

James

Practical Christian Living

(Teacher Edition)

James - Chapter 1

Introduction

I'll give only a brief introduction, as the most important part is the lessons contained within James itself.

Many people believe this was the earliest written book of the New Testament around 50 AD.

Who wrote it?

2 Timothy 3:16-17 KJV 16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 WEB 16 Every Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness, 17 that each person who belongs to God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Regardless of who physically wrote it down, we need to remember that it is really from God. It is his message to us. But, who wrote it down for us?

The author identifies himself as James in James 1:1 There are several men named James mentioned in the New Testament. Two were apostles

Matthew 10:2-4 KJV 2 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; 3 Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus; 4 Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.

Matthew 10:2-4 WEB 2 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these. The first, Simon, who is called Peter; Andrew, his brother; James the son of Zebedee; John, his brother; 3 Philip; Bartholomew; Thomas; Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus; Lebbaeus, who was also called Thaddaeus; 4 Simon the Zealot; and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.

James the son of Zebedee was martyred early by Herod, which makes it unlikely he was the author.

Acts 12:1-2 KJV Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. 2 And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.

Acts 12:1-2 WEB Now about that time, King Herod stretched out his hands to oppress some of the assembly. 2 He killed James, the brother of John, with the sword.

Little is known of James, son of Alphaeus. The next to consider is James, the half-brother of Jesus.

Matthew 13:54-55 KJV 54 And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? 55 Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?

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Matthew 13:54-55 WEB 54 Coming into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished and said, "Where did this man get this wisdom and these mighty works? 55 Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother called Mary, and his brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas?"

Acts 1:14 KJV 14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

Acts 1:14 WEB 4 All these with one accord continued steadfastly in prayer and supplication, along with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

Galatians 1:19 KJV 14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

Galatians 1:19 WEB 19 But of the other apostles I saw no one except James, the Lord's brother.

While James, along with his brothers initially disbelieved. He developed a strong faith and became important in the early Church. This makes him the likely author.

Who was it written to?

James 1:1 says To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad:

This would be Jews that were outside of Israel. More specifically they were Jews who had become Christians.

The focus of James is on the practical aspects of Christianity. Many simple, direct statements on how we should live our lives. In 108 verses, there are 54 imperatives (commands).

James 1:1 - Servant

James 1:1 KJV 1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.

James 1:1 WEB James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are in the Dispersion: Greetings.

At times we introduce ourselves with titles. Sometimes we have a choice of titles that would apply to us.

- What do we use titles for?

Pride, To show what we do for the person we are speaking to

- What title did James choose?

bondservant - 1401 doulos slave voluntary or involuntary. He chose to emphasize his service (which did make him great Matthew 23:11)

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- Who was James a servant to?

God and of the LORD Jesus Christ. He emphasizes that Jesus is Lord, our master (Luke 6:46).

- Where/How did he perform his service?

On Earth to fellow Christians, a very practical approach to service

- How often do we think of ourselves as servants?

James 1:2-4 - Joy from Trials

James 1:2-4 KJV 2 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; 3 Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. 4 But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

James 1:2-4 WEB Count it all joy, my brothers, when you fall into various temptations, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. 4 Let endurance have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

Verse 2 is one of the tougher commands of the Bible, count it joy. That is rarely our first reaction to a trial or problem.

- What good thing comes from trials?

Patience

- What comes from letting patience have its work?

May be perfect and complete

James 1:5-8 - Lacking Wisdom

James 1:5-8 KJV 5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. 6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. 7 For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. 8 A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.

James 1:5-8 WEB 5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. 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. 7 For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

He states this as a conditional, if any of you lacks wisdom, but do any of us really have enough wisdom.

- How would we know that we lack wisdom? (the choices we make)

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- What should our response be when we realize this (again?)? (ask God, prayer)
- How does God respond to our request? (liberally and without reproach 3679 oneidizo defaming or chiding)
- How must we ask? (in faith, with NO doubting)
- What will the doubting man receive from God? (nothing)
- Why will the doubting man receive nothing? (double-minded and unstable, it wouldn't help anyway)
- Can we be unstable in our ways? (we can have knowledge of knowing what God says, but don't put it into action. In that sense we are double-minded, one mind knowing, the other not doing).

