

James Chapter 1

Overview

- no-nonsense instruction written to Jewish believers living outside of Israel/Judah
- theme: Faith that works
a true and saving faith will have **evidence** of a changed life and will **bear fruit**...
real faith can **be seen**

v1 Unlike the Pauline epistles where the salutation usually went up to 6 verses, the introduction by James is one crisp verse...that says so much

James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ:
a slave...bondservant, a slave by choice...
of God and the Lord Jesus Christ

The two are equated...since no man can serve two masters
James is saying Jesus Christ is God

What a radical change in this man's life!

- son of Mary and Joseph
[Mark 6:1-3](#); [Matt 27:55-56](#); [Jude 1:1](#)
- half-brother of Jesus...and an unbeliever until after the Resurrection
[Matt 12:46-50](#), [John 7:1-5](#), [1 Cor 15:3-7](#), [Acts 1:13-14](#)
- first Bishop of the Church at Jerusalem (Jewish) - not Peter!
[Gal 1:18-19](#), Acts 15:13-21
Note: NOT the James martyred in Acts 12:2
- servant of God and Lord Jesus Christ...a higher honor than "half-brother of Jesus Christ"

The resurrected Jesus radically changes lives...and every relationship a believer has

A genuine faith in Jesus Christ is evident by a changed life and relationships

to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad:

Myth: The Lost Tribes of Israel

When were the tribes of Israel reputed to have been lost?

During the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities

Yet James is writing this letter 500-500 years AFTER those captivities.

Are any of the tribes of Israel lost? No!

Could God ever lose something of His? No.

Is He absent-minded or unforgiving? No.

James is writing to believing Jews dispersed (foretold in Acts 1:8) by the persecution in Acts 8+ after the martyrdom of Stephan in Acts 7

The early Church WAS Jewish, so he is writing to the dispersed Church

Obviously, the Church consisted of believers from all 12 tribes

v2-8 **Evidence of genuine Faith is Godly fruit:** patience and wisdom...longsuffering

v2-4 count it all joy:

an accounting term..."account it...ledger it...to delight"

when ye fall into divers temptations:

delight in various things

1. we fall into ("stumble into") that are required if we are to bear Godly fruit...

- adversity
- trials
- tribulations

2. we fall into (are "surrounded with") for righteousness' sake

- persecution...

Matt 5:10-12

Acts 14:19-22

3. that happen in the world when Rom 1:16-17 is REAL in a man's life

Genuine faith bears fruit...and fruit grows in the valley...

not on the mountaintop

In the valley, The Lord

- strengthens our faith in Him...
- deepens our relationship with Him...
- finishes the refining work He has begun

So when in a trial, don't be bummed-out...a self-centered, natural response to adversity, trials and tribulations...thinking God

- has forsaken us
- is angry with us...

But be thankful...a supernatural response of faith in the all-powerful God Who

- never leaves us nor forsakes us
- is on our side
- loves us consummately...sacrificially
- tests our proclaimed love for Him
- teaches us to rely on His strength and not on our own "strength"
- has a perfect plan for our lives to mold us into the image of Jesus Christ
...executed with perfect timing...just ask Job

The fruit of trials and tribulations is spiritual maturity.

Ps 119:71 it is good for me that I have been afflicted that I might learn thy statutes

Is 30:20-23

Knowing the trying of your faith worketh patience:

Knowing...**by personal experience**...this fact:

the testing of our faith...that proves our faith to be real, sincere, genuine...finishes (bears the fruit of) "cheerful endurance"...
fruit of the Spirit

Note: murmuring and whining and complaining is rotten fruit and is summarily discarded as trash

Adversity, trials, and tribulations teach us to...wait on God's perfect timing...and to not trust our flawed timing

Rom 5:1-5

Prov 3:5-6

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct your paths.

Eccl 7:8

better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof; the patient in spirit is better than the proud of spirit

Consider God's perspective...

1. the purpose of testing is not to destroy but to prove value
e.g. the manufacturer of expensive equipment does not test it to destroy it, but to prove its performance and value.

The Creator does the same thing with His beloved creature...that He personally redeemed from the trash heap

So don't think God is not unaware of our trials and tribulations...

He sees all, knows all, orchestrates all

2. The trying of our faith also has a "refining" purpose

- to get our attention (Missouri mule)
- to reveal to us what God already knows about us... and wants to change

Not until I see the truth about myself am I able to acknowledge the truth about myself...and seek God's transforming power

Thus, the trials of my life are also used by God to change my behavior and my attitude

Therefore...considering God's perspective...of critical importance to the trying of our faith is our response to adversity, trials, and tribulations

"Regardless of the reason, remember there is a right way and a wrong way to **respond** to adversity. The right way is the way of obedience and trust. It is also the shortest way through the storm. Responding with rebellion and anger could mean a delay in God bringing you through the difficulty."

Charles Stanley

So...

Let patience have perfect work:
its full effect to bear bountiful fruit

Ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing:
complete, real, sincere...and sound (in mind)...lacking nothing...
so we can run with patience the course set before us, looking unto Jesus,
the author and finisher of our faith

the Christian walk is filled with trials and temptations, thru which

- We are refined and purified
- We...and the world watching us...will know that Jesus is Lord of all

So...patience is a key objective of the Lord's work in our lives...
a supernatural attribute that is developed in us...
thru adversity, trials, tribulation, and persecution

there are two things we must learn about adversity, etc:

1. expect them....they are a part of life in a fallen creation
2 Tim 3:12...a promise by God...
2. we are better children of God because of the trials we have faced.

Trials develop single-mindedness

- David said, 'though I walk *through* the valley of the shadow of death' I will "Fear not"

His faith was that God was greater than the trial...
not that the trial was greater than God
(fear, a corrupted faith)

His eyes were on the object of his faith...
the Good Shepherd who is always right
there with him, seeing him thru the trial

- After Jesus taught His disciples about faith and bearing fruit, He tested their faith in Him
'Let's get in the boat and go over *to* the other side.'
Mark 4:35-41
When the storm rose, this statement should have eliminated their fear, but it didn't.
They were focused on the adversity and not on the One Who was in the boat with them.
Jesus is always in our boat, and He is enough to keep us from drowning...He calms the sea.

Trials develop single-mindedness...the mind if Christ in us

“When trouble comes, I always ask the Lord two questions:

1. What do you want me to see in this, Lord?
2. How do you want me to pray?”

Charles Stanley

v5 if any of you lack wisdom:
Who doesn't lack wisdom?!

What is wisdom?

how to behave in times of “fruit bearing” ie how to be a fruit tree
how to be still and know that He is God

Let him ask of God...shall be given him:

Desire wisdom so intently that we beg for it...

...and God...the only wise God (1 Tim 1:17)...will give it to us

- cheerfully (why God loves a cheerful giver (1 Cor 9) because He is a cheerful giver)
- readily
- bountifully
- generously

...and God will NOT

- taunt our ineptness or weakness
- scold us for not knowing how to be a fruit tree
- revile our barrenness
- begrudge us the power to obey Him

so don't be shy and don't be proud...just ask

Matt 7:7-11

v17 Giver of every good and perfect gift

James 4:2b have not because ask not

Matt 21:22 “...ask in prayer, believing, and you shall receive.”

John 16:24 “...ask and you shall receive that your joy may be full.”

God wants us to have His wisdom...so ask!

Every day and in every situation

Well...Monica and I lived this passage again this week...

Got a call from a woman at APS on Wed...left her name, number
Called her back...a Corporate Recruiter...left her a voice message

Our minds raced! “They want me to come back!”

