word of God, your wealth and pursuits will wither and parish.

(The rich man fades in all his pursuits or ways) This refers to his plans and purposes. Everything about him will parish or vanish. Therefore he should rejoice in anything that shows our character and true spirituality.

12 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.

Now James turns his attention to the inward problem that they are facing rather than the outward persecution. When things go wrong in your life, God looks first at your heart, then at your circumstances. He puts the word “blessing” and “temptation” in the same sentence. This puts temptation in a favorable light. It must be endured because of what it does. It is a revealer of self. Temptation is neither good nor bad. It just reveals what is really in your heart. You are not tempted to steal if stealing is not in your heart. The revelation on your heart is the pathway to repentance, which always leads to revival, into the blessing or the glory of God.

The crown of life mentioned here is God’s presence. His glory is upon your head. The glory of a man is his covering. That is his crown of life. The resting presence of God was promised to man. When he has stood the test, there is a break through to the next level.

The tests always lead to promotion when it is responded to in a proper manner.

CAUTION: Our Christian walk is not summed up as tests and trials. Rather it is summed up as life, wholeness and the fulfilling of God’s purpose. The tests that you might be facing can be over in a moment of time, or through disobedience can last forty years. If your life consists of tests and trials, you should examine your heart for rebellion and disobedience.

Deut 8:16 who fed you in the wilderness with manna, which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and that He might test you, to do you good in the end--NKJV

Let’s live in the good, not the tests. The Abrahamic covenant is yours.

Were it not for Goliath, David would have just been a kid throwing rocks. Don’t despise your challenges and difficulties. Overcome them through the Word of God. The challenges you face are the gateway to the throne room.

13 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.

This clears up the age-old question. God does not tempt man. He takes advantage of what is in our hearts to work His providence, but the inclination is not from Him. There is a difference between temptation and tests.

Why can God not be tempted with evil? The reason is that temptation is a revelation of the heart. You can only be tempted if something is in your heart. God is good. God is light and in him is no darkness at all.

(1 John 1:5 This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. NKJV).

There is no variableness, neither shadow of turning in Him. There is no evil in God. So God cannot tempt any man with something that He himself does not have. Verse 2 and verse 12 are basically the same and this is designed to “*prove the quality of one’s character*”. They are 3985 *Peirazo* To test, scrutinize, discipline examine and prove. And (3986 *Peirasmos*) putting to proof by experiment, experience, solicitation by temptation.

But tempted in verse 13 is “*a solicitation to evil*” because it says “*God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man*” (with evil). So in the previous scripture, James used the word “temptation” in the context of trial, but in this verse he is using it as a solicitation to sin. Evil temptations come from an evil heart. It is impossible for that to come from God.

Deut 8:16 Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end;

17 And thou say in thine heart, my power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth.

18 But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day. KJV

Endurance in the midst of trials and tests brings a blessing from God. He gets pleasure when His children through faith overcome. That is a sign of growth and personal development. It is your faith that grows. The seed of the Word of God that grows, not the ground of our heart.

Along with the “*Crown of Life*”, there are other crowns mentioned. There is the “*Crown of Righteousness*” (2 Timothy 4:8) and the “*Crown of Glory*” (1 Peter 4:4).

14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own lust and desires and is enticed.

This explains the origin of the evil that is found in the heart. The nature of temptation draws you into sin if it is in your heart. It is a process. What is in your heart is going to be manifest. Your desires make the way for temptation. The tool that it uses is enticement. It lures you. Like a fisherman trolling the lake, the lure draws the fish into the trap. This is another proof that God doesn't tempt any one for any reason. There is not good temptation or bad temptation because it leads to sin and death. That never comes from God. God may test you. His tests simply reveal what is in your heart so that you might see it and repent. Temptation is not external, rather it is internal. Inducement and enticement to sin is certainly outside, but response is the result of your will and desire.

With temptation, God has always made a way of escape.

*1 Corinthians 10:13 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.
14 Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. NKJV*

If you miss the way of escape and fall into temptation, God will still meet you there and give you the tools of His Word, faith and patience, to enable you to endure and overcome. Those that fall into temptation have missed the escape route. Don't be discouraged if you miss it because there is blessing still awaiting you. He said, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation. It also says that you are blessed if you take the way of escape.

The purpose of tests is to reveal your heart so you can change your situation where you are. Your problem is revealed, now it is up to you to make the proper decisions and do something with it. Repent and flee.

15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

Lust clearly in itself is not sin in its matured state. Lust is the tool that hooks your fleshly inclinations and pulls you in that direction. To conceive something means that it has become alive within you. It is not just a thought; it is a thought that is alive within you. It almost takes on a personality of its own. You can't shake it. It grows within you as it receives nourishment from your thoughts and meditations. When it comes out of you and is expressed, it becomes sin. Here is why many people cannot escape even the most obvious traps of sin. They are hooked, and cannot get free until the sin has run its full course. Every seed has its life

cycle. That is why people who have fallen into sin would not listen to reason until they destroy their life, and then suddenly it is like their eyes are opened, and they question why they would ever do such a thing.

“Full grown or fully matured” is a picture of the completed cycle of the seed that was conceived in their heart earlier. Either to life and blessing or to destruction. That is why you put a guard over your heart. To overcome fleshly inclinations, you have to plant something in the heart.

16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.

There was apparently a growing deception over the question of God’s involvement in their present distress and the condition of their lives in general. This was a question of God’s goodness. In order to receive from God, you must believe that He is good. Once you understand the goodness of God, you can trust him. How can you trust someone if you do not believe they are good. As a result, God gets blamed for a lot that He did not do. To believe anything opposite of verse 17 is deception.

17 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.