James 1:9-11 Glory of the Rich and Poor

James 1:9-11 KJV 9 Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted: 10 But the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away. 11 For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways.

James 1:9-11 WEB 9 Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation, 10 but the rich in his humiliation, because as a flower of the field he will pass away. 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.

Glory 2744 Kauchaomai boast, vaunt, rejoice
Usually our take on boasting would be different than this.

- What should the lowly brother glory in? (exaltation, how is he exalted? Matthew 19:24 And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”)
- What should the rich glory in? (their humiliation, how are they humiliated? Whatever riches or THINGS we collect, it is all temporary. Cheryl and I used to go to auctions, and sometimes estate auctions reminded me of this. Here, this person had spent a lifetime accumulating all this stuff and now it was being sold to strangers for next to nothing. It really showed the futility of a focus on accumulating)

James 1:12-15 Temptations

James 1:12-15 KJV 12 Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. 13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: 14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. 15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

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James 1:12-15 WEB 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. 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. 14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. 15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

- What blessing is for those who endure temptation? (Crown of life)
- What does it mean to endure temptation? (successfully withstand)
- Does God tempt us? (NO)
- What causes us to face temptations and how can we minimize temptations? (our own desires, training our desires)
- What is the progression from our desires? (desires>sin>death)

James 1:16-18 - Good Gifts

James 1:16-18 KJV 16 Do not err, my beloved brethren. 17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. 18 Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

James 1:16-18 WEB 16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. 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. 18 Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.

- Where do all good and perfect gifts come? (from above, God. He is the ultimate original source of anything good.)
- How is God the Father of lights? (All good originates there. We may reflect the good, but we aren't the source)
- Is there any variation or changing with the times? (no variation or shadow of turning)

James 1:19-21 - Qualities Needed in Trials

James 1:19-21 KJV 19 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: 20 For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. 21 Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

James 1:19-21 WEB 19 So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; 20 for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God. 21 Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

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Our world seems to have completely lost the concept of being slow to speak. Now, you see people interrupting, talking over one another, monopolizing conversations.

- What does it mean to be slow to speak? (think before we speak, listen before we speak)
- Why is being slow to speak difficult? (pride)
- What can our wrath never produce? (righteousness of God)
- Why do you think these instructions were included right after talking about temptations and trials? (trials tempt us to focus on ourselves and lash out, if we fall to temptation we often are tempted to compound the issue by speaking to attempt to justify ourselves)
- How do we lay aside wickedness? (put it down, put it away, leave it behind, don't keep it nearby at hand, make no provision for it)

James 1:22-25 Doers, Not Hearers Only

James 1:22-25 KJV 22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. 23 For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: 24 For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. 25 But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

James 1:22-25 WEB 22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 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; 24 for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. 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.

- Is there a temptation to deceive ourselves in this? (Yes, we want to think well of ourselves. Like a mirror that makes us look younger, thinner, etc.)
- What is the purpose of a mirror? (to reflect reality, to show us what is not easy to see, to allow us to fix problems)
- Do we face the issue of being a forgetful hearer? (most of us have heard many lessons on what we should do, perhaps thousands of hours, but still struggle at times)
- What did Jesus call one who heard but didn't do in Matthew 7:26? (he is a foolish man like one building a house on sand)

James 1:26-27 Pure Religion

James 1:26-27 KJV 26 If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridled not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain. 27 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

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James 1:26-27 WEB 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. 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.

- How serious is it to not bridle our tongue? (our religion would be useless)
- Why emphasize visiting orphans and widows? (in their trouble, they have real needs, importance of helping those that cannot benefit us back)

Matthew 25:34-36 KJV 34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: 36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

Matthew 25:34-36 WEB 34 Then the King will tell those on his right hand, 'Come, blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; 35 for I was hungry and you gave me food to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and you took me in. 36 I was naked and you clothed me. I was sick and you visited me. I was in prison and you came to me.' 34 Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; 36 I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.'