It forced us to prayerfully consider “the offer”

1. Immediate, knee-jerk, shallow thought (of the flesh):
APS salary vs CCA support...
Health insurance....
2. Deliberate, deep thought (prayer of the spirit): hold on here...

I was called to be a pastor...
and told “Not now...“wait”
Three years later, “Now”
...to Rockford IL
...to Ahwatukee

It had been the desire of my heart for about 10 years

Two weeks ago, God took my APS job

- Is your faith real?
- Is the desire of your heart real?
- You don’t need a job, I have given you a job.
- He freed up 40 hours/week...for what?
(Get ready!)
- This is a time of stretching and spiritual growth

Now...this “offer: from God or from the Tempter?

- My faith is real
- The desire of my heart is real
- ROI (fleeting vs eternal)
- Free up 40 hours/week to give it back to APS? Doesn’t make sense
- Matt 6:24

Decision: I would turn down the APS “offer”

After phone tag, connect: “Free to work for SRP even though your contract has a non-compete clause”

There was no offer...but it forced an intense prayerful reflection!

PTL!

v6-7 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering:
ask...

- believing God will give
- not doubting that He will...
- not staggering at the promise of God (Rom 4:13-22)
- and knowing the timing is completely His

he that wavereth...sea driven with the wind and tossed:

The doubter will be tossed...agitated...troubled...

by the lies of the prince of the power of the air

In spite of the circumstances of your life, are you sailing on a
“sea of glass”?

You are walking by faith
wise...being still and knowing that He is God
bearing fruit

...Or...because of the circumstances of your life, are thrashing in the
“Perfect Storm”?

You are walking by fear...a corrupted faith
not wise...not still...not trusting the all-powerful
God
barren

let not that man think...receive anything of the Lord:

if we don't believe God, how can we expect to receive His wisdom?

Heb 11:1, 6

Believe...without

- seeing
- understanding
- instant gratification

Believe He is...and is willing and able

If you have not yet come to the end of yourself...you have not yet come to
the beginning of God

He will wait as long as it takes to work...so we will see that He did it and
give Him all the glory

v8 A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways:
when a professing believer who is

- insincere
- vacillating
- uncommitted
- uncertain
- confused
- staggering at the promise of God
- walking in fear and not in faith
- standing on the ways of man (e.g. psychology) vs the ways of God (The Word)

he is unstable....experiencing the “Perfect Storm”

the testing of our faith results in

- longsuffering
- single-mindedness
- stability...a sea of glass

Faith is for the moment...and is binary

- black or white
- we believe or we don't
- we act on our faith or we don't

and it must be tested to make its colors known

every believer is either

- being tossed by the sea...double-minded...walking by fear
or
- standing on the Rock...single-minded...walking by faith

the most miserable of places:
too much in Jesus to enjoy the world...but
too much in the world to enjoy Jesus

James 4:8

v9-11 **Evidence of genuine Faith is Godly fruit:** humility

the brother of low degree...exalted...rich...made low...pass away...fade away:

The brother in the faith who is humble will be exalted by the Lord...
but the self-exalted man will be abased and humiliated.

The stumbling block of the rich is their wealth

- “This is a result of my hard work and ingenuity” vs God’s blessing taking God’s glory instead of giving the glory to God
- “I’m all set...this will protect me from life’s surprises” proud independence vs humble dependence
- “I want more!”
how much is enough and how do you use what you have now?
- the object of their faith vs Jesus Christ (Matt 6:24)

Money is not the problem...man’s heart is

Money is amoral...the heart of man is immoral

The heart of man worships what money can buy

- Possessions
- Pleasures
- Power

The world “keeps score” by money...but it is a deceiving and flawed measurement

the flower (beauty, appeal) will fall off, shrivel up, and perish in the mid-day sun

The possessions/pleasures/power money can buy are short-lived...
as are those who put their faith in money

The sun wins! God wins!

money cannot buy life...cannot beat death
at the end of the day, money is worthless

v12-18 **Evidence of genuine Faith is Godly fruit:** perseverance in God’s purpose

v12 Blessed is the man that endureth temptation...receive the crown of life:
“Oh how happy” is the person that perseveres the testing of his/her faith
by adversity, trials and tribulations in the valleys of fruit bearing!

- Tried and found approved...does not stumble but stands firm
- The adversity is evidence of sonship...and of being refined
- Grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ
- Receives a *stephanos*...wreath...promised to overcomers by
the Lord
crown **of** life...His eternal life
crown **for** life...everlasting (Lifetime Achieve. Award)

temptations and trials are blessings in disguise...how God cultivates faith
in our hearts...
we overcome trials by faith (1 John 5:4-5)

v13 Let no man say...I am tempted of God:
v2 above, “temptation” means affliction, adversity, trials, etc
here, it means a trick or a trap or an enticement by the tempter...
a temptation in the common use of the word

back in Gen 3, God was not the cause of the fall of man...
He was the heart-broken tester of man’s love for Him and man’s
free will
test results: the creature loved himself more than he loved his Creator
that is our inheritance from our father who returned to dust
evidence: God gives us time, talents, resources...and we squander those
gifts on ourselves rather than investing them in His work of
redemption

God cannot be tempted with evil:
the holy and pure God...who alone is worthy...CANNOT be tempted by
“worthlessness”

How could evil possibly entice God?

He is Love.
He is Light.
He is Life.
He Alone is good.
He owns everything.

There is nothing about evil to attract God...evil has nothing to offer God
but things completely contrary to His nature (sin)

e.g. Matt 4:1-11

God hates sin because of what it did to His beloved creature and His
perfect creation

neither tempteth he any man:

equally important, the holy and pure God DOES NOT entice His beloved creatures to

- rebel against Him
- disobey Him
- corrupt themselves

God does not test us with sin...He tests us to strengthen us against sin.

v14-15 but every man is tempted:

from Adam and Eve, right up to day, and on into the future,

- man fails in Gen 4:7...fails to master the sin continually knocking at the door...
the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak
- man, like a fish enticed by bait on a hook, is dragged away from the presence of God by his own corrupt nature craving things that are destructive

those desires are forbidden because the all-knowing God knows where those paths lead...

- invade the mind
- seize the mind
- are embraced by the mind...

lust hath conceived...brings forth sin...bringeth forth death:

then those lusts breed sin...in the heart

and when lust has consumed a man, it brings spiritual and physical death

sin has a maturation process...a "fermentation" cycle...of corruption and death

alcohol is fermented juice...a corrupted joy...resulting from the introduction of a "puffing up" agent (lust...pride..."self" vs God)

alcohol is an excellent picture of sin...a subtle counterfeit that looks/tastes good and appeals to the flesh up front...but has a deadly bite

we can't blame our sin...our choices...on

- God...God didn't make me do it
- Satan...the devil didn't make me do it
- The world...the world didn't make me do it

sin lies in the heart of man (Jer 17:9), not in the heart of God
the choice to rebel against God lies within a man, is not imposed by the
devil

“The devil made me do it” is nothing more than blaming another for our
choices rather than accepting responsibility for them ourselves.

sin is

- my own fault...therefore
- self-destructive

v16 do not err:
do not

- make God the author of sin, disobedience, rebellion, pride,
selfishness
- make God the “pot-stirrer” that causes men to sin and die
- be seduced by the father of all lies
- trust your flesh (for there is nothing good in it...Rom 7:18)
- blame anyone but yourself for your sin...and then the
consequences of sin

v17 Father of lights:

do not err...know that God is

- Abba Father...a loving, protective Daddy
- The Source of every good and perfect gift to His children
John the Baptist said, “A man can receive nothing, except it
be given him from heaven.” (John 3:27)

Wisdom
Knowledge
Understanding
Faith
Grace
Life
Jesus Christ, His Son

- The Source of Light...not darkness (sin)
physical light...God is the Creator
spiritual light...God is Spirit and Light

- unchanging
 variableness: fickleness or mutation...double-minded and
 unstable (v8)
 shadow of turning: not even a hint of changing
 Mal 3:6 I am the Lord, I change not
 Heb 13:8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday,
 today, forever

Do not err...don't pin any of the sin "rap" on God because everything He created

- was good
- was a gift to man...
- has been corrupted by man thru ungodly choices...sin

what God did do is...

v18 His own will begat he us with the word of truth:
 He provided a way out...a means of re-generation...
 to become born again...by the Word (John 3:3-8)
 He made it possible for us to become new creatures (2 Cor 5:17) by grace
 thru faith (Eph 2:8-9)

Whose idea was it to leave Egypt?