Both the gift and the act of giving is the mindset of God all of the time. There is no variableness. His character is immutable and unchanging. He doesn’t change from good to bad. He is always good. Everything and only that which is good came from Him.

Father of Lights-The Greek word here for light is “*PHAO*” (5457 Strong’s Greek dictionary) “*To shine or make manifest. Luminousness, Fire and light.*” There are numerous applications that describe God as light. It is probably the perfect description of Him. One particular scripture is 1 John 1:5

“This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all” KJV.

Most likely it refers to the changing seasons of heavenly bodies of which God is the creator and father. Although they change in the seasons of the year, God is unchangeable. In every season He is the same. From Him who made the heavens comes every good gift. He is not like the shadow on the sundial that moves and changes.

18 Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first fruits of His creatures.

The King James Version said, “*He begat us*”. We are born of God and we come from Him. This shows the will, the purpose and the means where by God would bring His Plan of our regeneration into being. This was God’s desire. His will through His Word brought us forth and out of all creation made us His possession. This was not revealed to all of creation. Like a master artist, He unveiled us as His masterpiece, as a species of being that never before existed. What pride He took in planning every detail of our creation and redemption.

Just as the offspring of sin is death, the offspring of the Word is life. We are the offspring of the spoken Word of God. So is Satan. He has to respond to that Word just like all of creation.

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

This implies that James was encouraging these people to correct the course they were on and be careful what they were saying, lest they add problems upon problems. Don’t be so quick to act or spout off with their mouth through unbelief. Yes, you are under tremendous persecution, but don’t let circumstances pull you into anger and wrath. Just be very quiet and slow about the direction that you are thinking.

20 for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

Man’s wrath is usually based on anger and revenge. Wrath is a reaction rather than love, which is an action. You cannot respond to those who are persecuting you with anger and wrath in the name of God. God is not trying to get even with anyone. He already did that. He poured His wrath out on his enemies at the cross and died for them.

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

Therefore or because of what I just said to you; lay aside improper attitudes, also the impure and unholy affections that have gripped your heart. Get rid of the remainder of wickedness that lies in you, “*the filthy garments*”. And with a heart of humility, receive the word that has already been planted in your hearts. That Word is what will be your salvation in these sobering times. The word is the seed. When the seed is planted in your heart, it grows and produces after itself. *(For further study on the seed of the Word, see Mark 4)*

Filthiness and wickedness. Lay aside the things that have been in your heart. It is out of the abundance of the heart, the overflow of the heart that these things spring forth. As garment, these attitudes are taken on to our lives. We put them on. Wrath is the overflow of wickedness. Thanksgiving is the overflow of trust. Giving is the overflow of love. When the implanted Word sets in the soil of your spirit man, it will grow producing after its kind. If salvation is planted, that is what it will produce. The same is true of healing and deliverance of all kinds. Signs follow the Word that is sown in the heart.

22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

Since this word has been planted in your hearts, do the word. Don't just hear it, act on it. Romans 2:13 Paul said, *"For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified."* How is deception tied to just being a hearer of the word instead of a doer? You forget what the Lord has made you into and start living by another law, the law of the flesh (*Romans 8:1*). You are deceived because you think you are something that you are not. You forget what you are and start living by the law (*Which will take you to the filthy garments of your own righteousness and ability to keep the law without Christ*) of what you are not. You are fallen from grace.

Simply hearing God's word does not mean that we believe it. To act on it is a response of the heart.

23 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;

The natural face. *Lit. "The face of his birth with his physical features."* Now James describes in more detail the downfall of a person who is only a hearer of the word. He uses the illustration of a mirror when talking about the Word of God. If you only hear, you are like the man who looks at himself in the mirror and walks away.

The reflection of our life, who we are, and what God has made us to be is only seen in the word of God. Our whole identity is wrapped up in the plan and purpose of God that is revealed through His word. We cannot know who we are if we do not look into that mirror.

24 for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.

It takes a decision before you look into the mirror to retain what the image looks like. I could ask you what you look like and most of you would have

difficulty describing what you saw. You should know. You look at yourself everyday in the mirror. You may know the general outline or shape of your features, but how many teeth show when you smile? How many freckles are on your face? How wide are your eyes? How many wrinkles show up when you smile? It takes a decision in advance to see those things. If you don't make that decision when you look into the Word of God, you forget the details of the covenant, and all you remember is the general outline of baptism or sanctification. You see whom you are when you look into the Word. You see the man that God wants you to be. Therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith. The image of a healed man, a delivered man, a man of the Kingdom of God.

As the mirror is held up before us, we see where we stand in light of it. Both in righteousness and in conduct. In righteousness, we see Jesus as the finished work. In conduct, we see the nature and tendencies of God that we grieve or offend through our deeds. At that point we should do something about it and attempt to align ourselves with what we see. We should address the defects and blemishes in our moral character and bring ourselves into conformity to the heart of God, so that we do not grieve the Holy Spirit through our use or abuse of one another.

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.

Better it is "*the perfect law, even the law of liberty*". When you look into the word and stay there, you continue day after day in His Word, and determine not to forget who He said you were, but act on it and integrate it into your life; you will see what true blessing is all about. The Word of God is the means of our regeneration as we see in verse 18. The Word of God reflects His image as a mirror and when we continue to look into that mirror are changed into that same image from glory to glory (Verse 23). It shows us the way we as believers should live (1:25, 2:8). It is the standard by which judgment will come (2:12). The Law of Moses is not the perfect law of liberty because it was imperfect and unable to save or deliver ultimately. Therefore it was not the Law of Moses. Otherwise there would be no cause for the second covenant to come into being.

26 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.

