

The book of James is named after its author.

James was the half brother of Jesus (Mark 6:3)

He is the brother of Jude (Matthew 13:55), who wrote the book of Jude

James initially rejected Jesus as Messiah (John 7:5), but later he believed (1 Corinthians 15:7)

He wrote with the authority of someone who had actually seen Christ.

He was the key leader in the Jerusalem church. (Acts 12:17) (Acts 15:13) (Acts 21:18) (Galatians 2:12)

He was called one of the pillars of that church, along with Peter & John. (Galatians 2:9) (Galatians 1:9)

He was martyred in the year of A.D. 62

The book of James has been dated to be written in A.D. 44-49, making it the earliest written book of the New Testament books.

The book of James is like the New Testament version of the book of Proverbs.

1.) James gives direct straight forward instructions on how to live as a Christian.

2.) How to be obedient to the Lord even though you will battle with the flesh.

3.) How to deal with and overcome everyday problems and unexpected problems.

He teaches us about Godly behavior.

He teaches about faithfulness to God but also, the visible fruits of faithfulness - Faith is the root of salvation; works are the fruit of salvation.

He addresses the real issue of being tempted to sin and passing the test that you are taking to move forward in your spirituality and closer in your walk with God.

Faith Tests - Outline

1.) The test of perseverance in suffering (1:2-12)

2.) The test of blaming God for the temptation that causes sin (1:13-18)

3.) The test of response to the word (1:19-27)

4.) The test of being impartial in your love (2:1-13)

5.) The test of performing rituous works (2:14-26)

6.) The test of faith associated with your tongue (3:1-12)

7.) The test of humble wisdom (3:13-18)

8.) The test of participation and indulgence in the world (4:1-12)

9.) The test of your dependence on God for today's needs (4:13-17)

10.) The test of patient endurance (5:1-11)

11.) The test of truthfulness (5:12)

12.) The test of prayer for results (5:13-18)

13.) The test of true faith (5:19-20)

James 1:1-2 - This is a letter

Vs 1 - James listed himself as a servant

Who was he writing to? He was writing to the 12 tribes of Israel, who have been scattered, because of the persecution of the church in Jerusalem.

Vs 2 - My brethren - He wrote this to believing Jews, this is the affectionate name that we give to our brothers and sisters (in Christ).

Count it all a joy - (consider it a joy) when you fall into (divers temptations) - this means various trials or problem situations.

This is opposite of the way that we normally think

Why? or How can we?

Vs 3 - Knowing this - this is an important statement! He says you can only consider it a joy if you know this.

Know What?

That the trying of your faith worketh patience!

Patience - Perseverance - Endurance - only comes by going through the trial that is in front of you. You can't get to the place of victory at the end of the race unless you participate in the race.

It may be hard, grueling or demanding but you won't ever get to the next level if you don't participate in the challenge. So James says consider it a joy that you are given an opportunity to succeed, instead of dreading that you might be challenged.

Vs4 James says let patience have her perfect work - (Go through it!!)

People say don't pray for patience - this is wrong! If you want it, then you need to ask God for it.

You can never become as strong as you need to be, if you are never challenged. You can never be as close to the Lord as you can be unless you run out of your strength and have to depend on God.

As long as you can figure out a way to solve your own dilemmas, you will never rely on God.

Listen to Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."

Paul was singing the song that we should sing - (Lord don't move that mountain, just give me the strength to climb)

Vs5 This wisdom that Jesus talks about is the wisdom to understand and be at peace for God's will in your life.

The only way that you can have joy is to know that God's will is better than our will even if you don't understand the process of getting to where God is taking you.

MacArthur says: James is not referring to a wisdom of philosophical speculation, but the wisdom contained in the pure and peaceable absolutes of God's will revealed in His word, and lived out. Only such divine wisdom enables believers to be joyous and submissive in the trials of life.

James says if any man lack this wisdom "Let him ask of God"

The next part of this verse describes God "The one that we are supposed to ask".

1. He gives to all men liberally - God is generous in his giving, he wants to give us this wisdom.
2. God upbraideth not - God doesn't hold back his giving because of the fault that he finds in us, he will give us wisdom to help us overcome future dilemmas of worry and anxiety.
3. It shall be given unto him - Remember we are talking about God giving us wisdom. God wants to give and will give, but he wants us to ask him for the wisdom to have peace in the midst of adversity.

Vs 6 In verse 6, he gives us the conditions that need to exist in the way that we ask God.

1. Let him ask in faith - We must be confident in God and his sovereign power, enough to trust that he can and will give us this wisdom to get past the problem.
2. Nothing wavering - Don't pray without confidence, God wants us to be steady and strong in our prayers. We need to have stability in our prayer life, not believing one day and doubting the next day, be consistent in your faithful prayer, expecting God to deliver you everyday but accepting if you have to wait.

The person that doubts God when they pray, is like a wave in the ocean that moves back and forth and never settles in a permanent state of strength in position.

When you pray with doubt then your mind is in a divided state that God recognizes as distrust in him.

Vs 7 This verse points to someone who has a doubting heart.

God says that if you don't believe that he can deliver you out of your problem then you never will be delivered.

How many of us fall into this category? We ask God the way that we are supposed to, but we doubt that God will deliver us. We simply ask just to make sure that we've covered all of our bases to help with our problem.

Vs 8 A double-minded man - This is a translation of a Greek expression that denotes having your mind or soul divided between God and the world.

You can not place your faith in the Cross and something else at the same time. This produces instability and God will never honor this kind of faith.