- Moses' No. He fled in fear and didn't want to go back until God sent him
- The 12 tribes of Israel? No. They wanted to be free from bondage...but to stay in Egypt...free, they even wanted to go back.

It was God's plan to deliver them completely

Whose idea was it to deliver me from sin and death and the world?

- Satan's? No way.
- The world's? No way.
- Mine? No. Dead men don't have ideas.

It was God's desire and plan to save us and deliver us completely out of this corrupt world

Where would we be without God loving us before we loved Him?

He...not we...desired firstfruits

kind of firstfruits:

the first batch of figs for the season (first fruits) is always the sweetest batch

also true of the fruit of the saguaro cactus and the prickly pear cactus

regenerated man is rescued from the curse of God (Gen 3) before

- other life is
- the earth is
- before the universe is

man is made new before all the things are...before the rest of creation is

that “first-batch sweetness” produced by grace should be evidenced in our lives

v19-25 **Evidence of genuine Faith is Godly fruit:** purity...of thought, word, and deed

v19-20 words to live by!

v4...the work of patience:

1. quick ears
2. slow tongue
3. even slower wrath

swift to hear:

“ever-ready” to hear **and** understand...requiring reasoned thought
vs just hear (Is 6:9-10)

slow to speak, slow to wrath:

whenever we talk, we give our heart and tongue opportunities to make a mess of things

We were created with one mouth and two ears.

When one is working, the other is not.

So which do you think our Creator deems to be more important?

I've usually got it all backwards!

Backwards is a corruption...fruit of the flesh.

wrath of man...righteousness of God:

when we bite our tongue, our anger is controlled.
when we loosen our tongue, our anger is a wild fire.

man's self-centered anger does not finish/accomplish the righteous work
of God...quite the opposite

name one good thing that comes from our anger:

"I gave him a piece of my mind!"

Can you afford to lose that piece?

Can you scream, curse, or revile

- a backslider into repentance?
- an unbeliever into the kingdom of God?

"I feel better."

Do you really? Did anger produce forgiveness in
your heart?

Did it ward off bitterness?

"I made things right."

Really? Never has before....

Prov 14:29 we all have lots of example of part B...
I won't bore you with mine

15:1
16:32

the Godly fruit of faith is patience...self-control and purity

v21 Let us lay apart:

Therefore...let's rid ourselves of

- filthiness: "dirtiness"...pride, arrogance
- superfluity of naughtiness: "super abundance" of "depravity,
maliciousness"

and receive with meekness:

the Word of God...the Seed "implanted" and mixed with the potting soil
of faith...to bring forth abundant fruit of God

the Word of God can deliver, heal, protect, and preserve us from
corruption

v22 be ye doers of the word:

doing the Word is

- submitting to the will of God...revealed in His Word
- sustained obedience...especially when don't "feel like it"
- where the necessary changes in our hearts take place
- a lifestyle...making the Word of God your Guide for Life
- where real faith is separated from counterfeit faith

faith = H + B+ **O** + W

faith is seen in the doing...in the obedience to the Word of God,
while waiting for the promise of God
(i.e. no instant gratification)

Why do you do the things you do?

To glorify God...or to glorify yourself?

For the benefit of others...or for the benefit of yourself?

a man's heart is known by observing his walk (lifestyle), not by listening
to his words

if you are hearing but **not** doing...you might be a counterfeit Christian

the front line of real Christian living is the family

Eph 4:1-2 as introduction to Eph 4-6 (echoed in Col 3)

- if a man does not treat his wife right...I don't want to hear about his Christianity
- if a woman...her husband...
- a child...his/her parents...

those Christians are no different than the sea gulls in

"Finding Nemo"

"Mine! Mine! Mine!"

i.e. un-Christ-like...hypocrites

genuine, saving faith in Jesus Christ can be seen

The Word of God is very clear...

not hearers only, deceiving your own selves:

Joshua 1:7-8

Rom 2:12-13

Luke 6:47-49

Luke 12:47-48

John 13:17 “If you know these things, happy are you if you do them.”

John 15:14 “You are My friends if you do whatsoever I command you.”

doers of the Word are the best hearers (hear and understand)
mere “Listening” has no memory, “Doing” etches in stone

listeners...

- those who do not letting the Word sink deep into your heart and change it
- those who throttle the Word...don't want to do it
- have no fruit to show for the Seed implanted in them
- delude themselves into thinking they are children of God

v23-24 For he beholdeth himself...forgetteth:

he just glances at himself in the mirror of God's Word, never seeing the real man that God sees...a helpless and hopeless sinner in desperate need of a Savior

he does not see the moles, wrinkles, scars, and disfigurement left by sin

head knowledge ≠ saving faith

heart knowledge = saving faith...and can be seen (Ch 2)

v25 but who so looketh into the perfect law of liberty:

whoever peers into the Gospel of Grace, Law of Love ...and lives it with perseverance,

- puts feet to his faith...
- and has fruit to show for it as evidence of its sincerity

will be blessed

God blesses obedience...

obedience is words and action...not just words

...as we continue to build on James 1:22...
...with James 1:8 in mind

v26-27 **Evidence of genuine Faith is Godly fruit: self-control**

v26 bridleth not his tongue...is vain:
a quick preview of Ch 3

the pious man toward God who

- boasts
- curses
- backbites
- gossips
- murmurs
- slanders
- lies

has a faith that is empty...worthless...and powerless

NOTE: religion = “worship”

the tongue exposes the heart...and the heart reveals the object of your
worship

v27 pure religion:

genuine, unsoiled, pure faith...works

- visits and comforts the needy, weak and vulnerable
- is holy...does those things necessary to stay without spot and
free from
the lust of the flesh
lust of the eyes
the pride of life

works are evidence of a saving faith

BUT works apart from faith are meaningless

James Chapter 2

Evidence of genuine Faith is Godly fruit: impartiality and mercy

v1 My brethren:

a most appropriate springboard for the exhortation and rebuke to follow

have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ...respect of persons:

genuine faith in Jesus Christ does not play favorites based on

- economic status
- beauty
- social position
- height...weight...any external measurement
- etc

we should treat everyone the same...because God does

God is not a respecter of persons...He does not play favorites

v2-4 a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel...a poor man in vile raiment:

a man of dignity and wealth, as evidenced by his fine jewelry

(more rings = more wealth) and magnificent "GQ" wardrobe

vs

an unkempt beggar...a homeless man...in dirty, smelly, tattered and torn clothes

Sit thou her in a good place...stand thou there or sit here under my footstool:

"Come sit in the best seat, a choice seat...where everyone can see that you are here."

vs

"Go stand over there out of the way and out of sight, or sit here in this place of shame."

partial in yourselves...judges of evil thoughts:

"You are playing favorites...discriminating among God's beloved creatures..."