Here is the heart of the issue James was dealing with. What was coming out of their mouth was in direct contradiction to the Word, heart and nature of God. They thought they were being religious about it. This is where deception comes in. When you are deceived, you can do something in the name of God and call it right, but God says it is useless and vain.

Before long they would be killing people themselves and convincing themselves that they were doing what God wanted just as their predecessors did.

The restraining of the tongue is the evidence of one's religion. It is probably the most evident. To position yourself as a religious person, which is designed to bring the whole man under control, and yet violate the evidence of that religion is to prove that you are truly empty.

27 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.

Better, *Our God and Father*. Here is the true description of pure religion. Do something for someone, not against them. Help others that are in trouble and keep yourself in purity. Our duty is toward others first and then toward ourselves. Unfortunately, most people's theology is self-indulged. God gives special attention to the distressed. He gives special reward to those who join Him in this endeavor to care for the distressed. Listen to David describe the heart of God in relation to the poor.

Ps 41:1-3 Blessed is he who considers the poor; The LORD will deliver him in time of trouble. 2 The LORD will preserve him and keep him alive, And he will be blessed on the earth; You will not deliver him to the will of his enemies. 3 The LORD will strengthen him on his bed of illness; You will sustain him on his sickbed.
NKJV

Chapter Two

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

This section gives a look into the motives of these Christians. He begins to ask them questions so that they might examine their hearts. The question here is how they are handling the faith that has been given to them? He said that it appears that you are showing greater favor to men of rank or wealth. After being scattered because of persecution, they were trying to fit into other cultures. But now they have become subdued by wealth and it tainted their actions toward the poor in favor of the rich. They began to approach the Christian life with a personal motive. They believed that to have or obtain more was a sign of faith and blessing. James said, no, ministering to the poor was a greater sign of your faith. You are to show no partiality in this priceless gift.

2 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,

There was no middle class in those days. The distinctions were very clear. In our modern day, we still have countries where there is no middle class. They are very rich and very poor. However in those days, the conditions of the poor were much more severe. There was a tendency to shun the poor to fit in with the rich. The gold ring was worn in those days as a mark of wealth and social distinction. The filthy clothes were unavoidable for the poor. Nothing else was available. The condemnation was not on the

gold ring or the fine apparel. It was in the respect of persons for those who wear them.

3 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,"

Everyone was hearing about the new Christian faith. So they were all coming to hear the message. Since the Christians were the hosts and leaders of the services, they were the ones who determined where people would sit during the services they conducted. The wealthy apparently sat where they wanted, while the poor were pushed to the side or made to sit like a servant at someone's feet. To sit here in a lowly place at my footstool means to sit on the floor. Sometimes the attempt to fit in exposes the need to be accepted. It has caused the compromise and downfall of many people. An important thing to remember about compromise is that anything that you have to compromise to get or keep, you will eventually lose.

4 have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?

Judges with evil thoughts better, judges full of evil thoughts: evil-thinking judges. Pride causes a man to think more highly of himself than he ought to think. Because of social positioning, they allowed pride to enter their hearts. They made distinctions and judgments about people and it crept into their ministry. They were judging people through selfish motives. As an evil thinking judge would show partiality. This mindset fails to honor the poor whom God honors (verse 5). It favors those who oppress you (verse 6). This attitude acts as if Christ had never promised his kingdom to the poor who are rich in faith; and their wicked reasoning suggests that the poor must be less worthy of honor than the rich." Verse 9 says that it is sin. They were wavering between God and the world.

5 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 tenderly pleads with these believers. The message is not rich or poor with earthly wealth. The key message is to be rich in faith and heirs of the Kingdom, regardless of who you are. To show partiality to a rich man because he is rich suggest that it is not a matter of faith but rather social positioning and earthly wealth. 1 Corinthians 1:26 tell us, "*Not many wise after the flesh...not many mighty, not many noble...after the flesh are called*". God doesn't call after the flesh. He doesn't judge after the flesh. God called all men to be "*rich in faith*". Therefore there is no distinction, at least in God's mind between the rich and poor. He forbids

any distinction in your mind. Paul encouraged us in 2 Corinthians 5:16-21 to judge no man after the flesh.

16 Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer. 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. 18 Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, 19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. 20 Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. 21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.
NKJV

6 But you have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts?

These believers were completely out of bounds. They actually dishonored the poor because they were poor, and honored the rich man because he is rich. Here James points out the attitudes of those who have been corrupted by wealth. Is this what you want to become? This could be a reference to what happened to them before they were scattered. It is possible that the families of some of these people were hauled into court and persecuted by rich men. This was certainly the case when Saul, who later became Paul, was going around putting people into prison. The Jewish courts were held in the local synagogues. The master of the synagogue was usually the judge.

7 Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you are called?

That name that they blasphemed is the name of Jesus. It was because of that name they were put into prison. In your attempt to climb the social ladder, you are acting like and giving partiality to those who are and have blasphemed the honor and virtue of Jesus Christ.

8 If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you do well;

The royal law is the law of Love. Jesus said that all of the commandments hang on this law. In their opinion, they loved their neighbor as themselves. James was going to clear up their doctrine by exposing their actions.

9 but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors.

Partiality on this level is sin. It transgresses the law of love, thereby violates the law itself. The problem with the sin of partiality is that it hurts people. It wounds people. It targets the poor because they are poor and as ministers of the gospel, leaves the impression that God feels the same way. As ministers they speak for God. God doesn't come to a man because he is rich or poor. He comes to him because of faith. But partiality is a message that is just the opposite.

