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March 2008

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Translation

James 1:1 Jacob, a bonds slave of God [the Father] and the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes during the time of the dispersion [Jews exiled from Jerusalem]. Keep on rejoicing [maintain inner happiness]!

James 1:2 Although you have considered each occasion with inner happiness [spiritual self-esteem], my brethren [Jewish members of the royal family], when you encountered various kinds of pressure testing [providential preventative suffering: thought, people, system, disaster],

James 1:3 Knowing [from their status in spiritual self-esteem] that the testing [providential preventative suffering] of your doctrine produces patient endurance [courage under pressure],

James 1:4 Nevertheless, let patient endurance [passing pressure tests by utilizing the doctrine in your soul] keep on bringing about mature production [accelerated growth in the spiritual life by passing momentum and evidence tests], in order that you may become increasingly mature [spiritual maturity], even full-grown [completed edification complex of the soul], being deficient in nothing [able to handle any pressure without going insane].

James 1:5 Now, if any of you [who are under pressure testing] lacks wisdom [experience in the application of doctrine], keep on asking for help [pray for application assistance] in the

presence of God - Who gives to all [believers who ask] generously and will not reject your request - and it [assistance in the application of doctrine] shall be given to you.

James 1:6 But keep on asking with confidence, doubting nothing [faith-rest drill], for he who doubts on a recurring basis [spiritual malfunction] is like a wave of the sea [unstable] which is pushed around by the wind [agitated] and tossed all over the place [hurled about emotionally];

James 1:7 For that man [the one who fails to execute the faith-rest drill] must stop presuming that he shall receive anything [assistance in passing pressure tests] from the Lord,

James 1:8 Being a double-souled man [in emotional revolt], unstable [bored & restless] in all his ways.

James 1:9 However, may the genuinely humble brother [who knows how to execute the faith-rest drill] keep on celebrating in the sphere of his high [spiritual] position

James 1:10 But the wealthy one [spiritually] in the sphere of his genuine humility – like the wild flower of the grass [which stands out beautifully on the background landscape] – may eventually disappear [invalidates his spiritual progress through neglect],

James 1:11 For the sun [testing] will rise again with a scorching heat [intense pressure] and the grass [arrogant believer] begins to wither and the wild flower [genuinely humble believer] begins to fall apart [drifts off course] in the same manner [the arrogant and genuinely humble believers both flunk the next round of pressure tests] and the beauty of its face [the spiritual status of the genuinely humble believer] begins to fade away [loss of reflected glory]; also, in this manner, the wealthy one [genuinely humble believer] during his journey [spiritual life] may wither [begin losing everything he has accomplished so far].

James 1:12 Spiritually happy and prosperous is the man who remains under pressure [passes tests that accelerate spiritual growth], for after being tested for approval, he shall receive the crown of life [awarded at the Evaluation Seat of Christ for good production], which was promised [by the Lord in eternity past] to those [mature believers] who continue to love Him [occupation with Christ].

James 1:13 Let no one when he is being tempted [allured to sin when the pressure gets too great] say: “I am being tempted by God [allured to sin],” for God is incapable of being tempted by evil [violates His divine essence and character], neither does He Himself tempt anyone [allure to sin].

James 1:14 On the contrary, each one is tempted by his own lust pattern [function of the sin nature] when he is dragged away [from the spiritual life] and is being enticed [lured to sin].

James 1:15 Then when the lust pattern becomes pregnant, it gives birth to sin; and this sin, when it has been fully realized, brings forth spiritual death.

James 1:16 Stop being deceived, my beloved brethren [Jewish Christians].

James 1:17 Every good gift [gradual instilling of wisdom] and every completed present [crown of life] keeps on being from above, coming down from the ultimate source of the Father of lights [intellectual and spiritual light: Bible doctrine], from the immediate source of Whom there is not within Him a hint of variation [no change of course in His grace mechanics] nor an eclipse [of His glory].

James 1:18 According to His determinate will, He regenerated us [spiritual birth] by means of the Word of Truth [quickened by the Spirit through Gospel doctrine] for the purpose of being the first portion of His creatures [first generation of Christians].

James 1:19 Understand these [rules for Bible study], my beloved brethren [Jewish Christians]: Every person must keep on being swift for the purpose of hearing [concentrate on doctrinal teaching with eagerness], slow when speaking [shut up in class and don't interrupt the teacher], slow to react in anger [mental attitude sins destroy spiritual momentum],

James 1:20 For the anger of man [mental attitude sin] does not produce the righteousness of God [fails divine standards].

James 1:21 Because of this [sin short-circuiting the spiritual life], after removing every category of pollution [cosmic 1 activity: arrogance complex of sins] and the overflow of wickedness [Cosmic 2 activity: hatred complex of sins], start welcoming in the sphere of genuine humility the implanted Word [Bible doctrine in the soul], which keeps on being able to deliver your souls [sanctification salvation].

James 1:22 Moreover, keep on being doers of the Word [metabolized doctrine in the kardia applied to daily life] and not hearers only [unmetabolized doctrine stuck in the nous or forgotten], deceiving yourselves [malfunction in the grace apparatus for perception];

James 1:23 For if anyone keeps on being a hearer [reception to gnosis is successful] of the Word but not a doer [application of epignosis is a failure], this one [who fails to metabolize doctrine: from gnosis to epignosis] is like a noble man who studies his natural face [inner characteristics] in a mirror [comparing his norms and standards to the Word of God],

James 1:24 For he observed himself [in the mirror] and then he departed [off he goes into apostasy] and immediately disregarded [forgets] what sort of person he originally was [that initial, brief look in the mirror that shouted: reversionist!].

James 1:25 But the one [believer with positive momentum] who has looked [deep concentration] into the mature law [principle] of freedom [Church Age doctrine rather than the Mosaic Law] and has persisted [continued with the function of the grace apparatus for perception on a daily basis], not having become a forgetful hearer [failure to convert gnosis

to epignosis], but a doer of work [applies epignosis to life after looking into the mature law of freedom and advances to maturity], this one shall be happy during application [doing the Word].

James 1:26 If anyone [a self-righteous do-gooder] has the subjective opinion [his self-analysis is corrupt and unbiblical] that he is religious, not holding his own tongue in check with a bit and bridle [runs doctrinal people down], but is constantly deceiving the mentality of his own soul [his right lobe has been seduced by self-righteous, legalistic arrogance], his religion [of human good] is empty [useless].

James 1:27 Pure [nothing added] and undefiled [non-legalistic] spirituality [genuine Christianity] in the sight of God, even the Father, is exemplified by this: Take care of orphans and widows in their difficult circumstances [they had been abandoned during the dispersion]; keep yourself without blemish [guard against false doctrine and scar tissue of the soul] from the cosmic system.

James 2:1 My brethren [members of the royal family], stop holding on to loyalty in the sphere of personal favoritisms [over-zealous commitment towards friends] with reference to our Lord Jesus Christ, the honorable One [everyone else is sub-par].

James 2:2 For if [suppose] a gentleman [patrician] enters into your local assembly with a gold ring on his finger, in magnificent apparel [exquisite toga], and a working man [plebian] also enters in filthy [stinking] clothes,

James 2:3 And you extend preferential treatment to the one who wears magnificent apparel, and you say: “You, please sit in this honorable place,” but you say to the working man, “You, stand over there or sit beside my footstool,”

James 2:4 Have you not discriminated within yourselves [shown favoritism based on erroneous, external human standards instead of divine standards] and have you not become judges with corrupt decisions [evil opinions]?

James 2:5 Listen, my beloved brethren: Has not God chosen by Himself [election in eternity past] the poor of this world [within the family of God] to become [a potential, not a guarantee] wealthy in doctrine [requires continued positive volition] and heirs of the kingdom [a reward, not a gift] which He has promised to those who keep on loving Him [meeting the condition of this heirship]?

James 2:6 But you have dishonored [treated shamefully] the poor working man. Don't wealthy men repeatedly exploit [dominate] you and drag you helplessly into courts of law?

James 2:7 Don't they [wealthy Jews] keep on maligning that honorable name [Jesus Christ] by which you have been surnamed [Christians]?

James 2:8 If you truly continue to carry out a royal law [problem-solving device contained in the implanted Word] according to the Scripture: “You will continue to exercise impersonal love [relaxed mental attitude] towards the one in your periphery as yourself,” you keep on doing honorably [divine good].

James 2:9 But if you keep on showing favoritism [as a result of reverse process reversionism], you are committing a sin, being convicted by the authority of the law [implanted Word, law of freedom] as violators.

James 2:10 For anyone who tries to keep the entire [Mosaic] law, but stumbles on one [command of the law], he has become guilty of all [the law].

James 2:11 For He who said: “Do not commit adultery” also said: “Do not commit murder.” Now if you do not commit adultery, but you commit murder, you have become a violator of the law.