The rich and the poor meet together; the Lord is the maker of them all.

Prov 22:2

...and have evil thinking...guilty of making yourself a judge of people based on

- their outward appearance
- their value to you!"

“You are no more righteous than the Pharisees!”

- love the uppermost seats in the synagogues (Luke 11:43)
- love the chief seats at feasts (Luke 20:46)

Favoritism is sin (Prov 28:21)...a manifestation of other sins:

- pride
- injustice
- covetousness of the possessions, pleasures, and power the wealthy have
- fear man vs God

the evil of favoritism

1. based on some worldly standard like wealth or height; God doesn't look at the shell
1 Sam 16:7
2. only God can see that which is the only valid measure of a man, his heart
the only standard of measure is Jesus Christ, and every man falls short
Rom 3:10, 23
3. is presumptuous of the pot to judge the worthiness of the Potter's work!
4. is anti-love toward others
Matt 22:36-40
5. is totally contrary to the mind of Christ
Phil 2:5-8

v5 poor of this world rich in faith:

the poor walk by faith more easily than do the wealthy...who are quick to trust in money than to trust in God

the poor trust in that which is forever...the rich in that which is fleeting
God's wealth is forever

- joint-heirs with Christ
 - every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ
- worldly wealth rusts, wears out, is lost, is stolen...burns

men/women of faith possess REAL wealth, not false wealth

do not desire things you cannot keep...desire things you cannot lose

v6-7 ye have despised the poor:
mistreated, disrespected a man falsely...and therefore his Maker!

Do not the rich:

1. oppress you...throw you into jail when cannot repay your debt
2. drag you into court...with their high paid layers
3. blaspheme our Lord Jesus Christ...your favoritism has given them additional cause to blaspheme God

a very strong rebuke of a sinful and foolish practice

v8-9 if ye fulfill the royal law...Love your neighbor as yourself...do well:
quoting Lev 19:18
part of the Lord's Summary of the Law (Matt 22:36-40)

Favoritism breaks the 2nd most fundamental command of God

...loving your neighbor is fulfilled by doing the Word...not by hearing it
or saying it
that is a faith that works...the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ

But if ye have respect of persons...ye commit sin...as transgressors:
not doing well...not having the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ...
is playing favorites

favoritism is sin, a practice contrary to the

- will of God
- Word of God
- nature of God

so the Law of Moses convicts the one playing favorites as a lawbreaker...

v10 offend in one, he is guilty of all:
as a vehicle of salvation, the Law of Moses must be obeyed...perfectly
how many laws must I break to be a lawbreaker? One

if a man trips and stumbles on only one law, he is judged by the Law as
completely guilty
It's like hanging from a cliff by a chain...if any single link breaks,
I'm going down

there are no shades of gray in God's standard of acceptable performance.
It is binary – all or nothing...black or white...perfect or corrupted

Every man has a choice...to

- be perfect (in word, thought, and action)
- accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior (His perfection in word, thought, action)

v11 if thou commit no...yet if thou:

definitions must be clearly understood here:

1. murder (Matt 5:21-22)
2. adultery (Matt 5:27-28)

inescapable conclusions:

- the Law is spiritual (Rom 7:14)
- motives count
- man is born a sinner...a law-breaker (Ps 51:5, Rom 3:10, 23)
- in our flesh dwells no good thing (Rom 7:18)
- we need Jesus (Rom 7:24 – Rom 8:1)
- we need God's grace (Eph 2:8-9)

v12-13 so speak ye and so do:

“So speak and act like a child of God...living under the Law of Love...
not a child of wrath...living under the Law of Moses”

judgment without mercy...showed no mercy:
mercy is an expression of love

Jesus said, “Go and learn what this means...I will have mercy and not
sacrifice.”

Matt 9:13...quoting Micah 6:8

Jesus said, “Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy.”
Matt 5:7

mercy rejoiceth against judgment:

Love covers a multitude of sins...mercy overrules judgment

Why show no favoritism? Why be merciful?

To avoid judgment.

Mercy rendered fends off judgment earned

forgive as much as you have been forgiven...

give mercy as much as you have received mercy...
freely and abundantly

Evidence of genuine Faith is Godly fruit: Good works

v14 faith...have not works...save him?

Evidence of a saving faith is works...seen in a changed life

does hearing the Word of God but not doing it/applying it/being changed
by it save us?

No

Hearing and saying but not doing is a “said” faith and it does not save...
it is a false faith

a saving faith has evidence.

For example...

v15-16 naked...destitute of daily food...give them not...what profit:

food and clothes – the two things Jesus promised to provide

(Matt 6:25-34)

if you say, “Go in peace, Dios los bendiga” without giving to those in need
of the abundance God has given you, your faith is empty, even
cruel.

Saying, “God bless you!” does not save you, doing what God says saves
you

(Faith = H + B + O)

1 John 3:17-18

Love is actions...not words

If Jesus said, “I love you,” but had not died to pay for our sins...
what would His words mean?

v17 faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone:
Faith without works (evidence) is life-less/false...it cannot save you
Faith cannot live alone
Titus 3:8

Works without faith (the fundamental requirement of pleasing God) is
dead/false...they cannot save you
Works cannot stand alone
Eph 2:8-9

Saving faith is belief in action
Faith...Works...one without the other is dead.
We must have both to live

Genuine Faith and works are wedded...the two become one...
and cannot be separated
1 John 2:6

v18 a man may say...I have works:
“Let’s compare righteousness. You are righteous by faith, I by works.
I am more righteous than you.”

words of a boaster...who will not be able to stand before a holy and just
God

show thee my faith by my works:
real faith is seen by its works
a changed life is evidence of a saving faith

people do not care how much you know (faith proclaimed) until they
know how much you care (faith that works)

like predestination and free will...it is not “either/or”...it is both
faith and works are not contrary...they are compatible

v19 believe there is one God...devils believe and tremble:
if you believe but do not do...you do not really believe
a faith in the head but not in the heart does not save.

The heart drives the tongue and directs the hands and feet.
What is in the heart? Has there been a change in your life?
Listen to the tongue and look at what the hands do and where the
feet go.

Unfaithful man and devils believe that God is...but do not trust in God,
will not surrender Him
At least the devils know enough to tremble...unlike unbelieving man

v20-23 But wilt thou know:
“Do you want to know the truth?”

a saving faith is a lifestyle...not a lingo.

Abraham...justified by works:

For example, Abraham said with his lips, “I believe.”
Then, to demonstrate he really did believe, he said, “I believe” with his
hands and feet on Mount Moriah
Otherwise his words would have been empty

his faith was made...proven...by his actions.
Abraham believed and acted – true faith obeys.
obedience is what God’s friends do
John 15:14

We must ask ourselves tough questions.

- With your tongue you say you believe.
What do your actions say?
- What kind of faith do you have –
a “said” faith or a saving faith?
- Are you a friend of God or a friend of the world (James 4:4) ?

v24 by works a man is justified:

the sum of the matter...

- genuine faith...works
- genuine faith and works are inseparable
- faith alone saves...but saving faith is not alone

Actions speak louder than words

Actions give meaning to words...words explain actions.

Faith and works...you cannot have one without the other

v25-26 Rahab the harlot justified by works:

genuine faith is for Jew alone but for Gentile too...for any man...

for whosoever

John 3:16

More tough questions:

- Can your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ be seen?
- If not, what faith is seen by your actions –
Faith in self?
Faith in money?
Faith in the world?
(many unbelievers reject Christ because
of..."Christians")
- Are you really saved?
- If you are saved but not living like it, why not? Repent!