- How can we become spotted from the world? (adopting its practice, its way of thinking, letting it contaminate our thoughts and speech)

James - Chapter 2

Introduction

James continues with very practical lessons. The two primary themes of the second chapter of James are:

- 1) Not showing partiality/how to treat others
- 2) Faith without works is dead

James 2:1-7 - Not Showing Partiality

James 2:1-7 KJV My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. 2 For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; 3 And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: 4 Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts? 5 Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? 6 But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats? 7 Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?

James 2:1-7 WEB My brothers, don't hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ of glory with partiality. 2 For if a man with a gold ring, in fine clothing, comes into your synagogue,[a] and a poor man in filthy clothing also comes in, 3 and you pay special attention to him who wears the fine clothing and say, "Sit here in a good place;" and you tell the poor man, "Stand there," or "Sit by my footstool" 4 haven't you shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? 5 Listen, my beloved brothers. Didn't God choose those who are poor in this world to be rich in faith, and heirs of the Kingdom which he promised to those who love him? 6 But you have dishonored the poor man. Don't the rich oppress you, and personally drag you before the courts? 7 Don't they blaspheme the honorable name by which you are called?

- Is it tempting to treat people differently based on their appearance (riches, youth, style, beauty)?

1 Samuel 16:7 KJV 7 But the Lord said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.

1 Samuel 16:7 WEB 7 But Yahweh said to Samuel, "Don't look on his face, or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for I don't see as man sees. For man looks at the outward appearance, but Yahweh looks at the heart."

1 Peter 3:3-4 KJV Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; 4 But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

1 Peter 3:3-4 WEB 3 Let your beauty be not just the outward adorning of braiding the hair, and of wearing jewels of gold, or of putting on fine clothing; 4 but in the hidden person of the heart, in the incorruptible adornment of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.

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Matthew 23:28 KJV 28 Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

Matthew 23:28 WEB 28 Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

- Why did James add a specific description of the poor man, in filthy clothes? (it drives home the point that we can't make excuses to ignore this instruction)
- They showed partiality by where someone was seated, what ways would we show partiality today? (who we spend time with, friendliness, willingness to forgive)
- How does this make us a judge with evil thoughts, since rich and poor aren't right and wrong issues? (we are deciding on our standards, our standards don't matter, only God gets to make the rules, we are usurping his position)

John 7:24 KJV 24 Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.

John 7:24 WEB 24 Don't judge according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment."

- What has God chosen that is easier for the poor?

1 Timothy 6:17 KJV 17 Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

1 Timothy 6:17 WEB 17 Charge those who are rich in this present world that they not be arrogant, nor have their hope set on the uncertainty of riches, but on the living God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy;

- What problems were some of the rich causing? (arrogant, trusting in riches when true trust belongs in God - everything else is temporary)

James 2:8-13 - Love Your Neighbor as Yourself

James 2:8-13 KJV 8 If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: 9 But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convicted of the law as transgressors. 10 For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. 11 For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. 12 So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty. 13 For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.

James 2:8-13 WEB 8 However, if you fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," Leviticus 19:18 you do well. 9 But if you show partiality, you commit sin, being convicted

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by the law as transgressors. 10 For whoever keeps the whole law, and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all. 11 For he who said, "Do not commit adultery," Exodus 20:14; Deuteronomy 5:18 also said, "Do not commit murder." Exodus 20:13; Deuteronomy 5:17 Now if you do not commit adultery, but murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. 12 So speak and so do, as men who are to be judged by a law of freedom. 13 For judgment is without mercy to him who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

- Why is it called a royal law? (a royal law is given by a king, the King)
- If we show partiality, what do we commit? (sin)
- Does keeping the law vs not keeping it have a simple majority determinant? (no a single transgression makes us guilty)
- How about, if we keep it all except one point? (still guilty)
- Will the temptation to exclude one point, choose the same point for everyone? (many seem to exclude the one item that is difficult for them, imagining it to be a small matter, but sin is never a small matter)
- Since we aren't perfect, what do we require to triumph over judgment? (mercy, God's grace)
- Since we know that mercy is needed for ourselves, how should that affect our attitude toward others?

Controversy of Faith and Works

Some have disputed that the book of James belongs in the canon of the New Testament, because they do not want to accept what the 2nd chapter of James says about faith and works. They miss that the same lesson is taught in other places in the Bible.