The next portion of verses has to do with how we see ourselves here existing on earth. It has to do with our opinion of ourselves. This passage of scripture will show us how the amount of humility we have will directly effect how we are able to receive the wisdom of God to persevere through our problems.

Vs 9 The trials in our lives make us all equally dependant on God.

No matter what level of earthly possessions that we are at, God is not an unjust God, he respects all men the same, whether rich or poor.

Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted.

James tells us that the person who is low, weak, or poor as far as earthly standards have them rated, can rejoice in the fact that if they are a child of God they are highly exalted by him. (Romans 8:17-18)

This confidence in the esteemed exalted position that God has given you as his child, will help you overcome discouragement and enable you to persevere through your trials.

Vs 10-11 These two verses, in contrast, describes the wealthy believer's who are brought down by the trials of life.

Verse 10 says "that rich can rejoice in that they are made low" this seems odd to believers way of thinking, but God is saying to us that when experiences happen that cause wealthy believers to suffer, those experiences help them to rejoice, and realize that true happiness and contentment are dependant on the riches of God and his grace, not earthly wealth.

Notice the comparison that is made with the flower and the wealthy believer.

The flowering field only last until the sun scorches them.

The wealth that this world gives is temporary and does not pass to eternity. (Isaiah 40:6-8)

He is telling us that the security that we think comes with wealth is a false security. It will not help us persevere through the trials of life. Sometimes we have to get to that state of "low degree" that he speaks about, to get to the point to see the power of God outside of ourselves and our own resources.

Proverbs 27:24 "For riches are not forever; and doth the crown endure to every generation."

Vs 12 Verse 12 is the summation of this first section on the test of perseverance in suffering.

Blessed is the man the endureth temptation - This means blessed is the man who perseveres through the trials of life.

Blessed - this means happy, joyful, at peace, not worryful or anxious.

When he is tried he shall receive the crown of life. The crown of life is the ultimate reward that believers will receive for trusting God through this life.

This crown of life is eternal life with Jesus in the presence of God.

The test of blaming God for the temptation that causes sin.

Vs 13 Temptation here is translated “trials” or “to go through trials”

When trials come into our life we have a choice to:

1. Obey God and strengthen ourselves and become confident.

or

2. Doubt the power of God and open ourselves to sin and become distant from God.

God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone to do evil.

God by his holy nature is not able to be tempted with evil (1Peter 1:14-16) God is holy, and if his presence is in us, then we should be holy.

Neither tempteth he any man - God allows trials to come into our life, and he allows Satan to tempt us with evil but God does not tempt us with evil because there is no evil in him.

He allows this to happen so that he can let us prove ourselves to him.

(2 Corinthians 13:5) If Jesus is in you then you have the ability to pass the test.

(1 Corinthians 10:13) gives us a promise - “God watches our trials or time of tribulation.” “There has been no temptation taken you but such is common to man; but God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”

We are that ones that choose whether to take the way of escape that God gives us, or to give in.

Vs 14-15 - In these verses we are able to see the process of temptation that leads to sin.

Everyman is tempted when:

He is drawn away - to be lured into a trap with bait. Temptation promises people something good which is actually harmful

A. Of his own lust - this denotes a fleshly desire that drives us away from God and into the trap.

B. His own - describes the individual nature of the lust; each person is different.

C. Enticed - this is a tem that means “to catch with bait”

2. When lust hath conceived - this means when we go after the bait and grab it.

3. It bringeth forth sin - this is when we are in a state of disobedience to God.

4. Sin when it is finished bringeth death (Romans 6:23) (1 Corinthians 11:30)

Sin is not a spontaneous act that happens, it is the result of a process

Vs 16 Do not err my beloved brethren - Jesus is saying to believers, do not go astray, do not make the mistake of blaming God for your condition instead of yourself.

If you go astray - you wonder out of the light!

Vs 17 Every good and perfect gift is from above.

God is the giver, and the gifts are good.

Father of lights (ancient Jewish expression) - the creator of the sun, moon, & stars

With whom there is no variableness - he doesn't change or turn like the sun, moon and stars.

From where we stand we see different phases of the sun, moon and stars but God never passes behind anything, his presences is always the same, he is the light that never changes.

(1 John 1:5) - “This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declared unto you, that God is light and in him is no darkness at all.”

Vs 18 Of his own will he begets us with the word of truth.

It is God's will that we receive the new birth that he promises, “He begets us” gives us the divine act of that new birth (2 Peter 3:9)

God offers this new birth through the power of his word. (John 17:18) (2 Corinthians 6:7) (Romans 10:17)

He gave us this gift so that we could give the first fruits of our new birth back to him, and live according to the righteous that he has. We should resemble the fruit from which we came.

The next text that James speaks of, is the test of your response to the word.

There is a certain way that God wants us to respond to his word. (The response of a person tells us a lot about how they receive what is said.)

There is a certain way he wants us to hear him.

There is a certain way he wants us to digest what he says.

There is a certain behavior that he wants us to have when he speaks to us through his words

There is a certain way that he wants us to carry his word.

There is a certain way that he wants us to apply his word

There is a certain sincerity that God looks for when you do what he asks you to do.

Vs 19 James is speaking to believers “brethren” - he tells us how God wants us receive his words, when he speaks to our heart.

Swift to hear - Eager, ready and willing to hear - (waiting on directions)

Slow to speak - He wants us to digest his instructions and let them grow inside of us before we ask of all the details. We tend to say; “isn’t there a better way”, or “shouldn’t we do this or that”. He says be still and listen. Grow before you speak (2 Timothy 2:15)

Slow to wrath - Don’t get angry or resent God because he asks you to do something that you don’t want to do.