James 2:12 So keep on speaking [free from mental attitude and verbal sins] and in this manner keep on doing [divine good production] as those [Christians] who are destined to be evaluated [for rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ] by a law of freedom [not the Mosaic Law],

James 2:13 For evaluation [at the Judgment Seat of Christ] will be without mercy [no reward for human good] for the one who did not produce mercy [grace orientation]; mercy will triumph during the time of evaluation [Judgment Seat of Christ].

James 2:14 What profit is it, my brethren, if someone [reversionistic believer] alleges that he has faith [without doctrine], but he does not keep on having production [either in the soul or by external application]? Is faith [without doctrine] able to deliver him?

James 2:15 If a [Christian] brother or sister exists shabbily dressed and lacking daily food,

James 2:16 And any one of you [in emotional revolt of the soul] says to them: “Go away in peace, warm yourselves and eat until you are satisfied,” but you don’t give them those necessities for the body, what profit is there [in your doctrinal misapplication]?

James 2:17 Even so, faith [after salvation], if it does not have doctrinal application [works], keeps on being dead by itself.

James 2:18 But now someone [a reversionist liping-off] will say: You have faith [with doctrine] and I have works [without doctrine]. You begin to demonstrate to me your faith apart from works [doctrinal application] and I will demonstrate to you by means of my works [human good] my faith [without doctrine].

James 2:19 You [Judaizer] have faith that God is one [monotheism]; you do well [by believing in one God]. The demons also have faith [in one God], yet they tremble with fear [His existence guarantees their judgment in eternity].

James 2:20 But are you willing to start learning by studying [grace apparatus for perception], oh empty man [ignorant carnal believer], because faith apart from doctrinal application keeps on being unemployed [operational death]?

James 2:21 Abraham, our father, was he not vindicated by doctrinal application when he offered up Isaac his son upon the burnt offering altar?

James 2:22 Do you see that doctrine [in the mentality of the soul] kept on working together with his production [application] to make faith complete [producing divine good]?

James 2:23 And the scripture [Gen. 15:6] was brought to completion [experientially] which said: “And Abraham believed God [that his posterity would populate the earth] and it [his obedience in offering Isaac as a sacrifice] was reckoned to his account as righteousness [divine good] and he was called a friend of God [experiential fellowship with Deity].

James 2:24 You can see that by means of doctrinal application [works] a man receives vindication [sanctification salvation] and not by means of faith alone [faith by itself is useless, it must have a working object].

James 2:25 Likewise, also, was not Rahab the prostitute vindicated by doctrinal application [works], when she welcomed the envoys [spies] and led them out [helped them escape] in another direction [away from pursuing soldiers]?

James 2:26 So as the body without breath is dead [a corpse], so also faith without doctrinal application is dead [a corpse].

James 3:1 Stop becoming many teachers [rebuke to the plurality of elders in a single assembly who were trying to usurp the authority of the pastor-teacher], my brethren, knowing that we [teachers] shall receive upon ourselves greater judgment [double discipline].

James 3:2 To be sure, we [teachers] all stumble from time-to-time. If any man does not occasionally stumble when teaching, this man is a spiritually mature man, able in fact [because of doctrine], to guide with a bit and bridle the whole body [control of the tongue while teaching is extended to control in other activities of life].

James 3:3 Now if we thrust the bits of horses into their mouths so that they will obey us [prevent verbal sins], we also control the direction of their entire body [prevent overt sins].

James 3:4 Consider ships [body of the teacher], also being large, and propelled by harsh winds: they are directed by a very small rudder [tongue] toward whatever direction the helmsman determines [appropriate spiritual destination].

James 3:5 In this manner also, the tongue is a small part [of the body], but it boasts great things [causes trouble]. Consider how such a small fire [verbal sins of a teacher] burns up such a large forest [destroys members of a congregation in its path].

James 3:6 Indeed, the tongue can be a fire, a world of wickedness. The tongue was placed in our anatomy although it may contaminate the entire body and may set on fire the course of existence [thinking-saying-doing] and may be set on fire by the agency of Gehenna [Satan himself].

James 3:7 For every species of mammal and also birds, reptiles and also marine life, has been controlled [tamed & subdued] in the past and is still being controlled by the natural order of mankind [instituted by God in Gen. 9:2],

James 3:8 But no one of mankind is able to tame the tongue, an unstable evil full of deadly poison [death bringing venom].

James 3:9 By means of it [the tongue] we praise the Lord, even the Father, and by means of it [the tongue] we curse mankind, who came into being according to the likeness of God;

James 3:10 Out of the same mouth proceeds blessing and cursing. My brethren, there is no need for these things [alternating benediction and malediction] to continue coming to pass in this manner [inconsistency].

James 3:11 Does the well emit out of the same opening sweet water [blessings from supergrace] and bitter water [cursing from reversionism]?

James 3:12 My brethren, is a fig tree able to produce olives or a vine figs [there is an expected fruit according to its nature]? Neither is salty water [cursing from reversionism] able to produce sweet water [blessings from supergrace].

James 3:13 Who is wise and understanding [a doctrinal expert] among you? Demonstrate this production [application of doctrine] from an honorable manner of life in the sphere of grace orientation [genuine humility] of wisdom [spiritual insight].

James 3:14 But if you possess bitter jealousy and contentiousness in the mentality of your soul [reversionistic thoughts], stop boasting and lying against the truth [contradicting their profession of spiritual maturity by verbal sins].

James 3:15 This wisdom [demon doctrine] is not descending from above [heaven], but is of the earth, soulish [unspiritual], demonic;

James 3:16 For wherever jealousy and contentiousness exist [in the reversionist], there is instability [wide emotional swings] and every category of vile practice [monsterhood has been achieved].

James 3:17 But the wisdom [Bible doctrine in the soul] from above keeps on being essentially pure, and then, as well: peaceable [relaxed mental attitude], oriented to authority [teachable], reasonable [not implacable or vindictive], full of mercy [grace orientation] and good fruit [divine production], unwavering, without hypocrisy;

James 3:18 Moreover, the harvest of righteousness [the supergrace life] is sown in peace [tranquility] to the one who continues to produce peace [benefits from the consistent use of the grace apparatus for perception].

James 4:1 From what source are the quarrels [fights between two people] and from what source are the conflicts [church brawls] among you [in your local assemblies]? Are they not, namely, out from the source of your frantic search for happiness through lusts [functions of the old sin nature] which wage a continuous battle [military campaign] in your members [mind, body & soul]?

James 4:2 You keep on lusting [frantic search for happiness], but you will not have [frustration from not getting the object of your lust]; you commit murder since you are full of jealousy [mental violence often leads to physical violence], but you are not able to acquire [the ultimate happiness you desire]; you quarrel [litigation in court] and fight [hire thugs to steal the object of your lust]; you will not obtain [the inner happiness you desire] because you do not ask [for the only true source of inner happiness: Bible doctrine circulating in the mentality of the soul].

James 4:3 You keep on asking [demanding in arrogance], but you will not receive it [the details of life], because you continue to ask [demand] wickedly so that you may squander it [the details of life] in your frantic search for happiness through pleasure.

James 4:4 Adulteresses [reverse process reversionists], do you not know that friendship with the cosmic system keeps on being alienation from God? Therefore, if someone has decided [in emotional revolt of the soul] to keep on being a friend with the cosmic system [continues in reversionism], he is becoming an enemy of God.

James 4:5 Or do you presume [subjective opinion] that the Scripture says for no reason: The spirit which was implanted in us jealously yearns?

James 4:6 However, He keeps on giving greater [super, conquering] grace [greater than the spirit of jealousy implanted within us]. Therefore, it says [in Proverbs 3:34]: “God opposes in military fashion the arrogant reversionist, but to the genuinely humble [positive believer] He keeps on giving grace [maximum benefits from doctrine in the soul].”

James 4:7 Be subordinate, therefore, unto God [execute His divine protocol plan]. Moreover, oppose [resist] the devil [by doctrine in the soul in the filling of the Spirit] and he will avoid you.

James 4:8 Come close to God [reversion recovery] and He will come close to you [intimate fellowship based on the filling of the Spirit and metabolized doctrine in the soul]. Cleanse your hands [confession], sinners [carnal believers], and purify the mentality of your soul [post-salvation epistemological rehabilitation], double-minded ones [reverse process reversionists].

James 4:9 You [reverse process reversionists] will be miserable and you will lament and you will weep. Your laughter will be turned into grief and your temporary happiness into depression.

James 4:10 Receive genuine humility [a disciplined, grace oriented life] in the opinion of the Lord [principles of the supergrace] and He will promote you.

James 4:11 Stop speaking evil of one another, brethren [members of the royal family]. The one who continually slanders [maligning, gossiping] a brother [fellow believer] or continually judges his brother [fellow believer] is slandering the law and judging the law [law of liberty or supergrace principles from Bible doctrine]. Moreover, if you judge the law [by slandering, gossiping or maligning someone], you are not a doer [supergrace believer] of the law [law of liberty or supergrace principles from Bible doctrine], but a judge [opposed to the supergrace life].