Galatians 5:6 KJV 6 For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

Galatians 5:6 WEB 6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision amounts to anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith working through love.

Avails - Strong's 2480 ishyo - have force, can do, be able.

- What does avail? (faith working in love)
- What does it mean for faith to work through love? (the faith to follow God's commands and the two great commands both involve love)
- Would faith not working in love avail? (no, it would be dead and not even really faith. When we really believe that something results in either benefits or danger, we act. Not acting indicates a lack of belief)

Example of the Rich Ruler:

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Mark 10:17-22 KJV 17 And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? 18 And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God.

19 Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother. 20 And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth. 21 Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me. 22 And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.

23 And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! 24 And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! 25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. 26 And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved?

Mark 10:17-22 WEB 17 As he was going out into the way, one ran to him, knelt before him, and asked him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" 18 Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except one—God. 19 You know the commandments: 'Do not murder,' 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not give false testimony,' 'Do not defraud,' 'Honor your father and mother.' 20 He said to him, "Teacher, I have observed all these things from my youth." 21 Jesus looking at him loved him, and said to him, "One thing you lack. Go, sell whatever you have, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me, taking up the cross." 22 But his face fell at that saying, and he went away sorrowful, for he was one who had great possessions.

- Had he heard (he approached the right person with the right question)?
- Did he believe (if he didn't, why was he sorrowful)?
- Was hearing and believing enough for him? (no and even he realized it and was sorrowful)

And in Jesus own words:

Matthew 7:24-29 KJV 24 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: 25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. 26 And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: 27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it. 28 And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: 29 For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

Matthew 7:24-29 WEB 24 "Everyone therefore who hears these words of mine and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on a rock. 25 The rain came down, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it didn't fall, for it was founded on the rock. 26 Everyone who hears these words of mine and doesn't do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. 27 The rain came down, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell—and its fall was great." 28 When Jesus

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had finished saying these things, the multitudes were astonished at his teaching, 29 for he taught them with authority, and not like the scribes.

- Who did Jesus say was a fool? (one who hears and doesn't do)
- Was hearing and believing alone enough to be wise? (no without doing he is foolish)
- What earthly example did he compare this foolishness with? (building without a proper foundation)
- Why did the house fall, what did it lack? (it lacked a foundation, hearing alone isn't a proper foundation)
- If we don't have this foundation in our lives, what is our result? (an eternal failure)
- Is hearing and having the right answers enough? (no, we often pride ourselves on answering correctly, but that isn't enough)
- Is this a temptation for us today? (yes, it is much easier to have and say the right answers than it is to apply them and put them into action in our lives)

James 2:14-26 Faith Without Works is Dead

James 2:14-26 KJV 14 What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, 16 And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?

17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. 18 Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. 19 Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. 20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? 22 Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? 23 And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. 24 Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. 25 Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? 26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

James 2:14-26 WEB 14 What good is it, my brothers, if a man says he has faith, but has no works? Can faith save him? 15 And if a brother or sister is naked and in lack of daily food, 16 and one of you tells them, "Go in peace. Be warmed and filled;" yet you didn't give them the things the body needs, what good is it? 17 Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead in itself. 18 Yes, a man will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without works, and I will show you my faith by my works. 19 You believe that God is one. You do well. The demons also believe, and shudder. 20 But do you want to know, vain man, that faith apart from works is dead? 21 Wasn't Abraham our father justified by works, in that he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? 22 You see that faith worked with his works, and by works faith was perfected. 23 So the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him as righteousness," Genesis 15:6 and he was called the friend of God. 24 You see then that by works, a man is justified, and not only by faith. 25 In the same way,

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wasn't Rahab the prostitute also justified by works, in that she received the messengers and sent them out another way? 26 For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, even so faith apart from works is dead.

- Can faith without works save? (no)
- What would you think about someone who saw a poorly dressed person in the cold, who said be warmed and then went on his way? (strange, either doesn't think right or is a very cold uncaring person)
- Did telling them be warmed actually accomplish anything? (no)
- What does it mean to say faith is dead? (ineffective, isn't really even faith)
- Is belief without action any different than what demons do? (no)
- Even knowing this, do we have a temptation to place too much trust in knowing the right answers vs. putting it into practice? (yes it is much easier)
- What areas can be strong temptations to believe but not act? (anything that is difficult for us personally)

James - Chapter 3

Introduction

James 3 covers two main topics:

- The power of the untamable tongue
- Wisdom from above vs earthly wisdom

James 3:1-2 Not Many Teachers

James 3:1-2 KJV My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation. 2 For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.