Only you can answer these tough questions for yourself.

God knows the answers, no man does...so God alone can judge
you.

But do you know the answers?

Ask God tough, honest questions and ask Him to reveal the truth to
you

A man's faith is not real unless it moves him to action

It takes 2 oars to row a boat forward

With only one, end up going nowhere...in circles

James 1:22

James Chapter 3

Evidence of genuine Faith is Godly fruit: not just works...also words

How many of us have a tongue?

OK...that's who needs to pay careful attention to this passage of Scripture

The study will be littered with Scripture...

I will read...you write down the addresses for subsequent meditation

v1 My brethren:

another appropriate into. "I love you. Brace yourselves!"

many masters...greater condemnation:

masters = "instructors, teachers"

in the midst of all the "spiritual altoids" is the strongest...to either:

1. pastor/teachers and those who want to be a pastor/teacher
this is not

- a job
- to be taken lightly
- to aspire to...

it is a calling of God

God calls...equips...gifts...sends

- a servant, not a boss
- who has a shepherd's heart, not a self-serving heart...

and He holds him to a higher standard of:

- faithfulness (2 Tim 2:1-2)
- and
- integrity...being a doer (Ch 1:22)

if the "Born-Again" beliefs mentioned are a result of

- a starvation diet
- or
- junk food...

what of the pastors? Greater condemnation

2. self-appointed instructors/rebukers of sin in others
one who thinks it is his/her job to rebuke others for their sin
and to correct all their faults...
without the brokenness of spirit, meekness, gentleness, and
mercy of God

v2 why the warning in v1...because even the very best man is very imperfect...
still a work-in-process
this starts a conversation about the tongue

in many things we offend all:
people are careless with their tongues...their emotions...with each other
people are fragile...men more so than women even though women are
more emotional
therefore, it is all too easy to cause another to trip or stumble by what we
say

if any man offend not...a perfect man...able also to bridle the whole body:
the complete man...completely conformed into the image of Jesus...

- is able to govern his entire body
- offends no man...and grieves not the Holy Spirit...
with his tongue

Rom 6:19

Rom 13:14

1 Cor 9:27

we must exercise great care when we engage our tongue!

v3 we put bits in horses' mouths...obey us:
by pulling on reins attached to bits in the horses' mouths, a 150 lb. man
can control the Budweiser team of Clydsdales, weighing
17,600 lbs and having bone-crushing strength!
100x power...because of a device of iron placed in the mouth

the Word of God needs to be the bit in our mouth

v4 also the ships...a very small helm:
another illustration of the power of something so small– the rudders used
to steer the great machines of the seas and skies

- an oil tanker is 3 football fields long x 1 football field wide
- a Boeing 747 weighs 910,000 lbs at takeoff, about as long as a
20 story building

both machines can be steered by a 150lb man because of a tiny piece of
equipment called a rudder...the blade of an oar, if you will
the rudder is not only small, it is extraordinarily beneficial – the giant
machine would be worthless without it

v5-6 Even so, the tongue is a little member and boasts great things:
our tongue is a very small part of our body, in volume and weight...

But it is a “Big Talker”!

It is ungoverned...and its effects are likened to

1. A great forest fire
2. A world of sin
3. A leavening agent that defiles and corrupts
4. Fire from hell

Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue is a fire:

1. our tongue is a great forest fire
great forests can be destroyed by one little, tiny spark
The recent fires in AZ and CA started with one small, uncontrolled spark

Fire is very beneficial...for warmth and for cooking...
unless it is ungoverned/uncontrolled

The tongue, when it is ungoverned, ignites great inferno of mischief, trouble, and devastation

Ps 52:1-4

Why do you boast of evil, you mighty man? Your tongue plots destruction; it is like a sharpened razor, you who practice deceit. You love evil rather than good, falsehood rather than speaking the truth. You love every harmful word, O you deceitful tongue!

A world of iniquity:

2. Our tongue is a world of sin...the habitation of untold evil and wickedness
 - Dissentions
 - Divisions
 - Strife
 - Backstabbing
 - Backbiting
 - Gossip... [which can start as a “Prayer Request” unless we are careful]
 - Slander
 - Lying
 - Deceit
 - Blasphemy

Ps 5:9

Job 15:5

it defiles the whole body:

3. our tongue defiles, stains and disgraces...either us individually or us corporately, the Body of Christ

Prov 13:3

The deepest wounds we can inflict on another are inflicted by our tongue

Sometimes our words are as sharp as a surgeon's knife that cut all the way to the bone

Other times our words are as brutal as a chainsaw

The wounds caused by our words take the longest to heal and are prone to infection...bitterness

Also...the tongue is a burner of bridges...that restrict/cut off avenues of help later

setteth on fire...set on fire of hell:

4. our tongue is like the fire of hell
Hell = "gehenna", the perpetually burning garbage dump outside the western gate of Jerusalem

Prov 27:20

Hell and destruction are never full

...and the damage of an uncontrolled tongue knows no bounds

it ignites our children, our parents, our spouses with a fire from hell...

the devil loves to stir our emotions and to get us wagging our tongues!

a gossip makes a mountain out of a molehill by adding dirt

"No one gossips about other people's secret virtues."

Bertrand Russell

v7-8 every kind of beast...tamed:

man is able to subject all creatures...but he cannot subject his own tongue
man has dominion over all the kinds of animals...but not over his tongue
man can govern neither himself nor one of the smallest parts of his
body, his tongue

tongue can no man tame...unruly evil...deadly poison:

Husbands and fathers, how much of the trouble in your family can be
attributed to your uncontrolled tongue?

Wives and mothers?

Sons and daughters?

The ungoverned tongue is

- a loose cannon...a wild instrument of destruction
- an wide-open dispenser of
deceit
depravity
deadly poison

the tongue...more powerful than a team of Clydsdales or a 747...

cannot be controlled by any man

only the Lord Jesus Christ, God Almighty Himself, can control the tongue
of man

v2...none of us are perfect men

therefore...Ch 1:19

Ps 141:3

Set a guard over my mouth, O LORD; keep watch over the
door of my lips.

Only Jesus can

- quench the fire of hell unleashed by the tongue
- heal the wounds inflicted by the tongue
- rebuild the bridges burned by the tongue

v9-10 bless we God...curse we men:

with an ungoverned tongue we both

- bless God (with songs of worship, prayer, praises) ...and
- revile man (who is created in the image of God and for whom Jesus died)

In reviling man, we revile man's Maker...like Job's wife in Job 2:9

Such a thing is irrational and contrary to the Maker's design for that part of the body

These things ought not be so:

Since Gen 3, when man defiantly ate of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, both good and evil spews from his mouth

We are quick to engage our tongue...and abuse gushes forth

But that need not be so! We have a choice how to use our tongue.

Prov 10:19

Prov 26:20

Ps.34:12-14

Ps.35:28

Don't have a wild, knee-jerk tongue...give control of it to the Lord

Rom 6:12-13

Think before you speak...vs "Ready, Fire, Aim"...
and silently ask yourself "WWJS?"

v11-12 fountain send...sweet and bitter:

a water fountain does not flow with both fresh and foul water
a well this unpredictable would be sealed shut and abandoned.

all trees bear fruit after its own kind...not another kind
A tree this rebellious would be chopped down and burned

Ps 12:3

Prov 10:31

may the words of our tongues

- taste like 7-Up and not vinegar...
- comfort like a cool breeze and not pollute like raw sewage

Spirit-filled words are as a cool drink of water on a summer day in
Phoenix...