James 4:12 There is one Lawgiver and Judge [God the Father] who is able to deliver [supergrace believers] and to destroy [discipline reversionistic believers]. So who are you to judge a fellow believer?

James 4:13 Come now, you [reversionistic businessmen] who say: "Today or tomorrow we will travel to such and such a city and produce [fleece] in that place for a year and engage in business and make a profit."

James 4:14 Such a person [reversionistic businessman] does not understand [due to lack of doctrine] what kind of life yours [prospective client] may be tomorrow. For you are a vapor trail which appears for a short time and then disappears.

James 4:15 Instead [of focusing solely on making money], you [Christian businessmen] ought to say this: "If the Lord wills [divine guidance], we shall both live [residence] and do [function] this or that [according to supergrace principles]."

James 4:16 But as things stand, you [reversionistic businessmen] keep on boasting in your arrogance. All this boasting is evil [wicked & degenerate].

James 4:17 Therefore, to the one knows the honorable thing to do [daily intake, metabolization, and application of doctrine] but who does not do it [negative volition towards doctrine], to him it is missing the mark [complete failure in the spiritual life].

James 5:1 Come on now, you rich men, burst into weeping and scream over your miseries [divine discipline] which are coming upon you [if you continue in monetary reversionism].

James 5:2 Your wealth [riches obtained in monetary reversionism] has rotted away [along with your soul] and your clothes have become moth-eaten [loss of capacity for life].

James 5:3 Your gold and silver [material possessions] will become tarnished and the venom of your soul [scar tissue] shall be your evidence [of reversionism] and shall devour the pieces of your flesh [worldly possessions] like fire [sin unto death]. You have accumulated treasure [in the energy of the flesh] for the last time [sin unto physical death].

James 5:4 Behold, the wages of the workers who harvested your fields which have been stolen by you [fraud, deprivation] continue to scream out [for justice]. Moreover, the shouts of those who had completed the harvest have entered into the ears of the Lord of the Armies [Jesus Christ will eventually avenge them].

James 5:5 You have lived in luxury and self-indulgence on the earth and you have lived the life of a sensual voluptuary. You have fattened the mentality of your soul for a day of slaughter.

James 5:6 You have condemned the innocent [in court]; you have murdered the just [honest believer]. He [God] does not oppose you [because you are destroying yourself].

James 5:7 Therefore, brethren [abused members of the royal family], persevere [continually apply doctrine] until the coming of the Lord [at the rapture]. Behold, the farmer waits with expectation [in spiritual self-esteem] for the valuable fruit of the land [grace blessings], constantly persevering over it [applying doctrine] until he has received the early rain [spiritual autonomy] and the latter rain [spiritual maturity].

James 5:8 Persevere [through testing by the application of doctrine] and stabilize the mentality of your soul [by building an edification complex], because the return of the Lord [at the rapture] is near.

James 5:9 Brethren, stop complaining against others of the same kind [fellow believers], so that you are not judged [divine discipline]. Behold, the Judge [God the Father] stands along the paths [to continually discipline you].

James 5:10 Brethren, receive an example of endurance through suffering and perseverance through testing [by applying doctrine] from the prophets [OT male teachers], who have communicated [doctrine] in the name of the Lord.

James 5:11 Behold, we congratulate the ones who have endured suffering [by applying doctrine]. You have heard [through teaching] of the perseverance of Job [by applying doctrine] and you have seen the end result from the Lord [his restoration after passing evidence testing], because the Lord keeps on being compassionate and merciful.

James 5:12 But before all things, my brethren [members of the royal family], stop making promises with an oath [lying as a con job], neither by heaven [using God as a cover], nor by earth [using a sacred object as a cover], nor by any other oath [such as your mother's grave], but let your Yes be Yes and your No be No [exhibiting honesty and integrity], so that you do not fall under condemnation [divine discipline for verbal reversionism].

James 5:13 Is anyone among you suffering affliction? Keep praying. Is anyone cheerful? Keep singing.

James 5:14 Is anyone [Jewish believers] among you sick [dying the sin unto death due to apostasy]? Let him call elders [local community pastors] from the church [not the synagogue], and after they have anointed him with oil [given him medical attention], let them offer prayer for him [the dying apostate believer] in the name of the Lord.

James 5:15 And the prayer of faith from a doctrinal person [pastor-elder] shall deliver [bodily restoration] the one who is hopelessly sick [under severe divine discipline], and the Lord [respecting the authority of the pastor] shall restore him [the dying reversionist]. Moreover, if he committed sins, he shall be forgiven [as part of his recovery] by Him [the Lord].

James 5:16 Therefore, [those who are dying the sin unto death] acknowledge your sins [verbal reversionism] to others of the same kind [pastor-elders as the victims or recipients of verbal sin], and may [the pastor-elders] offer prayer for others of the same kind [fellow believers, even if they are reversionists], in order that you [reversionists] may be restored. The prayer of a righteous [mature, doctrinal] believer has great power when it is operational [effectively working].

James 5:17 Elijah was a man with the same [sin] nature as us, and by means of prayer he prayed that [God] send no rain, and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months.

James 5:18 Then he prayed again [resumed his earlier prayer 3-1/2 years later], and the heaven brought forth rain, and the earth sprouted forth its fruit [agriculture].

James 5:19 My brethren [members of the royal family], if anyone among you has been seduced [deceived by scar tissue of the soul] away from doctrine and someone [presumably a mature believer] turns him around [changes his attitude toward the truth],

James 5:20 Let him know that the one [mature believer] who turns the sinner [reversionist] away from the delusion of his way, shall deliver his soul [person] from the [sin unto] death and shall cover a large number of [unconfessed] sins.

Introduction

The evidence of the epistle itself favors the traditional identification of the Lord's brother as author ... If it is correctly assumed that James, the leader of the Jerusalem church, wrote this epistle to believers who had been dispersed from Jerusalem in the persecution following Stephen's death, the occasion for writing is fairly clear. These Jewish Christians, scattered throughout the area west of the Mediterranean Sea, no longer had contact with the apostles; nor was James among them to instruct and exhort them. (F. Gaebelein) Acts 15 shows the position James held in Jerusalem where the Apostolic Conference took place. James presided; he summed up the findings which were then embodied in a brief letter and sent to all the mixed congregations by duly appointed messengers ... The apostles had to travel; James could and did remain permanently in Jerusalem, where he also finally suffered martyrdom. (R. Lenski) James had a prominent place, though he was not an apostle ... Peter was afraid (Gal. 2:12) of some who came from James. (A. Knoch)

The first chapter of James is concerned with pressure testing. Passing, and in some cases just surviving, these trials and tribulations requires the use of spiritual assets. Often when I discuss suffering and testing with others, there is a subtle consensus that the problems we face today are overwhelming - while those faced by believers in ancient times were few and far between. My reply is that technology changes, but people remain the same. So the problem-solving devices that are found in the Word of God are just as valid for us today and they were hundreds of years ago. Although James didn't write from Rome, Jerusalem was under Roman power. The following description of life during this time period supports my premise. (LWB) Rome in Cicero's day was a complex and sophisticated city, with up to a million inhabitants, and much of its pattern of life is recognizably familiar, even at a distance of two millennia. There were shopping malls and bars and a lively cultural scene with theater and sport. Poetry and literature thrived and new books were much talked about. Leading actors were household names. The affluent led a busy social round of dinner parties and gossip, and they owned country homes to which they could retreat from the pressures of urban living. Politics was conducted with a familiar blend of private affability and public invective. Speech was free. Everyone complained about the traffic.

The essential function of young women was to find a husband and they could be married off as young as twelve years of age. Young men were more rebellious than their fathers had been; those who lived in Rome increasingly left home before marriage and set up house in small apartments in the city center, where they learned how to have a good time on little money ... Besides the new influx of Christians, the majority religion would be classified as the worship of pagan deities ... They saw the universe as an organic whole consisting of two indivisible aspects: an active principle (God or gods) and that which it acts on (matter).