And don’t be such an angry person, losing your temper when someone disagrees with you. Don’t get angry in discussing God’s word with someone, you become ineffective in the message he has given you.

Vs 20 The wrath of man worketh not the righteous of God. Your anger and God’s will do not work together, you may think that you have a right to be angry at others who do not believe but God says that being angry or mean or slanderous to someone ruins your testimony and effectiveness. God says vengeance is his, our job is to love them and pray for them.

Vs 21 Lay apart filthiness - this means put away the dirty part of you that acts out in the flesh. Hate, revenge, lust, profanity and so on.

Superfluity of naughtiness - this means put away all the presence of evil that works in you so you can hear God.

Receive with meekness the engrafted word - you can’t receive this instruction from God with a rebellious spirit; we need to be meek. The engrafted word means the word that is planted within you, this word shapes you and changes you. Have you ever heard this saying? “The bible will keep you from sin and sin will keep you from the bible.”

It’s hard to grow apart from God when you are feeding yourself a steady diet of his word.

This word is able to direct your souls in the way of salvation.

Vs 22 Be ye doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

Act upon the word of God; don’t just hear it. If you act upon it then you have valued what God has said to you. The child that hears their father but doesn’t do what he says doesn’t stay in favor with the father, because their response shows the father their disobedience.

When you are a doer of the word and not just a hearer then you are putting into practice an instruction that you value more than your own. “God’s instructions”

The word of God demands action, you can’t know God in the close way that he wants you to, unless you actually take his word and apply it. (Psalms 34:8) says “O taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man that trusteth in him.”

If you hear it but don't act upon it then you deceive your own selves.

(J.Vernon McGee wrote this in his commentary) "You can read history, but it asks nothing of you. You can read literature, but there are no imperatives, no declarations, and no explanations, although it may have a lesson to teach which may or may not have been in the mind of the author. You can read science, but it makes no demands on you whatsoever. You can read a cookbook and it gives you a recipe, but it does not say you have to cook. There is no demand that you mix up a batch of biscuits or that you make a chocolate cake. However, the Word of God is a command. It is a trumpet. It is an appeal for action. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36). The message of the Lord Jesus Christ is (1) "repent"; (2) "come unto Me"; and (3) "believe (see Matthew 11:28; mark 1:15). The Word of God demands belief."

Difference between hearers and doers.

Now listen to the example that is given to us in verses 23-25.

Vs 23-25 A hearer of the word but not a doer - is compared to a man that walks by and notices himself, "his reflection" in the mirror, but immediately something else catches his attention and he goes away. He immediately forgets what he saw because he didn't do anything that required time as he looked into the mirror. "He didn't fix his hair, he didn't study himself in the mirror and correct the things that needed to be fixed." "It was a casual glance". After all, we know what we look like, we don't have to study our appearance. But God uses James to give us this example that shows us that a "hearer of the word but not a doer" is like the person that glances into the mirror.

When we study Gods word or listen to preaching, God will show us a mirror to see ourselves and what we need to change, if he convicts us by showing us something that we need to change but we glance at it while in church but we don't continue to look at it, then we will soon forget it, because our mind will move to other things.

We are told here to act upon your convictions that God gives you when you are in the presences of his word. Be doers not just hearers.

The person that looks into the perfect law of liberty "this is salvation through Christ Jesus". "And continueth therein"- this means you didn't just glance and forget, you didn't just hear and dismiss; you looked into the mirror of you life, which God revealed to you by his word, and you saw something that needed to be fixed, and you concentrated on it, you prayed about it, you surrendered that thing to God, you didn't forget what was wrong with your life, you concentrated on it. The bible says in verse 25: "He being not a forgetful hearer but a doer on the work", this man shall be blessed in his deed.

God will help you "bless you" if you act upon the instructions that he gives your heart, not just hear them and forget until next time, but act upon them, Be A Doer!

Vs 26 If any man seen to be religious - the appearance "outward appearance"

The outward display of a religious person sometimes in the ceremonial worship that so many people observe. They have their traditional ways of worship, which include their responsive readings, their recitals of creeds, and their ceremonial dress and symbols.

We are told here that God does not want one word of insincere praise and worship to come out of our mouths. To bridle our tongue is to keep the reins tight, bridle means to control.

James tells us that if we worship God just with words but not with our heart then our worship is in vain.

(Matt 12:35-37) God looks at our heart and our words.

Vs 27 He gave this example of sincere love for God, this is pure religion he says. If your heart has really been devoted to God, then you will have compassionate love (John 13:34-35)

Examples:

- 1.) Visit the orphans, the fatherless and help them
- 2.) Visit and help the widows, and care for them
- 3.) Keep yourself with the appearance of Christ, not dirtied by the world

These examples show that you have the compassion to help these groups of people that most often can never repay you. Caring for them clearly demonstrates sacrificial love. That's what God is looking for.

Chapter 2

The test of being Impartial in your love.

Vs 1 James begins this chapter by instructing the reader not to show partiality or favoritism to people.

He speaks to believers “brethren” and says that we should set Jesus as our example. He refers to Jesus as the “Lord of glory” because Christ is the one that reveals the Glory of God. (John 1:14) (2 Corth. 4:4-6) (Heb. 1:1-3)

Jesus always gave us the example of impartiality. (Matt 22:16)

Listen to the genealogy of Jesus (Matt 1:1-6) these people were not in the elite group on the upper end of the social scale.

He resided in Nazareth, a humble town with no claim to fame.

He ministered in Galilee and Samaria, which were regions that Israel’s leaders did not recognize as great spiritual cities.