James 3:1-2 WEB Let not many of you be teachers, my brothers, knowing that we will receive heavier judgment. 2 For we all stumble in many things. Anyone who doesn't stumble in word is a perfect person, able to bridle the whole body also.

Teachers - Strong's 1320 didaska meaning give instruction

It seems that some were becoming teachers out of pride or to bring honor to themselves. The same idea, but from a different perspective in Matthew 23:10

Matthew 23:10 KJV 10 Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ.

Matthew 23:10 WEB 10 Neither be called masters, for one is your master, the Christ.

Teachers - Strong's 2519 katheko meaning gone down, the idea of brought down.

Some have been confused by how these verses appear in English, but the concept is different. Do not be called a teacher, because we don't create truth. Instead we are ones who give instruction by sharing what we have learned, never an originator.

Luke 12:48 KJV 48 But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

Luke 12:48 WEB 48 but he who didn't know, and did things worthy of stripes, will be beaten with few stripes. To whomever much is given, of him will much be required; and to whom much was entrusted, of him more will be asked.

One who takes the role of teacher represents himself as one who has received much and that it is worth sharing. But the Bible principle is that the more we receive, the more that is required of us.

1 Corinthians 9:27 KJV 27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

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1 Corinthians 9:27 WEB 27 but I beat my body and bring it into submission, lest by any means, after I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected.

We need to take care. We need to watch what we do. A focus on teaching can distract us from making sure we are doing the right things, even to the extent Paul mentions of becoming disqualified ourselves.

- Why should not many become teachers?
- Is anyone perfect and who doesn't stumble in word?
- What are some of the ways we can stumble as a teacher?
- What does it mean to bridle the body or tongue and how do we do it?

James 3:3-12 Power of the Tongue

James 3:3-12 KJV 3 Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body. 4 Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth. 5 Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! 6 And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. 7 For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: 8 But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. 9 Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. 10 Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. 11 Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? 12 Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.

James 3:3-12 WEB 3 Indeed, we put bits into the horses' mouths so that they may obey us, and we guide their whole body. 4 Behold, the ships also, though they are so big and are driven by fierce winds, are yet guided by a very small rudder, wherever the pilot desires. 5 So the tongue is also a little member, and boasts great things. See how a small fire can spread to a large forest! 6 And the tongue is a fire. The world of iniquity among our members is the tongue, which defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature, and is set on fire by Gehenna. 7 For every kind of animal, bird, creeping thing, and sea creature, is tamed, and has been tamed by mankind; 8 but nobody can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. 9 With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men who are made in the image of God. 10 Out of the same mouth comes blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. 11 Does a spring send out from the same opening fresh and bitter water? 12 Can a fig tree, my brothers, yield olives, or a vine figs? Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh water.

He mentions the great effect (of a rudder) and great damage (of a fire) that result from small things (the tongue). This applies to all we do with the tongue as we have discussed, but here we see it continuing the thought of the dangers of teaching. As in the first century, we still face the dangers of false teaching. Great multitudes can be led astray by a single false teacher. Reflecting on that grave danger, should make us careful of both what we teach and watchful of our motives when we teach. The tongue's great power can be a rudder helping to safely guide or a fire destroying much.

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Curse - Strong's 2672 - to call down curses upon, pray that he perish

We know from Genesis that man was created in God's image. Cursing something made in God's image is a disrespect to God that we should be afraid to do.

We see a similar lesson in the book of Jude and the difference between condemning and cursing/reviling. (blaspheme, to vilify, rail on).

Good and evil out of the same mouth shouldn't be. Another sign of double-mindedness. We claim the good, but hesitate to give up the evil.