Man's duty was to live an active life in harmony with nature; that was the way to be virtuous, because virtue was the active principle that infused nature ... Animal sacrifices to nature deities were a daily public practice ... There was no police force and no penal system. Penalties were usually exile or a fine. (A. Everitt) There is abundant historical literature about the Roman world of James's time, especially from Cicero's letters and diatribes. It is not my goal to paint a complete picture of life in the Roman Empire, but rather to provide a few backdrops along the way so you might understand that pressure tests in that day are not much different than ours today. (LWB)

James's is the oldest piece of writing in the NT. He himself lived in the old Jewish fashion. (R. Lenski) While few dispute the Jewishness of the work, several scholars, notably Spitta and Meyer, claim that nothing Christian exists in this work other than minor Christian editing. (P. Davids) That might lend support to the early dating of the epistle, but I have a difficult time translating James without seeing evidences of Christianity throughout. (LWB) Acts presents James the Just as a mediating personality who tried to keep the peace between the extreme Jewish legalistic segment of the church and the supporters of the Pauline mission. (P. Davids, R. Martin) There are also numerous concepts or expressions in James that may be traced back to Proverbs ... The epistle of James is without doubt the least theological of all NT books, with the exception of Philemon. In fact, one of the reasons for the delay in canonical recognition of the epistle was its lack of theological content. (F. Gaebelin) James is not lacking in theological content; it is a treatise on experiential sanctification. It points to the *correct* way and the unlimited number of *incorrect* ways of living a spiritual life. I'm sad to say that the reason some commentators believe it has little theological content is because they didn't study the epistle deep enough to see the profound doctrines contained within it. (LWB)

To many commentators, there is a conflict between James and Paul. (LWB) James 2 implies awareness of Paul's slogan "justification by faith," but also shows that Paul's teaching was not understood correctly. This state of affairs was likely to have existed only in the early days of Paul's preaching, before James had met Paul and had an opportunity to understand, from Paul, just what he meant by "justification by faith." Since these Jewish Christians may well have looked on the Jerusalem Church as their "home" church, it is entirely feasible that the head of that church, James, would have got wind of this perverted form of Paul's teaching and responded accordingly. (D. Moo) Some have said that, minus the few references to the Lord Jesus, the book might appear to be part of the OT canon. (W. Baker) In my opinion, James should have been placed before or after the Book of Acts in English Bibles. It has considerable affinity to the Synoptic Gospels and "bridges the gap" between Pentecost and the beginning of Paul's dynamic teaching ministry ... in many ways, the transition between law and grace. That might have eliminated some of the apparent conflict between James's idea of law/justification compared to the same Pauline doctrines. (LWB)

The perception of a radical tension between the teachings of Paul on *justification by faith apart from works* and those of James that require *faith and works* comes largely from the Reformation conflicts between Luther and his Roman Catholic opponents. Counter-reformation polemics at times yielded to proof-texting James against Paul, which infuriated

a younger Luther ... The teaching of James dogged Luther, and throughout his life he let it be known, somewhat jokingly, that he would give his doctor's cap to whoever could show how Paul and James's teachings could be reconciled. In recent decades biblical scholarship has been effectively showing how Paul and James meant different things by their vocabulary based upon their different purposes ... How James and Paul employed the vocabulary they have in common is very different, for example, in the case of words such as "faith," "law," and "works." The case of the term "works" is most instructive. (K. Richardson) It is also a fact that sub-doctrines under the heading of *experiential sanctification* (such as doctrinal inculcation, enduring pressure testing, and receiving rewards) were almost totally absent from the Protestant Reformation. It is only in the past century that they have been seriously studied, outlined and brought forth as a topic of study under dispensational theology. (LWB)

This is precisely the direction I'm headed in, using etymological research related to experiential sanctification by Robert B. Thieme, Jr., and discursive units and inverted parallelisms from Timothy Cargal. I've also found valuable contributions on this topic by James Adamson, Spiro Zodhiates, Joseph Dillow and to a lesser extent Charles Ryrie and Dwight Pentecost. (LWB) By considering inverted parallelisms, we see that one major purpose of the Epistle is to convince the readers that they are a "Diaspora" not only because of their status as "exiles" in an evil and hostile world, but also because they have become a "Diaspora" by "wandering from the truth." But what is this "truth" from which James believes his readers have "wandered" and so find themselves in need of "restoration"? (T. Cargal) This "truth" is nothing other than metabolized Bible doctrine in the soul of the believer being properly applied to daily life. (LWB) The design of the Epistle is on the one hand to encourage those to whom it is addressed to bear their trials patiently, and on the other hand to warn them against certain errors of doctrine and practice. (J. Mayor)

By good *works* are to be understood all manner of duties **inward** and outward, **thoughts** as well as words and actions, toward God or man. (J. Adamson) I emphasized the words "inward" and "thoughts" in this quote, because that is where the biggest misunderstanding lies with the epistle of James. If I interviewed 100 Christians, 99 of them would not include *the inward dimension of thoughts* in their understanding of *works*, even though that dimension is emphasized in the NT far more frequently than words and actions! To use two of Paul's favorite descriptive words, that is why we have so many "ignorant" Christians on the street today, spiritual "morons" when it comes to God's Word. Both "faith" and "works" are dangerously ambiguous words by 21st century definitions. We will empty our modern understanding of these words in this study of James, replacing it with ancient Greek definitions which did not eject the internal dimension from their inherent meanings. The "straw" nature of this epistle will disappear if we reinsert the *internal dimension of the mind* alongside the obvious *verbal and overt dimension* that can be heard and seen. As I mentioned earlier, it is the lamentable lack of research on experiential sanctification that led the Reformers to put James on the backburner. (LWB)

Again and again the wild dream of a Christianity without Judaism has risen with attractive power. But the epistle of James marks in the most decisive way the continuity of the two Testaments. (F. Hort) These important comparisons should be emphasized when reading

Paul next to James. The apparent contradiction regarding works is just that, only apparent. James was not struggling against Judaizing Christianity, which sought to require the ritual aspects of OT law in addition to faith in Christ ... He was concerned with the consistency of genuine faith as evidenced by its results, that faith should be active, not a mere profession covering a life of sin. (K. Richardson) There's no reason why you can't teach divine norms and standards of behavior without being legalistic. There is a lot of sound wisdom in Proverbs, even though the indwelling and filling of the Holy Spirit is not discussed there. (LWB) When Paul claims that a person cannot be justified on the basis of works of the law, he is clearly referring to works that *precede* conversion. The works in James 2, however, are the works that *follow* conversion. (D. Moo)

I don't usually include outlines in the introduction of my exegesis. I prefer to leave that up to the pastor or teacher as part of his sermon or teaching development. But after reading a plethora of introductions to James, I was so appalled by what has been done with this epistle that I believe a good outline is required to keep us on track. I like the following four discursive units outlined by Cargal for the Epistle of James:

➤ **UNIT 1 - James 1:1-21**

Theme: "Receiving the implanted Word" in order to "be perfect"

- Admonition in 1:4 "to be complete and whole, lacking in nothing"
- How to fulfill that admonition in 1:21 by "having put aside all filth and abundance of wickedness, by meekness, receiving the implanted Word"

➤ **UNIT 2 - James 1:22 – 2:26**

Theme: "Works" of the "Word"

- Admonition in 1:22 to "be doers of the Word and not hearers only"
- Dictum in 2:26 "faith separated from works is dead"
- Parallelism: "Works" are "doing the implanted Word"

➤ **UNIT 3 - James 3:1 – 4:12**

Theme: Proper mental attitude by "humbling oneself" in the light of impending "judgment"

- First admonition in 3:1 "not many of you should desire to become teachers"
- Failure to fulfill the admonition in 3:1 means "judgment" awaits "teachers"
- Second admonition in 4:10 to "humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord and He will exalt you" rather than "judging your neighbor"
- Failure to fulfill the admonition in 4:11-12 brings the role of the "one Lawgiver and Judge"

➤ **UNIT 4 - James 4:13 – 5:20**

Theme: Bringing back one's neighbor

- Inverted content in 4:11 "speaking against one another"

- Posited content in 5:19 “restoring anyone who should wander from the truth”

Using these discursive units, some “general answers” which we will discover are:

- ✓ The “truth” from which they have “wandered” is related to the “implanted Word” in UNIT 1.
- ✓ They have “wandered” from this “truth” by being ones who “hear” it, but are not “doing” the “works” of this “Word” in UNIT 2.
- ✓ By not having a “proper understanding about themselves” that would lead them to “humble themselves before the Lord” brings “judgment” in UNIT 3.
- ✓ Their “restoration” is to be accomplished both by being “perfected” by this “implanted Word” in UNIT 1 and by the efforts of those who “restore” rather than “condemn” these wayward “neighbors” in UNIT 4, thereby “saving their souls.”