Partiality - Originally this term meant “for someone to raise their face in recognition, or to elevate someone. In other words, to regard someone as greater than someone else.

This term later is used to refer to exalting someone based on an external, superficial basis such as appearance wealth, race or social status. (Prov. 24:23) (Prov.28:21) (Matt 22:8-10) (Acts 10:34-35) (Eph 6:9) (Col 3:25; 4:1)

(Rom 2:11) God’s righteous judgment without respect for any person - “without favoritism”

(1 Pet 1:17-20) Jesus was impartial in his dying.

We are then given an example of a real life situation that applies to the assembly of believers of the church.

This is important for us to see.

Vs 2 Now we are given the first character of this example

1. The man with a gold ring and “goodly apparel” - nice clothes.

2. The next character is the man who is poor, and is dressed in shabby clothes

They both come into the church assembly

Vs 3-4 If you try to treat the wealthy person better than the poor person, then you are showing favoritism.

The 4th verse says if you do this , are ye not then partial in yourselves, and become judges of evil thoughts?

The bible says when we show partiality and favoritism like this, then we are acting out in the flesh, a judgment that we have determined in our mind. (God calls them “evil thoughts”

Vs 5 James tells us how God judges between man and who he accepts as rich and poor.

He says Hearken “listen to me”

Hath not God chosen the poor of this world (to be rich in faith)

God has different standards, the world may classify someone as poor, but God looks at it differently

God doesn’t want us to use the same standard that the world uses, to measure wealth.

He also speaks about the wealth of the so called poor, that they have a part of the royalty being heirs of God in the kingdom of God.

This right of royalty as an heir meaning to “inherit” is “promised” given to those that love God and have believed on Jesus.

Vs 6 Now here is the accusation made by James

But ye have despised the poor - The poor are despised because men feel like they will never get anything in return from a person who doesn’t have anything.

The problem with that way of thinking is that it is selfish and our flesh is always going to look at this situation in the same way. “What’s in it for me”

Now James points out that the Rich are usually the ones that mistreat you, and try to get what you have by suing you - "judgment seat"

Vs 7 They are usually the ones that blaspheme the name of God because they don't fear the power of God, they believe in their own power and in their own riches.

Vs 8-9 James makes it black & white in these two verses

If you love every man equally as according to God's law then you are pleasing God, but if you show favoritism, because of someone's outward appearance, then you are thinking like the world, you are acting in the selfish flesh and God tells us you are "committing sin"

(Lev 19:18) "Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of the people but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, I am the Lord"

(Duet 6:4-5) "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul and with all thy might"

(Matt 22:36-40) God says all the commandments rest on this

(Phil 2:3-5) Let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus.

Vs 10 If we try to observe the commandments that God gives us, but we fail in this category then you have failed in everything because the commandments are based on how we love and treat God, and how we love and treat others. (Exodus 20:1-17) 10 Commandments

Vs 11 We can't pick the commandment of God, we can't pick the rules that we want to follow, and disregard the ones we don't want to follow. We are not showing the love of God in us, if we partially obey him.

Vs12 We need to speak and act as believers who are going to be judged by the "Law that gives Freedom". This speaks of the law of redemption through Christ Jesus, which is salvation to the believer.

We as believers will be judged according to our actions as believers

(Rom 2:1-16) We will be judged!

Vs 13 Judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. But if God sees that you have been merciful, then he sees his heart working in you!

Mercy rejoiceth against judgment—Mercy is victorious over judgment

A person who has received the mercy of God, will show mercy to others because they realize that mercy was shown to them.

God's mercy is victorious over judgment because we will escape the judgment of the unbelievers if we accept the mercy that God offers through salvation.

The test of performing righteous works.

We come to the section of the bible that compares faith to works.

Faith is believing in God, trusting him, and accepting his gift of salvation through Jesus Christ who shed his blood for the atonement of our sins. Believing this, accepting this and knowing this, without being able to actually see this, is faith.

Works are the things we do that represent Christ living and working within us. The works are the part that you can see.

These are the righteous acts that we should want to do because Jesus, who indwells us is urging us to do them.

James is not stating that a person is saved by works, he has already told us that salvation is a gift (James 1:17-18). Paul also tells us in (Eph 2:8-9) for by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourself, it is the gift of God. Not of works lest any man should boast.

At this time of James' writings, some of the Jews believed that since Jesus has done away with the law, and obedience to God, as a way of salvation, then if they would merely accept the existence of Jesus and the facts about his life, then it was no longer necessary to perform righteous acts. A mere mental acceptance of Jesus is all they needed. James shows us that if a person has faith, that faith will manifest itself in righteous works.

Vs 14 Notice it says if “a man says that he has faith”, it doesn’t say that he has faith, it says that he says he has faith. What doth it profit - this means how does it help someone to say that they have faith, but they don’t have the works to go along with it. It’s just a verbal statement; there is no fruit to faith.

Notice the next question “Can faith save him”?

James is looking at faith in the believer and asking the question - “can that kind of faith save?” - purely intellectual faith.

James is not disputing that faith is necessary and important, in someone being saved. What he is disputing is that saving faith is not just an intellectual process that doesn’t require obedience to God, and a commitment from the believers to serve God by righteous acts that he calls works. It can’t be just a head knowledge is has to be a heart knowledge.

Vs 15-17 James illustrates this point by showing us a comparison of faith with out works, to “words of compassion, without acts of compassion.”

Notice - words of wishing warmth - did not warm the person, words hoping that they were filled with food did not fill them.