- How does a little thing like the tongue control something big?
- How does the tongue defile the whole body?
- What does it mean that no man can tame the tongue, aren't we supposed to control it?
- What does it mean to curse men?
- Can something really bring forth both good and evil? (no man can serve two masters)

James 3:13-18 Heavenly vs Earthly Wisdom

James 3:13-18 KJV 13 Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. 14 But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. 15 This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. 16 For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. 17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. 18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

James 3:13-18 WEB 13 Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by his good conduct that his deeds are done in gentleness of wisdom. 14 But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, don't boast and don't lie against the truth. 15 This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, sensual, and demonic. 16 For where jealousy and selfish ambition are, there is confusion and every evil deed. 17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceful, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. 18 Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

Meekness is Strong's 3130 prautes - gentleness, humility. In James 1 we learned that we are to receive the word with meekness. Can we really have this inward gentleness, humility and not show it outwardly? We need to examine our conduct to test ourselves objectively in regards to our humility. Gentleness is a fruit of the spirit (Gal 5:23) and we are to be clothed with it (Col 3:12). What examples in ourselves would show that we are meek and gentle or not?

It doesn't seem accidental that the subject of meekness/gentleness is brought up while discussing the dangers of the tongue. Our speech easily betrays our lack of humility and gentleness. We need to be willing to yield, not insistent on having our own way or what we think is best. The result of this type of righteousness is peace and we know that we are to be peacemakers.

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- How do we show our wisdom?
- How are our works done in meekness of wisdom?
- What does envy and self-seeking lead us to do?
- What results from envy and self-seeking?
- What are the characteristics of wisdom from above?

James - Chapter 4

Introduction

James 4 covers four main topics:

- Conflicts and Prayer
- Compromise vs. Humility
- Don't Speak Evil and Judge
- Don't Boast About Tomorrow

James 4:1-3 Conflicts and Prayer

James 4:1-3 KJV From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? **2** Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. **3** Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

James 4:1-3 WEB Where do wars and fightings among you come from? Don't they come from your pleasures that war in your members? **2** You lust, and don't have. You murder and covet, and can't obtain. You fight and make war. You don't have, because you don't ask. **3** You ask, and don't receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.

He speaks of conflict arising from our desires, not from a passion for the truth. But this verse is a warning to us, that when in conflict it is important to honestly examine our true motives. Are we seeking truth, or are we seeking honor and acceptance. There is a war among our members. Earlier in James chapter 1 we learned where sin starts and in Romans 7 we see a more detailed description of the war in our members.

Romans 7:19-23 KJV **19** For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. **20** Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. **21** I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. **22** For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: **23** But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

Romans 7:19-23 WEB **19** For the good which I desire, I don't do; but the evil which I don't desire, that I practice. **20** But if what I don't desire, that I do, it is no more I that do it, but sin which dwells in me. **21** I find then the law that, to me, while I desire to do good, evil is present. **22** For I delight in God's law after the inward person, **23** but I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity under the law of sin which is in my members.

Not asking, reminds me of Matthew 7

Matthew 7:7-8 KJV **7** Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: **8** For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

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Matthew 7:7-8 WEB 7 “Ask, and it will be given you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and it will be opened for you. 8 For everyone who asks receives. He who seeks finds. To him who knocks it will be opened.

On the contrary side, we can often be tempted to think that the response is unconditional, but the Bible shows otherwise. Here we see the problem with asking amiss and in Chapter 1 we saw the problem with asking while doubting.

- Where were the wars and fights?
- What caused these conflicts?
- Why were their efforts to obtain things having no results?
- What should they have done to obtain results?
- Why would we choose not to ask about anything important to us?
- Is it possible to ask wrongly?

James 4:4-10 Compromise vs. Humility

James 4:4-10 KJV 4 Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. 5 Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? 6 But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. 7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. 9 Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. 10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

James 4:4-10 WEB 4 You adulterers and adulteresses, don't you know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. 5 Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, “The Spirit who lives in us yearns jealously”? 6 But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” Proverbs 3:34 7 Be subject therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners. Purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9 Lament, mourn, and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he will exalt you.

1 John 2:15-17 KJV 15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. 17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

1 John 2:15-17 WEB 15 Don't love the world or the things that are in the world. If anyone loves the world, the Father's love isn't in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, isn't the Father's, but is the world's. 17 The world is passing away with its lusts, but he who does God's will remains forever.