There are some vocabulary words that need to be defined in order to understand the 2nd major contribution to our understanding of the Epistle of James. By all means, review the glossary on my website: www.versebyverse.com. But these equivalent phrases will set the tone for the exegesis that follows:

“truth” = Bible doctrine, the mind of Christ

“implanted Word” = doctrine on the launching pad of the soul, ready for application

“wandered” = rejects the Word of God as the rule in life, pursues the lusts of the sin nature

“hear” = listens to the Word of God but rejects it, listens to doctrine but fails to metabolize it

“doing” = accepts the Word of God, metabolizes doctrine, is ready to apply doctrine to life

“works” = application of doctrine to daily life, production: both internal and external

“humble themselves” = genuine humility, relaxed mental attitude

“judgment” = divine discipline that brings about enforced humility

“perfected” = made mature by doctrine in the soul, forward momentum in the spiritual life

“restored” = confession of sin by a reversionist and re-engagement in the plan of God

“condemn” = verbal sins against a reversionistic believer (gossiping, maligning, slandering)

“neighbors” = fellow believers in your periphery

“saving their souls” = experiential, persuading a negative believer to re-engage in God’s plan

Ethical failures are symptomatic of people who have not “received the implanted Word” (1:21) that would transform their “evil desires” (1:14-15) into a willingness to perform the will of God revealed in “the wisdom which is from above” (3:17-18). Thus, the most foundational symptom of the disease which plagues the implied readers is an absence of “wisdom” (1:5) ... The cure for this disease is for the readers to be “brought back to the truth” (5:20) that God is “pure good.” They will not be “restored” to orthopraxis unless they are first “restored” to orthodoxy. (T. Cargal) In other words, they will not be restored to producing works (internal or external) that meet the norms and standards of God until they have first undergone *post-salvation epistemological rehabilitation*. Their souls must be saturated with Bible doctrine; this doctrine must become their very own; they must successfully apply this doctrine in the filling of the Spirit consistently for many years. “To

do the Word” is therefore a synonym for aligning your thoughts, words and deeds with *the mind of Christ*. Moral and ethical behavior (external acts) will follow the internal. (LWB)

The following chart from the www.rbthieme.org website will be of immense help when we get to James 1:22ff. It is a great teaching aid, if you are familiar with his ministry. I use lots of Thieme’s terminology throughout my exegesis, especially on spiritual mechanics (experiential sanctification) and dispensational theology. A basic understanding of the components of the *grace apparatus for perception* is necessary to understand the 2nd unit of James’s epistle, 1:22 – 2:26. (LWB) The grace apparatus for perception (GAP) is a grace system whereby God has made it possible for all believers to learn doctrine and to advance tactically to spiritual maturity. Therefore, it is the divine provision for spiritual growth and advancement ... GAP is simply a technical term used to communicate the mechanics for the intake of spiritual knowledge and assimilation of doctrine into the soul. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) It is, of course, possible to function with the *grace apparatus for perception* without hearing or understanding its terminology or breaking down the internal components in operation. Believers who love the Word of God and are filled with the Spirit have existed for centuries - without the benefit of a detailed knowledge of how *Operation Z* and the use of *ten spiritual problem-solving devices* occurs. But why not take advantage of the excellent vocabulary and teaching aids (distilled from the Greek and Hebrew) that is available to us today? You can enjoy traveling in an automobile without knowing what’s under the hood, but an understanding of the internal combustion engine and the mechanics of power transmission adds a whole new flavor to the experience. Ask any die-hard NASCAR fan! (LWB)

activity bundled to be burned at the Evaluation Seat of Christ because they insisted on operating by their own rules instead of God's precisely correct protocol plan. Doctrine and the application of doctrine: you can't have one without the other. (LWB)

The letter is replete with imperatives. By one count, there are 54 occurrences. The frequent use of the imperative is an indication that the writer is a person who speaks with authority and who commands respect from the members of the church. (S. Kistemaker) The author does not mince words about the need for Christian living ... The letter is eminently practical about the Christian walk ... While the church is not *under* the sway of the Mosaic Law as a system, that legal code and its eternal moral expression still stands as a test and a guide for living ... There is no indication that he ever placed the Law over grace. Instead, he used it to demonstrate the demands of morality expressed in it. Dispensationalists certainly understand this. While believers today are not under Law as a system, many moral and spiritual lessons can be learned from its commands and instructions ... Lest one think this is a cover for legalism, James makes it clear that grace living can be accomplished by spiritual humility. (W. Baker)

In his epistle James discloses his Christology not directly but indirectly, and thereby seems to reveal an early stage of doctrinal development in the Christian church. If we assume that the church in the first part of the first century had no fully developed doctrine of Christ, we may conclude that the letter appears to reflect an early period in the history of the church. (S. Kistemaker) The purpose of this potent letter is to exhort the early believers to Christian maturity and holiness of life. (J. Blue) Tradition says that he was given the name "Old Camel Knees" because he spent so much time in prayer ... It is clear that James' theme is not works, but faith – the same as Paul's theme, but James emphasizes what faith produces ... Faith is the *root* of salvation – Paul emphasizes that; works are the *fruit* of salvation – that is the thing James emphasizes. (J. McGee) Most commentators drift along without any serious belief, and often with positive disbelief, that there is any unity of plan, design, purpose, argument, or exhortation in the Epistle as a whole or in the development of any one theme or paragraph in the Epistle in itself or in its relation to any other part or to the whole. (J. Adamson) That is a tragically untrue belief. (LWB)

What is important is not that we as readers find closure in our encounter with this text, but that we continue to explore new ways of making its messages meaningful to us that we may be challenged to see that our faith is working with our works and that our faith is completed by works. We must be "restored" from our own "wanderings," that we may then fulfill our vocation as believers of restoring others. (T. Cargal) We must understand that our current "testings" and the final cataclysmic battle are all part of the one great war in which the Christian is engaged. "Peirasmos" (testing) is rooted in the imagery of a war between God and Satan. The believer is God's soldier. There is no discharge from that war, which is the testing place for the world to come; but the prize for the Christian warrior is eternal life. (J. Adamson) With this background material in mind, I believe we are ready to begin our study on the Epistle of James. (LWB) Martin Luther called James a "really dangerous and bad book;" he threatened to thrust it out of the Bible and someday use it to heat his stove! (J. Adamson) I hope you don't come to that conclusion when we are finished. (LWB)

Chapter 1

LWB **James 1:1** Jacob, a bonds slave of God [the Father] and the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes during the time of the dispersion [Jews exiled from Jerusalem]. Keep on rejoicing [maintain inner happiness]!

^{KW} **James 1:1** James, a bonds slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes, those in the dispersion. Be constantly rejoicing.

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

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

It's difficult for me to use the name James instead of Jacob, because his name is clearly Jacob in the Greek. But I will succumb to the common usage of James after this introductory verse. Jacob identifies himself as a bonds slave of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. He writes this epistle to Jewish Christians, those who are members of the twelve tribes that have been exiled from Jerusalem. This exile is referred to as the dispersion (Latin) or diaspora (Greek). In spite of this national disaster, he tells them to keep on rejoicing (Iterative Present tense). The only way they could maintain inner happiness under such negative circumstances is by applying the Bible doctrine in their souls to the historical trends in which they live. Most of his readers would probably reply, "Yeah, right. What do we have to be happy about?" Jacob is going to explain to them that it is possible to be happy in the midst of suffering.

They can possess this inner happiness in the midst of suffering by the intake, metabolization and application of Bible doctrine. Their restoration to the truth (Bible doctrine) from which they have wandered is paralleled to the Jewish hope of a restoration to their homeland from which they have been exiled and are still wandering. God will give this truth (doctrine) to those who are interested. If a believer maintains that interest in the Word of God day-after-day for years, and applies it to daily life in the filling of the Spirit, he will receive knowledge and insight into the wisdom of God, the mind of Christ. This believer will be transformed on the inside by the "implanted Word" so that their "wandering" ceases. Their thoughts, words and actions will eventually align to divine standards and they will desire to learn more, metabolize more, and apply more in the midst of intense pressures.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

James has envisioned his audience as and directed his argument toward people who are already believers ... He or she should already know that God is “pure good.” Nevertheless, what prompts James to compose this text is his concern that they have “wandered from the truth” (5:19), or are at least in danger of doing so, and would not receive the blessedness promised to the believer. (T. Cargal) After the deportation of the ten tribes from Israel to Assyria and the exile of the two tribes to Babylon, and at times afterwards, thousands of Jews lived outside the borders of their homeland ... These devout Jews came to Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost, heard the gospel of Jesus Christ, became converts, and returned to their places of residence. Those who stayed in Jerusalem were persecuted and driven away after the death of Stephen. (S. Kistemaker) The place from which the epistle was written was undoubtedly Jerusalem. (E. Gibson) To my mind the arguments of Mayor for the early date are conclusive. (A. Robertson)

The writer calls himself Jacob, from which our name *James* is derived through the Italian *Giacomo*. (J. Mayor) “Jacobos” is the Hellenized form of the OT name “Jacob.” (S. Kistemaker) James assumed prominence in the church at Jerusalem. When Peter was released from prison in A.D. 44 (the year King Herod Agrippa I died), James took Peter’s place as head of the church ... The epistle reflects a time in which the church seems to be in its initial stages of development ... As far as scholars are able to determine, the epistle may be the oldest of the 27 NT books. Perhaps James wrote the epistle before the Council of Jerusalem in A.D. 49. (S. Kistemaker) The scattering and persecution of the Christians would indicate that it was written after the martyrdom of Stephen - A.D. 36 or 37 or a little earlier according to some. (T. Carson) God has the right to rule and nothing and nobody in the created universe can escape His control. Now James applies the term to Jesus. (R. Ward)

As a result of extensive study I have come to believe that the author of this epistle is James, the brother of Jesus, and the son of Joseph and Mary. He was brought up with Jesus until his eighteenth year. He was not one of the twelve, and not even a disciple till the very end of the Lord’s earthly life ... One of the saddest experiences of the Lord Jesus on earth was the fact that His very brothers and sisters who lived with Him did not believe on Him, as we find in John 7:5. James was one of them. (S. Zodiates) The internal and external evidence is strong that the book of James was authored by the half-brother of Jesus. This seems to be affirmed by the Jewish historian Josephus, from the book of Acts (chp. 15, 21), from Galatians (chp. 1, 2), and from what is known of the problems of the Christian Jews in the dispersion from Jerusalem. (W. Baker) James writes to them with rightful spiritual authority and with full knowledge of their needs. (F. Gaebelein)

Some people like chapter outlines. I’ve had several seminary professors who are crazy about them! Since the first couple of chapters in James seem confusing, I’m going to provide a brief outline of Chapter 1 to accompany Cargal’s high-level outline in the *Introduction*.