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

This is the sad irony of the law. The principle and duty of obedience to the law is one. Jesus said that on "Agape" hang all of the commandments as are mentioned in verse 8. Through the Law you are trying to keep all of the deeds of love without the ability or power to understand, walk in or receive perfect love. You can't do it because you don't have it. A changed nature and the Word of God is what enables you to receive and walk in and receive the love of God. John explained it in his epistle.

1 John 2:5 But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. KJV.

11 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.

This is how it works. The law is summed up in one thing. Love. To break any part of it is to break all of it and thereby become a transgressor of the law.

12 So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty.

Judgment day is coming. When that day comes, we will be judged by the perfect law of liberty, which is love. This is not a question of judgment to salvation, rather of good works. That is a clear message that we must hear. That which would have set you free now judges you. Obedience produces freedom while disobedience brings bondage and death.

13 For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

The American Standard Version says it this way:

“For judgment (is) without mercy to him that hath showed no mercy: mercy glorieth against judgment.” ASV

Apparently God judges you as you judge others. This is born out in Matthew 18:24. Jesus tells the story of the man who was forgiven 10,000 talents, and in verse 35 said,

*“So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses”.
KJV*

If you don't forgive, neither will your heavenly father. It appears that there is no forgiveness in unforgiveness.

This is the statement to answer to all of this. *“Mercy has triumphed over judgment at the cross.”* This is the Royal Law of Love expressed. What is greater than judgment? Mercy is greater. Not only is it greater, mercy has defeated and triumphed victorious over judgment. My judgment is swallowed up by His mercy. So why are you not showing mercy to these poor people?

14 What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?

Now that he has established what is right through their conduct, he brings it home to ask what you are doing with your faith about meeting the needs of the poor. This is not the same context as in Romans 10:17 *“Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God”*. Of course we are saved by faith through grace. He is in full agreement with Paul, but here he is talking about a dead, non-working faith that does not bare the fruit of good works. If it doesn't bare fruit, then it is dead. Faith moves. Faith acts. Faith talks and faith produces. It is true that we are saved by faith in Jesus Christ alone. However, genuine faith will always produce evidence of it in your life.

15 If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food,

I don't believe this was a parable. This was a daily experience in the lives of many of the people of that day. To be destitute is to be completely impoverished. This is a desperate situation. They were hungry. They weren't literally naked, rather ill clad.

16 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?

Here he begins to describe their responsibility. It is not enough to believe it. As the matter of fact, it is contrary to the nature of faith and the love of God to draw back in fear and not reach out and put legs to your faith. Every selfish act is an expression of fear.

17 Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

This is the sobering truth. If you don't do something with your faith, if there is no corresponding actions, it is just noise. Worthless, lifeless noise. Worse, it will deceive you into thinking that faith is less than it is.

18 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.

The American Standard Version says, *James 2:18*

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

This was a challenge. The fact is that faith works by love. It is impossible to display faith without reaching out through the love of God to the needs of others.

19 You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe--and tremble!

They boasted of their belief in God. Just believing in God is no feather in your cap. What were they doing with their belief? The devils also believe, and even more. They believe so strongly that they tremble in thought of it. Without works, you are not doing much more than the devil. At least he trembles. He believes more than most so-called believers. So there is belief without justification of the spirit.

20 But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?

It appears that these Christians were not excited to get this information. Unfortunately we usually hear what we want to hear. How foolish we look to God. Going through motions of service and worship that are completely off track from the heart of God. Full of words with no fruit. How worthless we must appear in that light.

21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar?

James now starts on a study of the application of faith in one's life. It was not enough to believe God alone. There must be corresponding actions that followed. God required this of Abraham. Not until he drew back the knife did God say, "*Now I know*".

Another application for this is that in God's mind, Abraham offered Isaac. In God's mind when he drew back the knife, it was a done deal. And He treated him from that time forward as a man who offered his son on the altar in behalf of his covenant with God, which obligated God to offer his only son in behalf of that same covenant. He is not saying that a sinner is justified in the sight of God by deeds he does. Rather he is saying that a believer is committed to carry out and display the purpose of faith by serving and giving, which is the ultimate expression of the faith of God.

22 Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect?

His works coupled with his faith completed his faith. The Greek text for perfect is "*TELELOO*" (5048 *Strong's Greek Dictionary* "*To accomplish or to consummate, to finish and make perfect, to complete to the end*"). Faith has an end. The end of our faith in Christ is salvation. The end of your faith for healing is a whole man. So your works along with corresponding actions walk toward, and talk as if it were a completed journey. Anything that we receive from God is truly a journey of faith.

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

Whenever you believe God for something, there is an accounting that takes place. God is faithful to do that. He never ignores your faith. He counts it to you for righteousness. This particular incident had taken place many years before Abraham offered Isaac on the altar. When you believe God for something and act on it, He responds to you as if it were a done deal.

As a result of Abraham believing God, he was fellowshiping with God as a friend would fellowship with a friend. The one thing that made Abraham a friend of God was his faith.

Hebrews 11:1 says, "*Without faith it is impossible to please him, for he that cometh to God must believe that he is and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him*".

Faith is the way God thinks. Faith is the way God talks. Faith is the way God acts. When we think and walk and act like God, we will fellowship with Him on a level of friendship. When our actions and words are

contrary to faith, we never have the opportunity to fellowship with God on the level that he enjoys and expects from a friend. The term “friend of God” comes from Isaiah 41:8 and 2 Chronicles 20:7. Faith is the watermark that God looks for in fellowship. A friend is someone who understands you and communes with you on the level that you understand.

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

Faith without corresponding actions is incomplete. The two make one. An action consummates your faith. Just as the joining of a man and a woman produces offspring, even so faith and corresponding actions, produce what you hoped for. (*Hebrews 11:1*)

25 Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way?