We cannot serve two masters.

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Matthew 6:24 KJV 24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Matthew 6:24 WEB 24 “No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You can’t serve both God and Mammon.

- What is friendship with the world?
- What is friendship with the world equivalent to?
- What causes the Spirit to be jealous?
- Do we have a choice on who flees and who draws near?
- How can we be double-minded in this?
- Does lamenting, mourning, weeping indicate this is serious? Does our reaction match this?

James 4:11-12 Don't Speak Evil and Judge

James 4:11-12 KJV 11 Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. 12 There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?

James 4:11-12 WEB 11 Don't speak against one another, brothers. He who speaks against a brother and judges his brother, speaks against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law, but a judge. 12 Only one is the lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge another?

Speaking evil of one another has no place for we are all members of one body.

1 Corinthians 12:12-14 KJV 12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. 13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. 14 For the body is not one member, but many.

1 Corinthians 12:12-14 WEB 12 For as the body is one, and has many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. 13 For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all given to drink into one Spirit. 14 For the body is not one member, but many.

We're tempted to object and say that we can do both, doing the law and judging, but Matthew 7 reminds us of what really happens.

Matthew 7:3 KJV 3 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

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Matthew 7:3 WEB 3 Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but don't consider the beam that is in your own eye?

- What does it mean to speak evil?
- How is speaking evil related to judging?
- What role of ours in relation to the law do we forget when we take the role of judge?
- Whose place are we usurping when we become judges?
- Does the one Lawgiver take his laws (including this one) seriously?

James 4:13-17 Don't Boast About Tomorrow

James 4:13-17 KJV 13 Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: 14 Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. 15 For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. 16 But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil. 17 Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

James 4:13-17 WEB 13 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow let's go into this city, and spend a year there, trade, and make a profit." 14 Whereas you don't know what your life will be like tomorrow. For what is your life? For you are a vapor that appears for a little time, and then vanishes away. 15 For you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will both live, and do this or that." 16 But now you glory in your boasting. All such boasting is evil. 17 To him therefore who knows to do good, and doesn't do it, to him it is sin.

Luke 14:28-33 KJV 28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? 29 Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, 30 Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. 31 Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? 32 Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. 33 So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

Luke 14:28-33 WEB 28 For which of you, desiring to build a tower, doesn't first sit down and count the cost, to see if he has enough to complete it? 29 Or perhaps, when he has laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, everyone who sees begins to mock him, 30 saying, 'This man began to build, and wasn't able to finish.' 31 Or what king, as he goes to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? 32 Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends an envoy, and asks for conditions of peace. 33 So therefore whoever of you who doesn't renounce all that he has, he can't be my disciple.

It is a matter of purpose, focus, and priorities. What is causing us to make the plans. In James, there only goal seemed to be to "make a profit". No other consideration is mentioned. It is easy for us to, to make plans based only on physical things, forgetting to consider the effects of our decisions on spiritual matters.

Matthew 6:31-34 KJV 31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? 32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father

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knoweth that ye have need of all these things. 33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. 34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

Matthew 6:31-34 WEB 31 "Therefore don't be anxious, saying, 'What will we eat?', 'What will we drink?' or, 'With what will we be clothed?' 32 For the Gentiles seek after all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 But seek first God's Kingdom and his righteousness; and all these things will be given to you as well. 34 Therefore don't be anxious for tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Each day's own evil is sufficient.

Sometimes we are tempted to make excuses for not doing the right thing. We find more urgent matters to cause us to put it off.

Luke 9:59-61 KJV 59 And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. 60 Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. 61 And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.

Luke 9:59-61 WEB 59 He said to another, "Follow me!" But he said, "Lord, allow me first to go and bury my father." 60 But Jesus said to him, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead, but you go and announce God's Kingdom." 61 Another also said, "I want to follow you, Lord, but first allow me to say good-bye to those who are at my house."

- Is he condemning making plans?
- What is he condemning?
- What examples can we think of where we might make plans without considering the spiritual consequences?
- Do we live as if we know what will happen tomorrow?
- Why is saying such things arrogant?
- Do we get to ignore any good thing that we know to do?
- How might we ignore good things today?