If you do not actually give them something to keep them warm or unless you give them food, then they are not truly helped.

This is our example of faith without the actual commitment that you have to make to God, when you accept his gift.

Jesus gives us an example of the difference between an intellectual acceptance of Christ, and a heart felt commitment to Christ, which is when a person accepts Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord, and they let him direct their lives to do righteous works. (Matt 25:31-46) (Matt 7:21-24)

Vs 17 This verse is hard for us to accept, but listen

Even so faith, if it hath not works is dead, being alone.

What is he saying? Faith, true saving faith is always accompanied by the works of faith.

This is a warning to us, remember he is speaking to people who are gathered together with the Christians. Everyone who he is speaking to, is claiming to have faith. James is warning them and us that true saving faith is different than just a profession of saving faith.

We need to look at our own faith; which kind of faith does ours look like? (the professed kind of faith_ or the (evidence kind of faith) that has righteous work with it.

Now James shows you the other side of the coin

Vs 18 A person may say: you have faith, I have works. You say you have faith but you don’t have any works, “I have works!” my works are all I need for God to accept me.

This man says I believe in God, but remember this man hasn’t said he had faith, he’s just doing the works. The bible says even the demons believe in God but they don’t profess their faith in him.

This man doesn’t make a spiritual commitment to God by professing Jesus as his Savior, he only tries to do good deeds as a way to please God.

Vs 19-20 He says again - even though you believe in God and do the works that you think are pleasing to God you are still lacking, because you have not made a profession of faith, which is accepting the Lord as your Savior, and accepting the blood that he shed for you. You have not repented for being lost and asked him to become Lord of your life. “You have works, you believe in God, but you do not have Faith”

Vs 20 He says again faith without works is dead.

He is saying the opposite here; which is something that a lot of people don't realize, which is; (works without faith is dead also)

O vain man - this is how God sees someone who is proud of their good works because it makes them look good, but they don't have faith, therefore their works are dead.

What is the big message that James is delivering?

You have to have both. If you say you have it, and commit your life to him then, you are that servant that looks for opportunities to use that faith. The use of that faith are the works that he wants to see.

There are 2 kinds of faith, living faith and dead faith.

In verses 21-26 James gives us 3 illustrations of living faith, so that we can see an example of that faith in action.

Vs 21-22 Abraham - His faith was justified by his works he couldn't just say that he would be obedient to God by sacrificing his son Isaac. He had to actually put action with his works (Genesis 22:1 -15)

Vs 23 This shows us that Abraham works justified his faith and fulfilled the scripture (Genesis 15:6) which said "and he believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him righteous."

Vs 24 You see that Abraham had to walk the walk of faith, not just talk the talk.

Vs 25 Rahab (Josh 2:4-15) (Josh 6:17)

Vs 26 Body without the spirit is dead. Faith without works is dead.

Chapter 3

The test of Faith associated with your tongue.

In this section of scripture James personified the tongue as being the representative member of the body that shows how our faults as human beings are put on display.

The tongue which gives us the ability to speak, is the biggest indicator of mans sinful heart condition. (Rom 3:10-14) (Rom 3:23)

The tongue through speech is the avenue that the bad part of us leaves our heart and mind, and is displayed for others. (Mark 7:20-23)

“Our Words”

Vs 1 Verse one makes reference to those who teach and preach. Be not many masters - Not many of you should presume to be teachers. Why shouldn't anyone that is available to teach, pursue this field?

We are told that the teachers and preachers of God will be held accountable for what they say.

There is a blessing that comes to those who teach accurately and do not mislead people, but those who teach and mislead people will be judged with a stricter judgment.

Vs 2 The easiest way to mislead someone is by using words to mislead them. (James 1:26)

Someone who is able to speak on God's behalf without misleading them, or without offending them, or without putting their own motives behind their speech is called a perfect man.

Perfect man - means someone who is able to accomplish God's will through their speech (“Spiritually Mature”)

This verse also tells us that if a person is able to control their speech, then they will be more able to control their entire body and the actions performed in the body.

Its hard for us to imagine how this small part of our body can have such a huge influence on everything that we do, and everything that we represent as children of God, but it does.

James gives us these examples to show us with visible pictures, how something so small can do such damage, and how something so small can effect so many things.

Vs 3 The first example is the bit that is put into the mouth of an animal. The bit controls the animal and gives it direction to go where the rider wants it to go.

Vs 4 The next analogy is the rudder of the ship. The rudder determines the direction of the ship.

Vs 5-6 The tongue is a little thing, but it boasts great things. Notice how big the fire can be, even if it starts with a little fire. One match can start a fire that can destroy an entire forest.

The tongue is a fire! It is world of iniquity-”evil”

So is the tongue among our members - the tongue is the little fire that can burn and destroy and effect the rest of your body.

This tongue of fire can change the course of lives, your own life and other lives around you. The tongue itself is set on fire by hell. Jesus uses this reference of Hell to represent all the demonic forces and Satan himself, who want control of this most deadly instrument, in order to destroy man, and cause a complete forest of people to mislead away from Christ, and into eternity of Hell.

Now, knowing that the tongue has this much power; how can we have control over this?

The bible tells us in James 1 that when we sin, it is because we are tempted to sin. (James 1:13-6). When we sin with our words it is because we are tempted to sin, and we give in to that temptation.

We are warned in (James 1:19-22) that our best resource to overcome this sin of words is to be careful without words and to constantly put the word of God, the presence of God into your life so that it will dominate the other

Question - Can't we simply train the tongue to only say the right things? It's not going to be easy

Vs 7 Man has been able to tame every type of wild beast, man has been able to impress his influence on these wild animals and make them to do whatever he wills.