Flesh-filled words are as salt water to a thirsty man in the desert

with our words, we either nurture and refresh...or we destroy...
our relationships

Without Jesus in control, my tongue is filled with poison...
because my heart is

By giving Jesus control of your tongue, we give Him control of our
heart...and that's what a right relationship with God is all about!

Be "governed by God"...controlled by God

Another reason why alcohol is a foolish choice

When governed by alcohol instead of by the Spirit of God, your
tongue is loosened and out pours

- Fire from hell
- Poisonous venom
- Unruly evil
- Bitter water

v13 a wise man and endowed with knowledge:
“Who is controlled by God and intelligent about the natures of both God and man?”

show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom:
let him display Godly behavior...characterized by meekness and wisdom

the wise man

- bites his tongue
- behaves with sincere humility
- trusts God and God's ways
- ...is a man of real faith

Prov 21:23

Job 27:4

Job 31:30

v14 bitter envying and strife...glory not...lie not against the truth:
if there is malicious jealousy, bitterness, and intrigue in your heart...
do not boast about having wisdom...
because those things in your heart are foolishness, not wisdom
don't think you have the truth if your heart is filled with bitterness, envy,
or strife

instead, bite your tongue! Bite that vicious thing and pray!

Ps 39:1

Prov 11:12

Prov 17:28

Prov 30:32

v15-16 wisdom...not from above, but:
the fruit of worldly wisdom is:

- bitterness
- envy
- selfish ambition
- disorder/confusion
- every evil practice

bitterness, envy, and strife are:

1. heart conditions...revealed by the tongue
2. sown by the devil
3. roommates with confusion and evil

this wisdom is man's way – this is from the heart of man

Jer 17:9

Rom 7:18

Prov 14:12

Prov 21:2

Prov 12:15

man apart from God is only evil continually
where man's way rules, peace is absent

Consider the end of the matter before you

- embark on what you think is the right way
- speak

Consider the foundation upon which you are building:

The Rock

or

sand

v17-18 But the wisdom that is from above is:

true wisdom is from the heart of God

- pure: clean, innocent, modest, perfect
- peaceable: able to pacify, gracious
- gentle: mild mannered, patient
- easy to be entreated: convincing, easy to submit to
- full of mercy and good fruits: compassionate and healing
- without partiality: no favorites
- without hypocrisy: sincere, genuine

fruit of righteousness is sown in peace:

true wisdom lives in those who abide in peace

Matt 5:9

James 1:22

where the Word of God rules, peace abounds

Is 32:17

Prov 12:18

Move and speak from the heart of God

Give your heart, mind, and tongue to God...they are all connected and He wants them all

Matt 12:36-37

1 Peter 3:10

Reject man' wisdom...it is fragile and volatile...dead

and embrace God's wisdom...it is unwavering and peaceful...alive

Rom 8:4-13

James Chapter 4

Evidence of genuine Faith is Godly fruit: Humility

v1 wars and fightings among you...your lusts that war in your members:
the fruit of man's wisdom...man's ways...is

- envy and strife (James 3:14-16)
- wars and fightings (individual or national)

the source of which are

- the strong desires for sensual pleasure...which is never far removed from the heart of man...
- the covetousness for riches and honor and glory the world has to offer

Gal 5:17

War...not a skirmish...a full-scale war!

Is there strife or envy in your life?
Somewhere, pride and lust lurk

v2-3 lust and have not:

“You long for...but do not possess.”
problem: wrong motive...worldliness

kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain:

“You assassinate another's character...moved with envy and jealousy, you covet ...but do not possess.”

problems: wrong motives...worldliness...
and an uncontrolled tongue

fight and war...have not...ask not...receive not...ask amiss:

“You quarrel and dispute...but do not have...because you do not ask...
or ask improperly.”

problem: bad heart condition...lust is the beginning and the end

do not receive because the request is diseased and evil, out of sync with
the heart of God,from which come every good and every perfect
gift (James 1:17)

thinking the grass is greener over there, you ask for something
so you can indulge your flesh with the things of the world...
instead of denying your flesh and strengthening your spirit with the
things of God right where you are

We must continually examine our motives and our desires

v4 Ye adulterers and adulteresses...the friendship of the world is enmity with God:
very strong words spoken in a figurative sense about a spiritual
condition...to those who have given their love to another god

Satan is the

- god of this world. (2 Cor 4:4)
- prince of the world (John 12:31, 14:30)

giving one's love to the god of this world is expressed in a lifestyle of
fulfilling the desires
(the lust) of the flesh and of the mind (Eph 2:2-3)

“Worldliness” is envy, covetousness, strife, lust...the nature and desires of
the flesh

“Are you not aware that

- hanging out with the world
- desiring the things of the world
- driven by the desire for money or material things or pleasure
- feeding the desires of the flesh
- being worldly

make you

- hostile toward God
- in opposition to God?”

whosoever...will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God:

ALL...who love the world and the things it has to offer are adversaries of
God...which is what Satan is...

so ALL...who love the world are

- allies of Satan
- enemies of God. (Rev)
- children of the devil (1 John 3:9-10)
- destined for destruction and hell with the devil

Let's be very clear on this point!

The world is the dominion of Satan (for the time being).

The world and God are enemies.

There is no fence to straddle...you cannot have one foot in hell and
one foot in heaven.

God and the world are opposed...there is no middle ground

life is binary – every man is either:

1. a friend of the world and an enemy of God
- or
2. a friend of God and an enemy of the world

Who is my friend, both in good times and in bad times?

What has the world ever done for me?

What has God done for me?

The warning is very loud and very clear:

- “Come out of her, my people!” (the world’s system)
Rev 18:4
- “Be holy, for I AM holy!”
1 Peter 1:16 quoting Lev 11:44
- “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. You cannot serve God and mammon (money, materialism, pleasures)”
Matt 6:24
- “Beware covetousness, for a man’s life consists not in the abundance of the things he possesses.”
Luke 12:15
- 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. 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. And the world passes away, and the lust thereof. But he that does the will of God abides forever.
1 John 2:15-17
- “...that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.”
Luke 16:15b
- Be not conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind...
Rom 12:2a

- “Prepare to meet your God, O Israel. For He that forms the mountains, and created the wind, and declares unto man His thought, that makes the morning darkness, and treads upon the high places of the earth, the LORD, the God of hosts, is His name.” (“fightin’ words...military talk)
Amos 4:12b-13

v5 Scripture saith in vain:

The Scripture is God-breathed...does God ever talk just to hear Himself talk...for no purpose whatsoever?

The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy:
Where does Scripture say that?

2 ways to look at this

1. This is not a specific verse being quoted verbatim...it is an over-arching message of the entire counsel of God about the nature of man, expressed in many ways in many places
e.g. Gen 6:5
2. the Holy Spirit, indwelling in us, is intensely jealous
Be not deceived...God is a jealous God.

Either way, the depraved spirit of man is

- driven by wrongful desires, jealousy, and ill will
- out of sync with the heart of God

and God has declared war against pride, lust, envy, covetousness

v6 But He giveth more grace:

the heart of God is love

- to love the unlovely, no strings attached
- to give grace freely...cheerfully...liberally

God resisteth the proud:

God

- is opposed to...
- casts away...
- “stiff-arms”...

the self-exalting

He scorns the scorers and despises the despisers (Prov 3:34)

But giveth grace unto the humble:

Given freely...cheerfully...liberally

In exchange for...nothing.

We don't deserve it.

There is nothing fair about God's grace.

the proud are independent...self-reliant...self-sufficient...

good-for-nothing...God opposes them

the humble are dependent upon Him...can do nothing apart from Him...

insufficient.

useful...God gives grace to them

When I am proud, I bring God against me. How irrational is that?!