Joshua 2:1-21 tells of Rahab who was a gentile and a prostitute. Yet, she possessed the promise by believing God and doing something. She believed that God had given Canaan to the Israelites so she hid the spies and sent them out another way so that they would not be discovered. She risked something in behalf of her need. She did more than just “believe God”. This is where most people stop. She put herself out on the line with the possibility of losing her life. Faith never goes into “safe” mode. Just as Abraham risked losing Isaac on the altar, Rahab risked losing her life and the lives of her family. She trusted the message and stepped into the realm of uncertainty. Like Peter when he stepped out of the boat. Like the woman who had the issue of blood that stepped out of her house to go find Jesus. Like the sick man who got out of bed, or the poor man who sowed seed into the Kingdom of God by giving. These are the corresponding actions or works that are married to faith.

26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

This shows the total incompleteness of one without the other. To be dead is to be lifeless. No ability to respond. Your faith cannot respond just as a corpse cannot respond without the spirit within the body. Corresponding actions are what carry your faith into the realms of life.

Chapter Three

1 My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.

Here we see a bit more of the picture. These people were teaching with motives and attitudes that were envious and self-seeking (*verse 14*). This is dangerous because as a teacher you are judged by a higher standard. More is expected of those who take lives into their hands to teach them. The Greek word “*Masters*” (*didaskaloi*) would today be “*Teachers*”. Over and over in the old Testament, God gives reference to His anger over the new kings that, through their sin, “made Israel to sin” *1 Kings 16:13,19,26. 2 Kings 13:6, 14:24, 15:9,18, 24,28*. God places a high premium on his people. To lead them wrong is very offensive to him.

Teachers and instructors wield a power greater than they realize. It is not just the exchange and transfer of information. There is a spiritual force that empowers our words. As those who are called and anointed to speak, the responsibility yields a greater condemnation or reward. Both *1 Timothy chapter 3* and *Titus chapter 1* speak of the qualifications of Christian leaders and remind us that they will be judged by a higher standard than those they are instructing. Character is everything in the Christian leader’s life.

2 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.

He displays the power of the tongue through verses 2-4. The tongue has the power to turn any situation into a whole new direction. We all offend. Lit. We all stumble. Perfect means, “mature, full of moral and spiritual growth. A mature man, who understands the authority of the tongue and uses it, is able to bridle the whole body. This has both a positive and negative application.

- a. *What you say as an instructor has the power to turn your life to darkness or light.*
- b. *The words of your mouth can literally bridle or alter the body. Since the body receives instruction from the brain, and the speech center of the brain is the most dominant part of the brain, words can turn the body in any direction. This is especially true when you back it with spiritual power.*
- c. *We are created in the image of God. Just as his words are creative, so are ours. The nature of words or language is creative.*

Perfect, “*teleios*”. This refers to what is complete, finished and mature. It signifies soundness and wholeness.

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

A bit in the horses mouth is again an illustration of how the tongue can turn the whole body or situation. However, there is more to a bit than we realize. A bit has focused application. If there is a journey or task that you are using the horse, the bit is used. However it is removed while eating. The horse must be watched because the bit can get hung up on something and do damage to the horses mouth. A bit that is too strong can cut the horses mouth and then you have an uncontrolled horse. After that it very difficult to find a bit that will work for that horse. These are all applications that we can use in relation to the bit in the horses mouth and our personal life.

4 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.

Again, he uses an illustration they can understand. This time a ship is the example. I like this one because it displays the great adversity of the wind and the sea. The bit is an example of personal internal things and the rudder of the ship is an example of overcoming external things. These winds and waves literally drive the ship in whatever direction it is going.

Yet, the ship is turned about with a very small helm (rudder) where the pilot directs. You are the governor of your life. You are the pilot. You don't own your life, but you are the steward of it. You are going to get everything you say because your words as the helm or rudder have turned you and everything you are in that direction.

5 Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles!

Just as the bridle in the horses mouth, just as the helm of the great ship, the tongue, though it seems small can do great things. People say things and consider those words as insignificant or unimportant. Your words, like a match starts very small but has the power to set the forest fire ablaze.

6 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.

This is a warning to the careless and carnal Christian about the destructive nature of their immature responses to their life and the lives of those they have been instructing. This is why verse one tells of the greater condemnation. It will defile the whole body and set in motion the wheels of nature. When it is used in the destructive sense, it will produce death.

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

The enemy of their souls will use those words to utter destruction when he becomes involved. Actually, that is all he has to work off of or use against us.

7 For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind.

The comparison of beast, birds and serpents and things in the sea, cast the tongue in the light of a wild animal with a mind of its own, a nature of its own. This is a whole new line of thought for the tongue. There is something independent of us that if we don't bridle, will not only go in an independent direction, it will control and dominate us, if not destroy us.

8 But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

The tongue is not and cannot be tamed in the same manner as those animals. You cannot tame it with natural things. Turning over a new leaf or trying harder won't do it. However, with spiritual power you can. It is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks.

Luke 6:45 says, *“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”*. NKJV

It is what is in your heart in abundance. If you want to change what comes out of your mouth, change what comes out of your heart. That is why we must fill our heart with God’s Word, as was told to Joshua in the book of Joshua.

Joshua 1:7-8 *“Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. 8 This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success”* NKJV.

Psalms 1:1-5 says much of the same thing.

“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night. 3 He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper. 4 The ungodly are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind drives away. 5 Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.” NKJV.

He meditates on the word of God and fills his heart with that word and what ever he does prospers. The ungodly won’t do this, the carnal Christian won’t do this; therefore they are driven like the chaff, which the wind drives away.