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

Only God can (control) tame the tongue. (Acts 2:1-11) (Philippians 2:19-11)

We might think we have it tamed but it will strike when you least expect it.

Vs 9-12 Look at the inconsistency of our speech, our words, that come from this tongue.

We give our blessings to God the Father with this tongue but we curse other men that are made in the image of God. The tongue is the most hypocritical member of the body.

Vs 10 You shouldn't bless and curse with the same tongue.

Vs 11 A fountain can't give sweet water and bitter water. Fresh water and salt water.

Vs 12 Can a fig tree produce olives, or a grapevine bear figs? So no fountain can yield salt water and fresh water.

Our tongue is untamable, this means we can't control it but God can control it, if we let the spirit have control over it.

The bible tells us in the words of Jesus (Matthew 26:41) Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation, the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.

You have to give this willing spirit control over your tongue.

Wars start because of the tongue, relationships flourish or fall apart because of the tongue. Only God can control the tongue, We are given an example in (Acts 2:1-11) We are also told in (Philippians 2:10-11) That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Job said in (Job 6:24) Teach me, and I will hold my tongue, and cause me to understand wherein I have erred.

(Psalms 5:1-9) David's prayer express how the Lord listens to our words.

(Psalms 12:3-4) The Lord shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things.

(Psalms 12:4) Who have said with our tongue will we prevail our lips are our own: Who is Lord over us

Isaiah speaks of the Lord's anointing on the tongue.

(Isaiah 50:4) The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he waketh morning by morning, he waketh mine ear to hear as the learned.

(Isaiah 54:17) This verse speaks of the end of the millennial kingdom.

No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servant of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord.

(Rev 20:7-9) "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breath of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them."

Listen to how Jeremiah describes the evilness of the tongue. (Jeremiah 9:8) Their tongue is as an arrow shot out; it speaketh deceit: one speaketh peaceably with his mouth, but in his heart he layeth his wait."

God will ultimately receive the praise of every man from his tongue.

(Romans 14:11) For it is written as I live saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue confess to God.

(Romans 14:13) So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

You see no man can tame his own tongue, it has a mind to be hypocritical

It will bless and curse if we allow it too, if we try to control it on our own.

We have to let the spirit within us to have control over our tongue. The spirit of God has power over the tongue, it is the only thing that has control over it.

We can use our tongue to flatter, to lie, to spread rumors, to gossip, to tear down, to curse, to blaspheme and to brag

Or

God can use our tongue to praise him, to speak the truth, to spread the gospel, to counsel those in need, to edify and build up those around us, to speak words of love, to sing praises to him, to spread the gospel and to pray.

As Christians we need to ask God to take control of our tongue.

The test of humble wisdom

Vs13 James asks the question in order for us to look at ourselves “Who is a wise man and endowed with knowledge among you?”

If you are this person then you should show it by “good conversation in his works” - this means by living a good life that represents the wisdom that God gives you.

You should not show your wisdom of understanding God, so that others will think you are smart, but you show your wisdom in humility. Meekness is humility, and if you truly have the wisdom of God and knowledge and understanding of his words. Then you will absolutely have that meekness because you realize that it is not of your own power that you have that wisdom.

Meekness - is the opposite of arrogance. People who are meek are not out to promote themselves.

Wisdom - this wisdom is a wisdom that comes from God. Wisdom and knowledge of God (Romans 1:28-31)

Listen to Paul’s statement—(Ephesians 3:7-11) he describes the wisdom that God has to know what purpose we all will serve for him.

Vs 14 But, if you have bitter envying and strife in your hearts glory not, and lie not against the truth.

Bitter envying - is to have a harsh resentful attitude toward others.

Strife - is sometimes translated self-seeking, meaning to have selfish ambitions. These people step on others, in order to get to a place they want to be.

If you have these characteristics, you should not boast about it, or dismiss the truth of God which says it’s wrong.

Vs 15 This kind of wisdom is not from above, but is earthly, sensual and devilish

Its clear that God hates this kind of wisdom. Self-centered wisdom that is full of personal ambition is not from God. Mans wisdom is earthly; sensual, demonic.

1. This wisdom is limited to things on this earth.
2. This wisdom wants to be superior and defies the supremacy of God.
3. This wisdom is generated by Satan’s influence.

Vs 16 “Where envying and strife are there is confusion and every evil work”

Confusion is disorder - Disorder is chaos - chaos is what you get when you use mans wisdom over God’s wisdom.

Man has always wanted to know as much as God, remember the lie that Satan told Adam and Eve (Gen 3:5)

(1 Corinthians 14:33) “For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.”

Vs 17 Now James describes Godly wisdom, this is the wisdom that we should desire.

This wisdom is supreme wisdom.

1. Pure - this means it is not diluted or mixed with man's wisdom. (Matt 5:8) (Romans 7:22-23)
2. Peaceable - not seeking conflict, or argument. (Matt 5:9)
3. Gentle - this person is not a vengeful person, their attitude will be kind. (Matt 5:10-11)
4. Easy to be entreated - willing to yield to God's wisdom and be taught. (Matt 5:3-5)
5. Full of mercy and good fruits - willing to forgive quickly and care for those who suffer. (Matt 5:7)
6. Without partiality - a consistent unwavering person, that doesn't make unfair distinctions.
7. Without hypocrisy - this kind of wisdom means you apply what you know. You don't act against your knowledge.

Vs 18 "And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace."

NIV - "Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness"

NKJV - "The fruit of righteousness, is sown in peace by those who make peace."