Why do I want to do that?

On the other hand, when I am humble, God showers me with His grace.

Why would I NOT want to do that?

v7 Submit yourselves therefore to God:

a rational response to the love and grace of God...is submission

- subject yourself to His authority
- subordinate your will to His
- obey His Word and His will and His ways
- seek His things instead of the things of the world

1 Tim 6:3-11

resist the devil and he will flee from you:

like Joseph, flee the lustful, covetous, prideful temptations of the tempter,

the god of this world

oppose the devil

- liar
- slanderer
- false accuser
- betrayer
- destroyer
- bamboozler (to deceive by underhanded methods, to hoodwink)

and he WILL...not "might"...runaway from you!

How can that be?

1 John 4:4 greater power

2 K 6:16 they with us are more than they with them

Satan has no power in the life of a genuine born-again Christian
(Faith that works)
Satan only wants to make a fool of you.
The world only wants to make a fool of you.
Your flesh only wants to make a fool of you.
What kind of friends (v4) are those?!

The “2 steps” of walking with the Lord, our True Friend:
1. Submit (to Him, the Prince of Peace)
2. Resist (the prince of the world)

How much resistance to we give Satan?
Are we as tenacious in resistance as he is in attack?

How often do we just “roll over” when faced with a
temptation of a trial?
We should be on the offensive, after all...because the King
of kings and the Lord of lords has delivered us from
the power of darkness and transferred us into the
kingdom of light...and light chases away the
darkness (Col 1:13)

v8 Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you:
in our relationship with Him, God is always the initiator...we never are
we are the responders, God never is

God has defeated our enemies (death and the devil) and offered His
grace...we respond to Him by

- seeking His will and ways...desiring the things of God
- climbing up into the lap of Abba Father and snuggling in...

Cleanse your hands, ye sinners:
purify your filthy actions, ways

Purify your hearts, ye double minded:

Respond to God...seeking His will and ways...desiring the things of
God...with your whole heart, not a divided heart

James 1:8 (heart, mind, tongue are all connected)

Jesus, quoting Isaiah: this people honors me with their lips but their heart
is far from me

1 K 18:21 How long will you falter between 2 opinions...follow God
or Baal

a divided heart vacillates and is uncommitted...and is a miserable place to
be

- too much of the world to enjoy Jesus
- too much of Jesus to enjoy the world

Divided hearts...like Divided kingdoms...fall and are taken captive by the
enemy.

A heart is either God's...or it isn't.

God has removed the separation between Himself and man...He has made
it possible for man to draw close

Draw close to Him and He will draw close to you.

v9 Be afflicted and mourn and weep:

“Realize the misery of your carnality...may it cause you to grieve and
wail.”

let your laughter turn to mourning:

“Let your gratification with the things of the world be empty and
painful...sooner rather than later, which is inevitable.”

joy to heaviness:

“May your desire of and delight in the things of the world result in
unbearable sadness...sooner rather than later, which is inevitable.”

worldly man, carnal Christian...be heart-broken over the condition of your
heart

my prayer for backsliders: abject misery

v10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord:
humility happens when we see our heart as God sees it...and then when
we submit and surrender to God's love...purposefully bringing
ourselves low in our unworthiness

He shall lift you up:
from the dunghill to the King's palace

The way up...is down

Humility is rational

- the proud lift themselves up – how far can that be?
- The humble are lifted up by God – how far can that be!

The way up...is down

v11 speak not evil of one another brethren:
connected to the heart and the mind...is the tongue

do not slander or backbite or gossip about your "Blood" relatives...
do not be a friend as the devil is a friend

he that speaketh evil...judgeth...speaketh evil of the law...judgeth the law:
he who slanders and condemns a brother, slanders and condemns the Law
of Moses...the Word of God
by proudly setting himself as judge of the Law

from the Lord's handling of the woman caught in the act of adultery, we
see that the qualification for being a judge is perfect sinlessness.

none of us

- have kept the Law (James 2:10)
...are worthy to judge another person...
- are all-knowing
...are able to judge fairly with complete knowledge

v12 there is one lawgiver:
only Jesus...

- Who authored the Law and kept it perfectly...
- Who has complete knowledge...

can

- judge a man's heart
- save us from our sinfulness and unworthiness

Is 33:22

Heb 7:25

- To deliver
- To make whole
- To preserve

by being judgmental, we place ourselves as equal to or above God!
Lucifer wanted to do that and look what happened to him!
(Is 14, Ezk 28)

So instead of proudly slandering and condemning...

- Be honest and genuine (Matt 7:1-5)
- Be humble and gentle (Gal 6:1-2)

v13-15 Go to now:
"Come now"

from being honest and humble...to being deceived and exuding
self-confidence...

Today or tomorrow we will go...continue there a year...buy and sell and get gain:
self-willed plans for our lives...which are not our own because we have
been purchased

- of traveling to another city for a year...or perhaps for a few months...
- to trade and make a profit...or perhaps to be made merchandise of for someone else's profit...

Whereas ye know not what shall on the morrow:

"But you cannot see any further than the end of your nose.

You do not know the course your life will take in the next 5 minutes, let
alone in the next 5 hours, 5 days, 5 months, or 5 years.

So make a Godly choice right now!

What is your life? It is even a vapor...:

Physical life in this fallen world...cursed by the sin of pride and lust of the flesh...is

- fragile
- weak
- fleeting...

no more permanent than

- the morning mist, which is burned off by the morning sun and disappears
- the steam rising out of you shower, which evaporates in the air

The number of our allotted days here on this earth is not even a rounding error in light of eternity.

Ps 144:4 Man is like a breath. His days are like a passing shadow

Ps 39:4-5 physical life is no more lasting than soap bubbles

1 Peter 1:24

A worldly philosophy of “Eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow we die.” is a foolish and lustful and wicked response to this reality.

...if the Lord will:

Instead, the rational thing to say is, “Whatever the Lord wills for me, that is my will.”

He is the Lord...His will be done.

I am not the Lord...my will not be done.

Are you living for the

- mist
- steam
- shadow
- bubbles...

or for eternity?

v16 now ye rejoice...is evil:

“Now, in your self-willed plans in pursuit of the things of this world, you boast of your plans and glory in your success.

Such pride and self-confidence is

- evil
- self-destructive
- harmful to your relationship with God.”

v17 him that knoweth to do good...is sin:
good: fair, honest, virtuous, beautiful (in God's eyes)

to "do ugly" in the eyes of God...is sin
to know the difference between right and wrong and to choose wrong...
is sin

we know the difference between right and wrong...
and we are held accountable
Luke 12:48

the plans of men are

- self-serving
- worldly
- lustful
- covetous
- filled with bamboozlement
- double minded

what are your plans?
Would God say they are beautiful or ugly?

Man's ways seem right...but they do not work...
they lead only to destruction
Set your plans aside and get into the middle of God's plan

James Chapter 5

This week we celebrate another baby dedication...one that the whole world celebrates but very few know what the celebration is about
Jesus Christ was born about 2000 years ago in Bethlehem and dedicated to the Father
40 days later in Jerusalem

Why did the Creator enter His creation in the form of His beloved creature?
Jesus was dedicated...to do what?

Let's examine that in context of our current study...

- v1-6 James is writing to wealthy men inside the church (v1)...not those in the world... who have been misusing the Lord's possessions and are
- trusting in their wealth...not in the Lord
 - cheating hired workers out of their wages
 - indulging their flesh with the pleasures of the world
 - oppressing poor believers

money is not the problem, the heart of man is always the problem

his message is a very stern one

- (v1) "Come on, you rich men! Weep and shriek because calamities stemming from your spiritual wretchedness are coming!"
- (v2a) "Your money and possessions are putrid...beware covetousness because your life does not consist of the abundance of your possessions (Luke 12:15)."