9 With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God.

He now turns his attention back to these believers. This is not a description of the way it ought to be, but rather a description of their conduct. These people were all over the place, blessing God and cursing man. They were using their tongue to curse those who were opposed to them. The scripture clearly said in Romans 12:14

“Bless them that persecute you; bless, and curse not” ASV.

“The similitude of God” i.e. they were cursing men who were made in God’s image.

10 Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so.

He rebukes them and chides them. “You are in violation of the image you have been changed in to. The tongue of the believer should not be inconsistent in this context. They were completely out of order.

11 Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening?

How is it that a born again, spirit filled believer is producing life and death at the same time? They were commissioned at a higher level to bless and lead men to Christ. Rom 5:5 tells of how our response should look like.

“And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us” KJV.

That is sweet water. The blessing of Abraham was not just that you would get a blessing, but rather that you would be a blessing.

12 Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring can yield both salt water and fresh.

Again, a broader and more defined thought to reason with them about how opposite their actions were in contrast to the new creature they had been changed to. Just as it would be shocking and unusual to see grapes on an apple tree, it should be equally unusual for a believer to display envy and strife and confusion as mentioned in verse 16. To curse people indicates what is truly in the heart of a person. This makes you question what tree that they were a branch of.

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

Who has insight among you? Prove it by doing what is right. You must remember your moral responsibilities. Notice that meekness and gentleness accompany real wisdom. Learning and wisdom are not the same. Wisdom is a product of the spirit. Learning is a product of the mind.

14 But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth.

Here he is naming their sin. Their guilt is exposed. Yet he pleads with them. Don't reject the truth by allowing envy and a self-seeking heart to blind your eyes. Verses 14-16 describe the characteristics or traits of false wisdom.

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

Wisdom dictates your conduct. It shows you through internal instincts the best way to go. Their conduct is nothing but flesh. It is not from God, nor is it even like Him.

Sensual: "Psuchikos". This is a sensual wisdom. It is fleshly driven. It is dominated by impurity and the corruption of this world. Being sensual, it is by nature manipulative and self-fulfilling.

16 For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.

The fleshly attitude you have been displaying bares the fruit of confusion and every evil thing. It bares confusion because it is not birthed out of the purpose and plan of God which has a destination attached to it. That which comes from man is selfish and self-fulfilling. It has no future or direction to it because it is separate from God's purpose.

17 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.

The wisdom that is from above has very definite attitudes. They are listed as such. They are pure, peaceable, gentle, compliant and willing to yield. Full of mercy and good fruits. Doesn't show partiality. This is wisdom that will cause you to prosper and at the same time fulfill the purpose and plan of God. This describes the nature of wisdom. If you find out what wisdom is, you find out what it does. Wisdom never expresses itself opposite of these things because it is birthed out of love. Earthly wisdom is birthed out of selfishness.

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

The attitudes that are from God and what He wants you to display are sown into the lives of others in the same manner you would plant a seed into the ground expecting a fruitful harvest. Everything in the Kingdom of God operates off of the pattern of the seed, plant, and harvest principle.

Chapter Four

1 Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members?

James now gets down into the dirt of the matter. This is the problem and the reason that James had to write the letter in the first place. This verse is inevitable. Any time that you find people who are self seeking, you will find a fight. The problem has continued to escalate because they could not see the their problem wasn't on the outside, it was on the inside. The problem is you.

2 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.

They had moved away from ministry to lust and covetousness. They quarreled and positioned themselves rather than going to God and asking Him to promote them. They were fighting and warring to have and possess when all of the time God had expressed that it was His good pleasure to give them the Kingdom. This reference to murder concerns me. Was it in the same context as the Apostle Paul before his conversion?

3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.

What asking you did was out of selfishness and greed, which are completely contrary to the nature of God. *Amiss*. Lit. Evil motives. Selfish purposes.

4 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.

Adulterers and adulteresses was a symbolic term for unfaithful people. Their attitude and actions were leaving the faithfulness of a relationship with God. They left their relationship with Him and committed adultery by pursuing another. You are unfaithful to God. *Friend of the world*. The Greek word is *PHILIA*. It indicates a reciprocal relationship between these people and the world. Enmity means hospitality and antagonism. That describes the relationship between God and the world.

5 Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"?

Do you think that God will not notice? Do you think that your affair with the world system of which He has hostility will go unnoticed? He yearns for you. He is jealous of you.

Ex 34:14 For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God: KJV

6 But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."

In the midst of this, God gives grace to recover yourself. It simply requires humbling yourself before the Lord and receiving His grace to enable you to overcome. The proud resists humbling themselves and determines to stand on their own strength. From here on to the next few verses, there is a serious call to repentance.

7 Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

It is apparent that the devil is involved in this situation because he is named here. He is the author of this confusion. The only way to overcome him is through the covering and grace of God. You submit yourself to something by yielding your decisions and assertions to Him and trusting Him to sustain you. Sin shall not have dominion in our lives. If a person falls into sin, he has somewhere in his life stopped submitting to God, and through his decisions and actions left a door open for the devil to get a foothold. The following verses bare that out.

Romans 6:12-20: 12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. 13 And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. 14 For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace. 15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not! 16 Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? 17 But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. 18 And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. 19 I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness. NKJV

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

God's response to us is mirrored by our move toward Him. As you draw near to Him, He draws near to you. You draw near to God through repentance and submission. Cleansing your hands is a sign of repentance and turning from the deeds that are offensive to the Spirit of God. To purify your heart is to be cleansed from the impurities of greed, pride, doubt and fear. Strain out the contamination. This is done through confession, repentance and forsaking your actions.

9 Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom.