Fruit of righteousness - are good works that are a result of salvation

Them that make peace - righteousness grows and flourishes in an environment of spiritual peace.

(Romans 1:18-23) "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shown it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse. Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things."

Man's wisdom will condemn him!

Chapter 4

The test participation and indulgence in the world.

In Chapter 4 James will deal with several questions that effect the everyday spiritual walk of a believer. Our faith is tested by many things as we have seen throughout this book, but pay close attention to the things that Chapter 4 addresses.

There are 3 major questions that are asked in this chapter.

What is worldliness?

How can a Christian fight against the Devil?

What is your life?

We think worldliness is the way someone talks, the way someone dresses, the people that they associate with, their lack of involvement in church, what kind of activities they participate in, and what kind of things you take pleasure in, "drinking, drugs, crime, violence." Some say worldliness is when a person is focused on making money, no matter what they have to do or neglect.

These things are not worldliness; they are sins of the flesh not of the world.

These sins are symptoms of the disease of worldliness but not the actual disease.

James gives us the answer at the end of Chapter 3

(James 3:16) "For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work."

This is the worldliness that James speaks of.

Worldliness is the product of Satan, that is manifested through our action. The things that the flesh desires.

(James 3:15) says - "This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish."

Envy and strife produce confusion and every evil work.

These two things are the worldliness that people accept, because their flesh desires what someone else has, and they want it for their self; this is envy. Strife is the selfish ambition that causes someone to be against someone else because they want to promote themselves or their own ideas.

These things are what creates confusion, the devil orchestrates these things to tempt man to sin so that he will give in to worldliness.

We need this background to recognize what James is saying in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4 - Wars are these battles between nation and nation, the culmination of many battles.

Vs 1 Fighting's are the small battles, these are the skirmishes.

We have these skirmishes in church.

We are told that these come from your desires that battle within you. "Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war within your members"

"Discord in the church is not by God's design." (John 13:34-35) (John 17:21) (2 Corth 12:20) (Phil 1:27)

(Ephesians 6:12) "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against power, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

These fights come from the war that goes on inside of each person. (Romans 6:13) (Romans 6:19) (Romans 7:5,23)

These fights come, because people want to have their own way. They want to fulfill their own lusts.

Vs 2 Ye lust and have not - As long as you don't satisfy that lust the lust will want to be fulfilled.

Selfish desires lead to war; this spirit of strife is worldliness; it is not Christian; meaning it is of the devil.

James is identifying strife and envy as being products of worldliness which are part of your old nature before Christ indwells you.

When this spirit; the spirit of worldliness gets into the church then you will have a worldly church.

The business world is a cut throat world, because it's orchestrated by man.

The political world is a cut throat world, because it's orchestrated by man.

*The church can not allow this worldly attitude to orchestrate it's purpose or it's direction or it will be no different than any other worldly organizations, that puts man against man and produces confusion.

Ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain; ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.

Our desires should be taken to God in prayer, in order for God to satisfy them or to deny them, and then we need to accept the answer that he gives us.

James tells us that the only way to battle this worldliness, is to pray. "Prayer is the cure for worldliness"

We need to overcome the lusts that war within us, "the strife & envy" by asking God to give us what we need and stop acting on the wisdom that the devil gives us to work with. We have to ask God, he will supply all our needs.

Here is the cure: (1 John 5:4-5) "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world and this is the victory that overcometh the world even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"

The only way to take away the envy and strife that is in your heart is to go to Jesus, and tell him everything.

Vs 3 Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your own lusts.

Sometimes when we go to God and ask for something, we ask him in order to fulfill a selfish desire, God sees our hearts, so he knows our intentions.

Vs 4 James uses the term adulterers and adulteresses to describe those people who compromise with the world in order to attain the goals that they desire.

The way of the world is to take by force what you want, with your own plan, no matter how it effects someone else.

Friendship with the world is enmity with God - you can't have a friendship with worldly ways and have friendship with God also. He is not there to be "use as needed".

We have to be careful not to commit spiritual adultery.

Vs 5 This spirit that is spoken of, is the old spirit, the old nature, the spirit that lusts to fulfill the fleshly desires the flesh. (Genesis 6:3, 5) (Romans 8:5-13) (Prov 21:10) - "The soul of the wicked desireth evil, his neighbor findeth no favor in his eyes"

Vs 6 James tells us that even though we have this battle within us, that all is not lost, God comes to the rescue. "But he giveth more grace; wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud but giveth grace to the humble."

When we can swallow our pride and admit that God, and only God can help us, then his grace becomes evident. We have to come to a humble state of believing that God is more capable than we are, before God will let his grace come upon us.

Vs 7 Now James tells us how to come to close fellowship with God, so that we can have the cure for this worldliness, so that we won't have to loose this battle with strife and envy. Which the devil influences us to have.

He gives us these seven steps to help us fight against the devil:

Submit yourselves therefore to God - Give God control.

Resist the devil and he will flee from you - resist him by using the power that the spirit of God gives you, in order to recognize something that the devil tempts you to do.

Draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you - continually try to become closer to God, nearer to God. If he sees you seeking to be close to him, then he will come close to you.

Colossians 1:9-11

1. Be filled with the knowledge of God's will

2. Walk worthy of the Lord - remember whose you are

3. Be fruitful in every good work.

4. Increase in the knowledge of God

5. Be strengthened with all might - your strength comes from him "his strength"

6. Be patient and longsuffering with joyfulness

Vs 8

4. Cleanse your hands - Sanctify yourselves - ask for forgiveness
5. Purify your hearts ye double minded - Focus your heart only on God don't dilute your hearts desire.