- 1 Maintain inner happiness
- 2 Providential prevenative suffering follows the attainment of spiritual self-esteem
- 3 Doctrinal testing produces endurance
- 4 Momentum testing leads to spiritual maturity

- 5 Pray for assistance in applying doctrine to difficult times in your life
- 6 Emotional revolt of the soul is a spiritual malfunction
- 7 Failing pressure tests
- 8 The double-minded believer is a casualty in the spiritual life
- 9 Believers with genuine humility and faith rest drill can truly celebrate life
- 10 You can lose the doctrinal structure in your soul by neglect
- 11 Testing is never over. It's always possible to fail the next test.
- 12 You will receive rewards for passing pressure tests
- 13 Temptation to sin does not come from God
- 14 Temptation to sin (internal testing) comes from your sin nature
- 15 The downward progression from lust to sin to spiritual death
- 16 Legalists are in a state of self-deception
- 17 Rewards come from God
- 18 Regeneration accomplished by the Spirit and the Word
- 19 Sit down. Shut up. Listen to doctrine. Don't get angry.
- 20 Anger is a sin; it opposes righteousness.
- 21 Stay out of the cosmic system. Welcome the implanted Word of God.
- 22 *Doers of the Word* metabolize and apply Bible doctrine. *Hearers of the Word only* do not metabolize doctrine. *Hearers only* are in self-deception.
- 23 Reversionists fail to metabolize Bible doctrine. The Word of God is a mirror.
- 24 Reversionists ignore their reflection in the mirror of the Word of God.
- 25 Positive believers use the grace apparatus for perception. They successfully metabolize and apply Bible doctrine to daily life.
- 26 The self-righteous do-gooder is guilty of verbal sins, self-deception, and legalism.
- 27 Correct application of doctrine is both external (eg. Helping widows and orphans) and internal (guarding your soul from scar tissue)

James 1:1 Jacob (Nom. Absolute; James), a bondsman (Nom. Appos.) of God (Poss. Gen.; the Father) and (connective) the Lord Jesus Christ (Poss. Gen.), to the twelve (cardinal) tribes (Dat. Adv.) during the time of the dispersion (Loc. Time; scattered, diaspora, Jews exiled from Jerusalem between 65-70 A.D.). Keep on rejoicing (χαίρω, PAInf., Iterative, Command; inner happiness)!

^{BGT} **James 1:1** Ἰάκωβος θεοῦ καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δοῦλος ταῖς δώδεκα φυλαῖς ταῖς ἐν τῇ διασπορᾷ χαίρειν.

^{VUL} **James 1:1** Iacobus Dei et Domini nostri Iesu Christi servus duodecim tribubus quae sunt in dispersione salutem

LWB James 1:2 Although you have considered each occasion with inner happiness [*spiritual self-esteem*], my brethren [*Jewish members of the royal family*], when you encountered various kinds of pressure testing [*providential preventative suffering: thought, people, system, disaster*],

^{KW} **James 1:2** Consider it a matter for unadulterated joy [without any admixture of sorrow] whenever you fall into the midst of variegated trials which surround you,

^{KJV} **James 1:2** My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

James 1:2-4 is one continuous sentence. James subtly congratulates his readers for their initial success in regarding each incident, each pressure test that had come their way, with inner happiness. But his use of the concessive imperative (although) means he doesn't want them to relax and get broadsided by the next round of pressures (adversities) that will eventually come their way. This is an obvious follow-up to his command in the opening verse to "keep on rejoicing." His readers are primarily Jewish Christians, those who have been exiled from their homeland and are quite possibly being persecuted in other ways. Those with human viewpoint only would "consider each occasion of pressure testing" and conclude misery and unhappiness. But James acknowledges that some of them successfully switched to divine viewpoint and came to a different conclusion. They were able to do this because they had built a strong doctrinal foundation in their soul, a stage in the spiritual life known as *spiritual self-esteem*. They are to maintain inner happiness *during* trials, not after they have ceased.

When they were involved in various kinds of pressure tests (Temporal Subjunctive), they considered all the facts surrounding the situation with a relaxed mental attitude (Culminative Aorist tense). They passed their first tests! But trials and temptations in their life are not over. They have succeeded in passing *providential preventative suffering*, which has propelled them into *spiritual autonomy*. But if they want to continue making progress in the spiritual life, they will have to pass *momentum tests* in order to attain *spiritual maturity*. Their key is to continue meeting the pressures of life with joy in the filling of the Spirit. The concessive "although" is very important to understanding James' subtle pat-on-the-back coupled with his warning that "it's not over yet." It's also possible to translate "inner happiness" as a Secondary or Double Accusative. In that case, you would add the verbal phrase "to be," so that each pressure situation is "considered to be a happy or joyous occasion."

RELEVANT OPINIONS

While suffering the unimaginable agonies of the cross, the humanity of Jesus Christ never lost perfect contentment with joy (Heb. 12:2). His relaxed mental attitude equated adversity with prosperity and living with dying (Phil. 1:21). He never felt threatened or sorry for Himself. His happiness did not change even under difficult circumstances, cruelty, torture, unjust treatment, death. You have access to this same happiness in your life – a beatitude that does not depend upon people, circumstances, or the details of life. When Bible doctrine and virtue-love fill your soul, you will enjoy contentment in the midst of thought, people, system, and disaster testing. The happiness of God is enduring and self-sustaining. When your spiritual life takes precedence over circumstances, you carry God's happiness with you as a constant companion. Your divine inner happiness and spiritual maturity conquer any

human unhappiness or fearful situation and generate a tremendous capacity for life. No set of circumstances can defeat you. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) Even a superficial reading of 1:2-18 shows that the author regards his readers as Christians ... If this simple and obvious fact is not observed, one may fall into a quagmire of skewed interpretations, just as many expositors of James have actually done. (Z. Hodges)

Already in the second verse, we are confronted with the problem of how the experience of “diverse trials” can be considered a cause for “complete joy.” As we shall see, the ‘problem’ for James is that the readers perceive the patient endurance of trials as the means to achieving this “perfection” in 1:2-4. However, he believes that such can only be achieved by the gift from God of the “implanted Word.” (T. Cargal) Life in this world brings constant temptations; welcome them. They are good training in resistance, and when they are overcome by endurance, they bring us nearer the Christian ideal. (J. Adamson) Here we are facing the circumstances of life, difficult, harsh, and unyielding. How should the Christian meet them? On the one hand, we have the *external* pressure and, on the other hand, we have the *internal* attitude. The word “count it” has to do with this internal attitude of heart and mind that causes the trials and circumstances of life to affect us adversely or beneficially. The word should rather be translated, “think forward, consider, regard.” (S. Zodhiates) To “consider it all joy” means to respond with a deliberate intelligent appraisal, not an emotional reaction. (H. Kent)

Once the literary coherence of the chapter is taken seriously, it is possible to detect the flow of an argument. (L. Johnson) The essential purpose of “periasmos” (pressure testing) is probationary, purifying the soul like a refiner’s fire, burning up the impurities, and leaving behind that which is tested and approved, that is, “the genuine element of true character.” (J. Adamson) Do not let outside adversities become inner stress in the soul. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) This is not the attitude of a cynic or stoic but of a triumphant Christian who meets temptation not with passive resignation but with positive joy ... Paul and James answer in unison: We can rejoice because we know that a testing, successfully passed, will produce faith and patient endurance in the life, and sometimes this can only be done through tribulations. (C. Ryrie) The word “trials” describes things that put a person to the test. They may be difficulties that come from without, such as persecution, or they may be inner moral tests, such as temptations to sin. (F. Gaebelin) Who among us would not be glad if the fruits of affliction could be produced by some experience of a more pleasant nature? (L. Strauss) God is in the business of building up strong Christian men and women who can persevere in hard times without fainting. (Z. Hodges)