This is a sign of real repentance. Acknowledge that you have been in sin and repent. Mourning and weeping is the sign of a broken heart that is truly sorry for their sinful condition. This is seen of David in Psalms chapter 51.

10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

Humility is to lower yourself and your opinion before the Lord. This is a guarantee from the Lord of His response to repentance.

Proverbs 3:5-8 says "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; 6 in all your ways

acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. 7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and depart from evil. 8 It will be health to your flesh, and strength to your bones. NKJV

11 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.

To speak evil of someone, you have to have a law that tells you why and to what measure that they are evil. The standard was the law itself. This judgment placed the hearer in a state of condemnation by using the law as a club on them. They could not help but stand before God as a lesser and condemned person. The problem with this when the law of God calls you evil, where are they going to go? When God condemns you, to what higher power can they go to be justified? James was saying, "You are not a judge of the law, but rather your position should be a doer of the law, which is to love them. To judge someone is to treat the law of love with contempt. You are not above the law when you judge others by it. You become judged by it yourself.

When you judge someone by the law, you must measure it to the full extent of the law. When you do that, you have to step out of grace into the law and become a judge of that law. You thereby fall under the judgment of it.

12 There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another?

You are not God. You take His position in judgment without His mercy and kindness and wisdom. Judgment without mercy is a fearful thing. Unless you have shed blood for that person, you do not own them and have no right to judge them.

13 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";

Their arrogance is now challenged. Their motive is again uncovered. Their boasting is in their trade and profit. They have become almost arrogant in their own strength. The act as if their life was there own.

14 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.

You are not even smart enough to know what is going to happen tomorrow. A vapor is just a mist or smoke suspended in the air. It is the product of something else. It appears for a moment and then burns off.

That is a description of your life. In regard to your own abilities and strength and wisdom, you are pretty insignificant. What a rebuke.

15 Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that."

This declares who is really the Lord. Our whole dependence is on the Lord. I don't do anything apart from Him. I can't even live if it is not His will, much less create my own way.

16 But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.

To boast in your own strength is evil. The off spring of pride is arrogance. Pride had become conceived in their hearts. We must always demonstrate faith in God's provision instead of our own. Without His wisdom and leading, we are as blind men on a journey. We are as blind men with no concept of where we are or where we are going.

17 Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.

They knew to do well and they didn't do it. They knew what was right but pride was found in their hearts as it was with Satan. Failing to do good was equivalent to disobedience, and therefore was sin. They must repent.

Chapter Five

1 Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you!

They were now rich and they were full of miseries. Misery was coming upon them. This is the end result of any man who forsakes God. To weep and howl is to cry out in regret and repentance. Cry out to the Lord so He will hear and deliver. It appears that James is now addressing the unsaved Jews who are the masters or employers of the poor Jews. The term “Brethren occurs four times in verses 7-12, but is not found in this section at all. Judgment will come on those who mistreat the poor.

2 Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten.

Let’s look at the condition of your life and the work of your hands. The Greek word for “CORRUPTED” is “SEPO”. (4595 Strong’s Greek dictionary) It means to putrefy i.e. parish and be corrupted. The beauty of what you have built for you and trusted in is worthless and ruined. It is full of holes and unfit to be seen in.

3 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.

These things will be a witness against you when you stand before God and give account for your stewardship. At that time, it will be like poison to you. The treasure that you have heaped up for the last days is not the treasure that you think it is. Instead of blessing you, it will burn you. This

silver and gold is spiritual and is God's perspective of your work and reward.

4 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.

People worked for them, and through fraud and deceit they cheated them and refused to pay for the work they had done. When someone cries out to the Lord, He is very sensitive to him or her.

As an example look at Exodus 22:22-24

"Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child.

23 If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry;

24 And my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless"
KJV.

The name "SABAOOTH" (4519 Strong's Greek Dictionary) mean "*Armies, a military epithet of God*". In the covenant God made with Abraham in Genesis 12:3, He stated this. "*I will bless them that bless you and I will curse them that curse you*". This is a part of the covenant that the Lord of Sabaoth (*The Lord of Hosts*) is committed to. In light of this, we must be very careful how we deal with people. The Lord Almighty is very attentive to injustice.

5 You have lived on the earth in pleasure and luxury; you have fattened your hearts as in a day of slaughter.

You have been very careful to take care of yourself. You are fat with everything that you want, and have held nothing back from yourself.

6 You have condemned, you have murdered the just; he does not resist you.

They began to do to others what had previously been done to them. They were hauling people, even the poor to court to take away what they have. It is very possible that they did not resist because they were told that this was the will of God. Using God's name to manipulate. To use God's name in vain is to use it without consent.

7 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.

There is a day coming that God will reap His field. James gives reference to the rapture here and not the second event, when at his coming, the saints will meet Him in the air.

You will reap what you sow. The early (October and November) and latter (*April and May*) rain. The farmers of Palestine depended heavily on two rainy seasons for their crops. Late fall and Mid Spring.

8 You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

To be patient is to have the same attitude that you have as a farmer toward the rain and the field that he is taking care of. He has planted the seed and he fully expects that seed to bring a harvest. Make sure your heart is right because the Lord is soon to come. As a steward over his field, you will be called to give account of your stewardship.

9 Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!

Grumbling usually comes from a situation that you have no power over, so out of frustration you vent your feelings in a grumble. Their grumble was against other people and apparently would result in condemnation. Therefore it most likely was not a just complaint. Don't allow there to be things that you are in contention about. In the previous verse, it said the Lord is at hand. In the case of grumbling, it said that the judge is standing at the door. They were going to fall into judgment over the things that they were saying.

10 My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience.

Sometimes when you feel that you are being mistreated for the gospel's sake, you need to open the word of God and look at those who have gone through much worse than you and draw from the experiences of their faith and patience. They gave the example of what kind of response that you are suppose to have.