Vs 9

6. Be afflicted and mourn and weep

This speaks about the attitude that we should have when we recognize the condition that we should have when we recognize the condition of sin that we are in and the sinful condition of the world.

It doesn't mean that we are suppose to go around looking sad and expressing how sad it is to be a Christian.

It speaks of us recognizing that the world and all of the things it has to offer, is not the reason for our joy. We need to come to God broken hearted because of our condition, and then we need to keep that humble heart, and weep for the lost people; to really care and be saddened by the fact that people are refusing the gift of God and going to hell.

Vs 10

7. Humble yourself in the spirit of the Lord and he shall lift you up. (John 3:30) - "He must increase, but I must decrease"
 1. Submit yourself to God.
 2. Resist the Devil
 3. Draw nigh to God
 4. Cleanse your hands
 5. Purify your hearts
 6. Be afflicted mourn and weep
 7. Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord

Now James addressed how Christians should treat other Christians

Vs 11-12 Speak not evil one of another - There are 2 different ways of wisdom that man can choose.

Wisdom from above: "Godly Wisdom" which is (James 3:17) Pure, peaceable, considerate, gentle, easy to be entreated, submissive, full of mercy, and good fruits. Without partiality - favoritism and without hypocrisy

Wisdom that is worldly (James 3:14-16) - This wisdom is full of bitter envying and strife.

Bitter envy - a harsh resentful attitude toward others

Strife - this is when we are self seeking - we have selfish ambitions and we care more about ourself than others.

The bible says that this wisdom is earthly, sensual, devilish.

Now in verses 11 and 12 James gives us instructions on how to apply that wisdom, and gives us a look inside of the mind of God, as to how he sees and grades our application of wisdom.

Speak not evil one of another - James is saying do not slander, or defame. James doesn't say not to confront someone who is involved in sin.

What he condemns is careless, derogatory, slanderous and critical remarks and accusations against others.

(Proverbs 10:18) - "He that hideth with lying lips and he that uttereth a slander is a fool."

(Proverbs 11:9) - "A hypocrite with his mouth destroyeth his neighbor, but through knowledge shall the just be delivering."

(2 Timothy 3:1-3) - This describes the worldly attitude that will be prevalent in the last days.

Those who speak evil of other believers, set themselves up as judges over those that they condemn. (James 2:4) By doing this they disregard God's law which continually forbids us to slander one another. By refusing to obey God's law, the slanderer puts themselves above God's law as if they were judges instead of people who need to obey God's law.

Vs12 This verse tells us how wrong that behavior really is. "There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy."

Now listen to the question: "Who art thou that judgest another?"

There is only one way to answer this question. If we are guilty of slandering one another, then we must see ourselves as the judge "the lawgiver". By slandering one another we put our self in the place of God.

This question is God's way of saying - Who do you think you are? God?

The next test that James speaks to us about is:

The test of your dependence on God for today's needs (James 4:13-17)

Vs 13 This verse is calling to attention everyone who has instituted a plan in life to reach the goals that they have set. This includes everyone. It doesn't say that we shouldn't plan; what it will show us is that we shouldn't plan our life without God. Verse 13 gives us an example of what we might say. "Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain."

Notice the particulars:

We will pick the direction and the place - "we have chosen a certain city"

We have decided how long we will stay - "we will stay one year"

We have chosen our actions - "buy & sell"

We have determined our success - "and get gain" - prosperity

Vs 14 This verse gives us a reality check, from God's perspective.

He tells us that we don't even know if we will have a tomorrow, we can't see past the second that we are living in.

We have made all these plans without considering that we do not even have control of the next breath that we will take.

Now this enormous question is posed to us, and the answer is given to us also.

For what is your life?

It is even a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

This really puts things into perspective.

Our life is like a vapor, once it is used and goes from water to vapor, it dissolves into the air without a trace.

There is no strength in this vapor to remain a vapor.

Vapor is a by-product of water; this lets us know how strong we really are, within ourselves; by using our own power to remain strong and consistent. We can't determine how long we actually are going to be visible in this world.

Vs 15 Now James tells us how we should look at our life, or existence and how permanent a fixture we really are in this world. He tells us that it's not our decision to live another day; it's God's decision for us.

We should preface each day and each plan by factoring in that God's will supersedes our own will. "We ought to say, if the Lord will, we will live, and do this or that."

If we would always keep the mindset that our plan needs to fit into God's plan instead of praying that God's plan will fit into our plan, then we would not be disappointed day after day, because things aren't going our way.

Vs 16 James says, we brag and boast about our business decisions and our life decisions because we have made a plan that turned out prosperous. James says this bragging and boasting in our own accomplishments is evil.

Why is it evil?

It's evil if we take credit for something that God has allowed to happen. It feeds our pride and teaches us to depend on our self instead of him. Remember; how far ahead can we really plan if we are unsure of tomorrow.

Vs 17 James says: "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

James informs us here that many people do wrong and don't realize it is wrong, but a Christian should be convicted by the Holy Spirit inside them.

When we are convicted by the Holy Spirit to do certain things, or help certain causes, or to be faithful in such things as prayer, worship and bible study, but we choose not to do it, then God considers that to be a sin, even if we think we have a good excuse.

James clarifies this so that believers will not continue to live in a state of sin. God is telling us that the act of sin can happen by omission in a believer's life as often or more often than sin happens as an act of commission.

We might say as Christians that "we aren't doing anything wrong", but sometimes we sin by not doing the things that God give us an opportunity to do.