There is no denial that trials also produce strain and pain; there is, however, the reminder that, when they come, and when we evaluate them aright, we ought to bear them with joy. The flesh will not like them, but the spirit will rejoice to prove itself and to gain from the trials that Christ intended should be gained. (R. Lenski) James is not, as is often held, here thinking of an alleged distinction between “internal” and “external” temptations. In the Christian life there is really no effective difference between the two: only the defects inherent in human nature make it possible for external or internal stimuli to goad a man into sin; thus, to sexual lust, straying thought is a temptation no less real, and not less potent,

than a provocative temptress. (J. Adamson) It seems probable that in this context James is thinking primarily of outward afflictions which human life must face, though indeed these quickly awaken inward temptations, since the outward trouble prompts a man to “give up,” or to tell untruths in order to avoid further distresses, or to give way to self-pity, bitterness and discontent, or to allow fear to dictate his actions. (C. Mitton)

Jews, of course, have a long tradition about testing, reaching back to Abraham, the prime example of one who passed the test, and to the Israelites in the wilderness, the prime example of failure. (P. Davids) James uses the word for “trials” in two different ways. In this passage, trials refer to the daily adversities of the human condition. However, in 1:13 the same root is used for temptations, which are exploited by evil intentions for evil ends. (R. Wall) The first chapter of James tells the reader much about the author, the author’s perception of the reader, and the author’s priorities. By beginning with trials, faith, maturity/completion, and doubt, James signals a number of his central concerns at the outset and, after reinforcing them throughout the first chapter, will return to them, one by one, in the rest of the letter ... There is a rhetorical figure *gradatio* in verses 2-8, literally a ladder leading the reader from one rung to the next, in this case from the testing of faith to endurance and from endurance, when it has its full effect, to mature and complete, lacking in nothing. (W. Brosend)

Double-minded (v. 8)

Doubter (v. 7)

Ask in faith without doubts (v. 6)

One lacking wisdom should ask of God (v. 5)

Complete (perfect), lacking in nothing (v. 4b)

Endurance completes its work (v. 4a)

Testing of faith works endurance (v. 3)

Facing trials of any kind (v. 2)

Our values determine our evaluations. If we value comfort more than character, then trials will upset us. If we value the material and physical more than the spiritual, we will not be able to “count it all joy.” Immature people are always impatient; mature people are patient and persistent ... The only way the Lord can develop patience and character in our lives is through trials ... Studying the Bible helps us grow in patience (Rom. 15:4). There is no substitute for an understanding mind. Satan can defeat the ignorant believer, but he cannot overcome the Christian who knows his Bible and understands the purposes of God ... God cannot build our character without our cooperation. If we resist Him, then He chastens us into submission. But if we submit to Him, then He can accomplish His work. He is not satisfied with a halfway job. God wants a perfect work; He wants a finished product that is mature and complete ... The mature person does not argue with God’s will; instead, he accepts it willingly and obeys it joyfully. If we try to go through trials without surrendered wills, we will end up more like immature children than mature adults. (W. Wiersbe)

James 1:2 Although you have considered (ἡγέομαι, AMImp. 2P, Culminative, Concessive, Deponent; regard) each occasion (Acc. Dir. Obj.; matter, situation) with inner happiness (Adv. Acc.

Manner; initial success in *spiritual self-esteem*), **my** (Gen. Rel.) **brethren** (Voc. Address; Jewish members of the royal family), **when** (temporal) **you encountered** (περιπίπτω, AASubj.2P, Constative, Temporal; become involved in) **various kinds of** (Dat. Measure; categories) **pressure testing** (Dat. Ind. Obj.; trials, *providential preventative suffering*: thought, people, systems, disaster),

^{BGT} **James 1:2** Πᾶσαν χαρὰν ἠγήσασθε, ἀδελφοί μου, ὅταν πειρασμοῖς περιπέσητε ποικίλοις,

^{VUL} **James 1:2** omne gaudium existimate fratres mei cum in temptationibus variis incideritis

LWB **James 1:3** **Knowing [from their status in *spiritual self-esteem*] that the testing [providential preventative suffering] of your doctrine produces patient endurance [courage under pressure],**

^{KW} **James 1:3** Knowing experientially that the approving of your faith, that faith having been put to the test for the purpose of being approved, and having met the test, has been approved, [that this approving process] produces a patience which bears up and does not lose heart or courage under trials.

^{KJV} **James 1:3** Knowing *this*, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

The believer in *spiritual self-esteem* learns how to maintain inner happiness while under pressure by his serious study of the Word of God (Perfective Present tense). The testing of the doctrine in his soul produces patience and fortitude. The progressive present points to this spiritual growth as occurring step-by-step, not all at once. It is a gradual process covering your entire life, not some form of instantaneous enlightenment where once you “get it” you can kick back and *slide* through life. These believers were not recent converts. The perfective present means they had made some progress in the spiritual life (*spiritual self-esteem*) before this first round of pressure testing arrived (*providential preventative suffering*). If they were neophyte Christians, James would have referred to them as “not knowing” about the purpose of testing in their life. They had some knowledge of how to successfully pass pressure tests, but they were not spiritual giants yet.

Doctrine stored in your soul is a “must have” in order to grow spiritually, but it must also be applied to life; it must be tested and approved by God in order to bear fruit. This “testing for approval” is not a one-time event. It happens in stages, with time in between to allow you to continue learning and metabolizing Bible doctrine so you are *prepared for the next round* of testing. “Gutting it out” with your own resources does not produce good fruit. This passage does not say “the testing of your *stoic personality* and your *ability to grin and bear it* produces patient endurance.” An unbeliever can do that! There is no spiritual reward, either temporal or eternal, for enduring pressure without the application of Bible doctrine in the filling of the Spirit. It might look good on the outside, but it will not receive a “qualitative approval” from God. So if you want to continue growing spiritually, doctrine must always be the highest priority in your life.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Since these charges (in verse 2 and 4) are warranted by *beliefs already held by the readers*, it might be better to interpret them as exhortations rather than harsh admonitions. (T. Cargal) The phrase “beliefs already held by the readers” is important to understand because the readers are not neophyte Christians. They have already passed some pressure tests (in verse 1) and are being encouraged to pass even more (in verse 4) because of what they understand now (in verse 2). They must allow their patient endurance so far to continue (complete itself) in order to become yet more spiritually mature. (LWB) Patience is the picture of being under pressure and, instead of trying to escape, of staying there, of standing fast. No matter where we turn today there is pressure. Are we abiding in it calmly and serenely or are we revolting? Those who have learned the art of abiding under pressure are those who are able to go through life without breaking under the strain. (S. Zodiates) It is struggling against difficulty and opposition that spiritual stamina is developed. (F. Gaebelien)

Patience is a willing and sustained endurance of difficult and arduous tasks for a noble and useful end. (Cicero) “*Hupomone*” is “firmness of faith;” it is not passive patience, but that gallant spirit which can breast the tides of doubt and sorrow and disaster and come out with faith still stronger on the other side ... The root word means to stay firm under pressure, attack, difficulty, hostility without shrinking from what comes against or upon you ... Mayor correctly embraces both the so-called external and the so-called internal assaults of evil ... Rejoice in the enemy’s ingenious assaults; constancy in withstanding them will win God’s approbation in the end. (J. Adamson) Trials serve as a feature of the life of trust that refines and shapes believers’ knowledge of divine providence and God’s holy purpose. (R. Martin) There is no way of knowing whether our faith is of better quality than by meeting trials and surviving them, and proving that our faith does not fail. (C. Mitton) Indeed, God is more concerned about your influence and reputation than you are. (R. Kendall)

Trials come in different ways. A man may find himself in a situation where his faith is put under severe strain because of a physical condition ... His children may want something he cannot give them. Strain may follow where there is a difference of opinion between husband and wife ... He may want to be considerate of other people but some folks are just downright provoking ... Sometimes the temptation is financial, overspending and running into debt ... Sometimes the testing of faith may be social ... Or his employer adopts a policy with which he cannot agree. He thinks the action which has been taken is wrong. He feels dissatisfaction with the whole procedure. He could lose his job ... He may be asked by someone to compromise his testimony by doing what he feels is wrong. If he will not compromise he may lose the contact ... A Christian will keep on believing in spite of all that may happen. He will have the disposition to persist. (M. Gutzke) James wants his readers to see the following progression of events: Trial → Testing → Perseverance → Maturity. (G. Stulac)

James 1:3 **Knowing** (γινώσκω, PAPtc.NMP, Perfective, Predicative; from your history of serious studying which led to *spiritual self-esteem*) **that** (introductory) **the testing** (Pred. Nom.; *providential preventative suffering* for the purpose of qualitative approval) **of your** (Poss. Gen.) **doctrine** (Obj. Gen.) **produces** (κατεργάζομαι, PMI3S, Progressive, Deponent; works, creates) **patient endurance** (Adv. Acc.; unshaken fortitude, constancy, persistence, remaining under pressure by applying the doctrine in your soul),

^{BGT} **James 1:3** γινώσκοντες ὅτι τὸ δοκίμιον ὑμῶν τῆς πίστεως κατεργάζεται ὑπομονήν.