11 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.

God has a destination for your life. He knows what he wants the end to look like.

Jeremiah 29:11 says, *“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end”* KJV.

Job is given as an example for these people to look at. No matter what he went through, God’s mercy and compassion was watching him and preserved him in the midst of his troubles. And because he endured, he saw what God intended for his life. This experience with Job was not a life style for him, rather a short experience.

12 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.

What these people were saying was bringing judgment into their lives. That is a law of life. They were swearing by heaven and earth about tomorrow, of which they had no power to do such. (See 4:13-14) When you respond, just be simple in your response to other people. Not just in a yes or no answer, but rather in your overall conversation with other people.

13 Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms.

Live your life as it comes to you. Respond to your situations with the simplicity of prayer and praise. It is possible that this was where a lot of grumbling came from.

14 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.

This is the importance of fellowship and the authority of the church. Submit yourself to the leadership around you and go to them being transparent with your needs. Acts 11:30 are where the Elders are first mentioned. They were the church leaders before deacons and bishops. Anointing oil is not symbolic if it is done in the name of the Lord. It is a carrier of the authority of that Name. Just as Paul used in the book of Acts 19:11-13

“Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them” NKJV.

The oil is also a symbol of the presence of God (*Psalms 23:5*). There is a promise of great spiritual power that is present when church elders lay hands on the sick.

15 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.

The prayer of faith is a powerful thing. It will touch every part of your being. That places a tremendous responsibility on us as believers to not withhold the prayer of faith when it is needed. It will not only raise them up physically, but it will also bring them into proper relationship with the Lord. When people cannot seem to get a breakthrough because of past sin or failure in their life, they need to have hands laid on them as they stand under the authority of the elders in the church.

16 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.

The confessions of your trespasses need to stay within the boundaries of the offense. You should not make confession to people who are not involved in the offense. The confession is repentance to the person that you have transgressed. To confess or repent opens the door to healing. Listen to Mark 11:24-26

“Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them. 25 "And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. 26 But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses" NKJV.

Confession or repentance keeps the door open to blessing. The effectual (*official and legal in answering its purpose. Capable of producing the desired effect*) and fervent (*red-hot*) prayer of a righteousness man can change everything.

17 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.

Elijah stayed within the legal boundaries of God’s covenant with Abraham. He only prayed what God had already said. He prayed earnestly. He reasoned with God about what He promised.

Deut 11:16-17 said, *“Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them; 17 And then the Lord’s wrath be kindled against you, and he*

shut up the heaven, that there be no rain, and that the land yield not her fruit; and lest ye perish quickly from off the good land which the LORD giveth you” KJV.

God challenged his people to remind Him about what he had said in His covenant. Isaiah 43:26 said,

“Put me in remembrance: let us plead together: declare thou, that thou mayest be justified. KJV”

Elijah’s prayers are found in 1 Kings 17:1 and 18:42.

18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.

This was evidence that the earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof. The blessing came from Him. He can give it and He can take it away. God responds to His covenant. You want results? Find out what His covenant said and pray or return that to Him. You will find that it will not return to Him void, but that He will accomplish it in your behalf.

19 Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back,

This shows that no matter who you are, it is possible to get into error. We wander off track until we are lost. That’s how a sheep gets lost. His head is down eating and he wanders away from the flock. He doesn’t know that he is lost until he looks up. Yet, we go get them and bring them back.

20 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.

Restoration is the heart message from the Lord to these people. The bible said in 2 Peter 3:9

“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” KJV.

To retrieve someone back into the truth can save a soul and cover a multitude of sins. This whole situation that these believers found themselves in can be restored and healed. This is more than a suggestion; rather this is expected behavior for all those who have wandered into error.

SINNER: “*hamartolos*”. This is a term that an archer would use when he misses the mark or target with an arrow. It denotes one who has entered into sin by a choice, one whose thoughts and deeds has been turned from the right path and is contrary to God’s nature and purpose. Therefore this term, “*sinner*” can be applied to a believer who loses his way and falls away from God in their lives. They have missed the mark and gone the wrong way. In such a case we are to reach out to those who have missed the mark. To restore such a one is our commandment from *Galatians 6:1*.

Galatians 6:1 Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. 2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. 3 For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. 4 But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. 5 For each one shall bear his own load.

NKJV

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In 1971 Jerry Edmon had an encounter with Jesus Christ that radically changed his life. He has seen the power of Jesus Christ and what it can do in an individual who will call upon His name. For almost four decades he has committed himself to address the pressures and problems faced in everyday life, and gives insight and direction on how to attack and leap the hurdles that slow us down. He challenges his audience to act upon their beliefs, making them work for and not against them.

Since his early days in ministry, a prophetic anointing began to emerge and over the years the prophetic gift has been instrumental in the change and development of many lives. His ministry helps us utilize our gifts and reshape our beliefs, to stand up like the champions that we were intended to be. He strongly believes that it is our decisions, not our surroundings that shape our destiny.

The mission of Jerry Edmon is to facilitate and provide an experience for people to “taste and see that the Lord is good”. To bring them into the presence of the Lord and taste of Him, to drink of Him. To provide an atmosphere where people sense His presence and in that exchange are freed from their bondage and pain.

Jerry Edmon serves as the Senior Pastor of the Family Worship Center in Elgin, Texas. He is also serving on the board of directors for the Independent Assemblies Fellowship, Deliverance Temple International and Clarion World Missions. He travels throughout the United States and other countries in conferences, crusades and revivals, ministering to the

hungry with the Word of God. His down to earth approach will awaken your heart to the absolute authority of God's Word.

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