Lazarus and the rich man...the rich man building new barns...come to mind

- (v2b) "Your GQ wardrobe is moth eaten...unacceptable attire for the Wedding Feast of the Lamb."
- (v3a) "Your wealth is corroded. All your gold and silver have as much eternal value as rusted iron. And your heart is rusting away just as your garbage is burning away."
- (v3b) "Just like Job, naked you came out of your mother's womb and

naked you shall return. All that gold and silver is going to burn in the “house fire” awaiting you. Your 401K is not burgeoning...it is empty.”

Teaching Matt 6:19-21, 24, 33

Warning Rev 3:15-17

Exhortation 1 Tim 6:17-19

- (v4) “You cheated your employees out of their fair wages and the Lord of hosts hears their cries. God is the God of the poor, who depend upon Him. He fights for them.”

Deut 24:15 At his day you shall give him his wage, neither shall the sun go down on it for he is poor and sets his heart upon it. Lest he cry against you unto the Lord and it be sin unto you

Lev 19:13 ditto

Jer 22:13 Woe unto him...that uses his neighbor’s services without wages and gives him not for his work

Mal 3:5 in a long list of those God will judge are those that oppress their workers in their wages

- (v5) “You have lived in voluptuous luxury, indulging and pampering your flesh with the pleasures of the world. You have fattened yourselves for a slaughter.”

- (v6) “You have oppressed your poor brethren, who are harmless and inoffensive.”

Rom 2:1-6

God hates oppression, injustice, and opportunism for self-gain

Material wealth is a snare for man...that becomes a cruel taskmaster

Ps 49:6-20

“The measure of a man’s wealth is how much he can do without.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Why did Jesus come? What was Jesus dedicated to do?

- to expose the false gods
- to reveal the One, True, and Living God...
- to show man the bankruptcy of his spirit and the corrosion of his heart
- to redefine “wealth” and “poor”
- to humble the proud
- to defend the poor and the oppressed

v7-11 James then turns to the poor brothers that have been abused by their rich brothers

- (v7) “Be longsuffering...as the Lord is longsuffering.
Wait upon the Lord until He returns.
Be as the farmer...who is completely at God’s mercy for
the rain and the dying seed being re-born and
bearing fruit...who must wait many months for his
crop to grow before he can harvest it.”

Real faith works...real faith waits

- (v8) “Resolutely set your thoughts and feelings on the Lord...every day we are closer to the Lord’s return. He is returning to judge and to avenge the wicked deeds of men. Time is on your side.” (this is the flip side of v3b)
- (v9) “Do not murmur or whine, or take your brother to court, because that is not the Lord’s way. The Judge of all men is almost here!”
- (v10) “Be encouraged by the example of the Lord’s prophets, all of whom endured hardship and displayed fortitude.”

Heb 11:33-39

- (v11) “Blessed is he who perseveres.
Consider the faith of Job, who although severely afflicted,
never cursed God...but fell down and worshipped
the Lord!
And waited for the last chapter in his life to be written.
The Lord sees your suffering...you will see His
compassion and mercy.
So hold on to the end!”

Genuine faith has endurance...
we overcome by faith...
and the Lord rewards genuine faith.

Why did Jesus come? What was Jesus dedicated to do?

- To reveal to us the loving Father...Who is on our side!
- To overcome the world...that is unstable and hopelessly lost
- To enrich the poor in spirit
- To teach us patience and longsuffering...
- To increase our faith

v12 to all...

“Whatever you do, do NOT make an oath or a vow!”

Jesus gave the same exhortation in Matt 5:33-37

a vow is an emotional outburst...by an uncontrolled tongue...
obligating a bankrupt and powerless debtor...the flesh

don't make promises...just deliver
don't announce what you are going to do...just do it...
so you don't prove yourself to be a hypocrite

our word should be like the Lord's Word...simple and absolute
God says what He means and means what He says...and He expects the
same of us

So be good to your word...it is precious.

Why did Jesus come? What was Jesus dedicated to do?

- So we could see and handle the Word of Life...the Absolute Truth (1 John 1:1-3)
- To empower us to walk as He walked and to talk as He talked

v13-15a again to the entire body, “Are you

- (v13a) suffering? In trouble? Pray...God is faithful to hear and to deliver.
- (v13b) cheerful and blessed? Praise the Lord and worship Him...
God is good!
- (v14) ill? Weak? Weary? Invite...reach out to...the elders to anoint
you with oil and pray for you in the authority of the Lord,
our Healer
Jer 17:14 Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed

The common theme is prayer...to the One Who can save and heal, protect and preserve

do not ignore the power of prayer by not praying....why leave the most effective tool in the box?

Matt 7:7

Why did Jesus come? What was Jesus dedicated to do?

- To teach us the power of prayer...to receive what He can do
- To save and to heal...
- To protect and preserve

v15b-16a and pray not just for physical suffering but also for spiritual suffering...
be concerned for the spiritual and physical well-being of a brother

pray for the greatest of gifts, forgiveness of sins

1 John 1:9...with Matt 10:8

Mark 11:25-26

Reasons for unforgiveness...sin...in the heart of man

- Pride
- Selfishness
- Ignorance

Confession is to be a public as the sin

- All to God
- If to an individual, first that individual and then to God
- If publicly, first to that public and then to God
- Not...confessing
Widely, randomly, loosely
To some false mediator...priest

Why did Jesus come? What was Jesus dedicated to do?

- To show us our sins...and to forgive us of our sins when we see and agree
- To heal the spiritual condition of the repentant
- To be the One Mediator between God and man

v16b-18 Effectual fervent prayer:

active, mighty, desperate, without ceasing...from the heart of God...
crying out for the intercession of the Son of God and the Spirit of
God

Luke 18:1-5

Not some memorized prayer repeated ad nauseum

Matt 6:7

an example of effectual fervent prayer...by a common man like you and
me...Elijah

- a common man like me
- a servant of God
- submitted to God
- available to God

Why did Jesus come? What was Jesus dedicated to do?

- To teach us to pray
- To show us that no man can boast before the Almighty God

v19-20 convert him...hide a multitude of sins:

gold and silver never cover sins

oaths and vows never cover sins

only Jesus, The Way, The Truth, and The Life...with His shed
blood...covers sins

this is why Jesus came...and what He was dedicated to do

- to turn a backslider...
- to hide a multitude of sins...
- to seek and to save the lost...
- to expose the false gods and to reveal the One, True, and
Living God...
- to give life to the dead...
- to humble the proud...
- to purchase the destitute, the diseased, and the deceived...
- to mediate reconciliation between the holy God and fallen
man...
- to fulfill the Word of God...
- to be our Kinsman-Redeemer

Who this morning was threatened by Emma?
We should be no more threatened by Jesus...offering us the love and the
grace of the Father

Who could refuse Emma anything she wanted?
Who can refuse Jesus what He wants...our whole hearts

Do you understand how much God loves you...and the extreme measures
He took to show you how much He loves you?

Will you kiss the Son and trust in Him (Ps 2:12)

God had to take on the form of his fallen creature in order to not violate His nature

- To be just...by judging the rebellion of sin
- To be gracious...by taking on that judgment Himself to give His life to the
dead
- To be love...by showing "I love you"
- To be meek...by entering into His creation as a baby

Is 7:14

Is 9:6

2 Cor 8:9