^{VUL} **James 1:3** scientes quod probatio fidei vestrae patientiam operatur

LWB **James 1:4** Nevertheless, let patient endurance [passing pressure tests by utilizing the doctrine in your soul] keep on bringing about mature production [accelerated growth in the spiritual life by passing *momentum* and *evidence* tests], in order that you may become increasingly mature [*spiritual maturity*], even full-grown [completed *edification complex of the soul*], being deficient in nothing [able to handle any pressure without going insane].

^{KW} **James 1:4** But be allowing the aforementioned patience to be having its complete work in order that you may be spiritually mature and complete in every detail, lacking in nothing.

^{KJV} **James 1:4** But let patience have *her* perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

James completes the three verse ladder or staircase in the spiritual life. Although his readers have made great progress, he wants them to press forward and not falter. He wants them (Imperative of Entreaty) to continue metabolizing Bible doctrine and passing pressure tests by the application of that doctrine to life (Iterative Present tense). He wants them to produce mature, fully developed fruit in their spiritual life. He wants them to pass *momentum tests* which lead to *spiritual maturity* and then to keep on going, passing *evidence tests*. In other words, he wants them to attain *supergrace* status and then to proceed to *ultra-supergrace*. He wants them to become increasingly mature. The progressive present is an arrow pointing ahead with no end; there is no stage in the spiritual life where you have attained all there is to know about the *mind of Christ*.

But there is a stage (Latin: perfection, integrity) where you have built a completed *edification complex of the soul*. You possess a complex systematic theology in your soul which has been thoroughly tested by God through endless repetition. At this point in life, you are glorifying God to the maximum. You have all the tools you need to handle any pressure in life without going insane. You are deficient in nothing (Attributive Participle). Very few individuals reach this supreme state of existence, with virtually unbroken fellowship with God. It is the goal for every believer, the result of years and years of doctrinal intake and application. Nothing rattles your cage anymore. You share the perfect peace and inner happiness of God. Your impact on others around you is profound, though perhaps invisible.

Perhaps this ladder with four stages in the spiritual life separated by three period of testing will help you see the gradation in verses 2-4:

Ultra-supergrace
Evidence testing
Spiritual maturity (supergrace)
Momentum testing
Spiritual autonomy
Providential preventative suffering
Spiritual self-esteem
Doctrinal foundation in the soul

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Patience gives us the picture of someone who is under a terrific load. James says, as you are bearing that terrific load, don't remain stationary; move about, exercise your energy. There should be no passive endurance in the Christian life. The Christian should be aggressive, and, in spite of the burdens of life he is carrying, he should move forward to the goal that is set before him ... The Christian should never make the mistake of thinking that the goal is everything. There is enjoyment to be had on the way. (S. Zodhiates) The statement that "perseverance must finish its work" indicates progress and development, the result of which may well be described as maturity. Thus, perseverance in facing trials develops maturity of character and a balance of all the graces and strengths needed for the Christian life. (F. Gaebelin)

The fact of continuing trial needed to attain "perfection" is modeled on the divine pattern which sets the standard and inspires the believer ... It looks ahead to its fullest maturity at the end time when God's purposes will have been achieved. Until then, the believer has to endure trials *en route* to the goal and to strive to attain the fulfillment of God's plan, not excusing himself or permitting any failure to block the way. (R. Martin) James constantly keeps the effort and reward in mind. The Christian must not be satisfied with showing constancy in endurance only to a limited extent, on some occasions, and in some matters, but to perfection, that is, always ... Faith is not static, it is at work. (J. Adamson) This work must not be suffered to cease prematurely. (F. Hort)

This unit (James 1:2-4) develops the theme "receiving the implanted Word" in order to "be perfect" as a corrective to the beliefs of the implied readers ... Therefore we summarize the theme of this first sub-unit as "The Blessing of Trials." (T. Cargal) Most interpreters of the NT understand Paul's use of "telios" to refer to *maturity*. This is the completeness to which James referred when he said we must endure trial joyfully so that we will be "perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." (J. Dillow) The Bible does speak of Christian perfection, but the Greek word is often used of *maturity*, a term that fits the biblical teaching on sanctification much better than does the idea of being flawless. (J. McQuilken)

James 1:4 Nevertheless (adversative), let patient endurance (Subj. Nom.; passing pressure tests by utilizing the doctrine in your soul) keep on bringing about (ἔχω, PAImp.3S, Iterative, Entreaty) mature (Compl. Acc.; fully developed) production (Acc. Dir. Obj.; accelerated growth in the spiritual life by passing *momentum* and *evidence tests*), in order that (result) you may become increasingly (εἰμί, PASubj.2P, Progressive, Result) mature (Pred. Nom.; *spiritual maturity*), even (ascensive) full-grown (Pred. Nom.; completed *edification complex of the soul*, ultra-supergrace, whole), being deficient (λείπω, PMPtC.NMP, Descriptive, Attributive; lacking, falling short) in nothing (Loc. Sph.; able to handle any pressure without going insane).

^{BGT} **James 1:4** ἡ δὲ ὑπομονὴ ἔργων τέλειον ἔχέτω, ἵνα ᾗτε τέλειοι καὶ ὁλόκληροι ἐν μηδενὶ λειπόμενοι.

^{VUL} **James 1:4** patientia autem opus perfectum habeat ut sitis perfecti et integri in nullo deficientes

LWB **James 1:5** Now, if any of you [who are under pressure testing] lacks wisdom [experience in the application of doctrine], keep on asking for help [pray for application assistance] in the presence of God - Who gives to all [believers who ask] generously and will not reject your request - and it [assistance in the application of doctrine] shall be given to you.

^{KW} **James 1:5** And if, as is the case, anyone of you [when undergoing these trials] is deficient in wisdom, let him keep on presenting his request in the presence of the giving God who gives to all with simplicity and without reserve [a pure, simple giving of good without admixture of evil or bitterness], and who does not [with the giving of the gift] reproach [the recipient with any manifestation of displeasure or regret], and it shall be given him.

^{KJV} **James 1:5** 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.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

James knows that believers are not always successful in the application of Bible doctrine. All of us are placed in pressure situations in which we have the doctrinal resources to pass the test but we fail. Our failure is no reason to fall apart; it merely means we need to continue preparing ourselves for the next test. So James addresses those believers who have not reached spiritual maturity and informs them that if they are lacking in experience when it comes to the application of doctrine in pressure situations, they should keep on asking God for help (Imperative of Command). One of the functions of prayer is to ask the Lord to help you apply the doctrine you have learned, but have yet to apply in daily life. If you need assistance in executing spiritual operating procedures in an emergency (application deficit), call the divine Help Desk! If we are filled with the Spirit, He is there to answer our call. He does not, however, circumvent His Word by dropping wisdom into your brain when you have been rejecting Bible study.

God is faithful to provide assistance in applying doctrinal principles to life (Iterative Present tense) to all believers who ask. He provides ungrudging help without holding anything back. He is a generous giver. He will not reject your request for help if you have faithfully done your homework. In other words, don't ignore the Word of God day-after-day and then when trouble comes throw yourself at His feet begging for help. The spiritual life works through doctrine; it cannot be circumvented out of laziness. You cannot reject the protocol plan of God and expect Him to rescue you at the drop of a hat. But if you are studying and metabolizing doctrine faithfully, the Lord will honor your request for *application assistance* (Futuristic Present tense) and will give you the help that you need (Predictive Future tense). No matter what spiritual stage we are in, we are always dependent on the ministry of the Spirit and doctrine.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

As a corollary then, if people ask God for “wisdom,” they should expect God to respond by sending adversity and trial so they may gain the wisdom they “lack.” Within such a pattern of beliefs, God does not reprimand people because they ask for wisdom; rather, God reprimands or “instructs” people as the means of answering their request for wisdom ... “Wisdom” is most naturally – at least by modern, Western readers – associated with knowledge, especially in its practical applications, i.e., knowledge that grants an ability, a “knowing how to do.” Wisdom in the OT is very closely tied on the one hand to practical action and on the other hand to God. (T. Cargal) The Lord is on the prowl to bless people who despair of themselves and look wholly to Him for the help they need. (J. Piper) A Christian may well feel himself in the dark in the midst of trials. A good degree of wisdom is required to see the good in trials ... God does not intend to let the distracted person go away empty. Yet God has His means for giving the great gift of additional wisdom. This is His Word. Wisdom does not come out of the sky. God's Spirit instructs, enlightens, makes us wise by means of His Word. (R. Lenski) Isn't this the cry in the heart of ones who are suffering? “I don't know what to do!” (G. Stulac)

James takes it for granted that his readers knew that in order to rightly interpret life they needed wisdom, divine wisdom. But if you lack that wisdom with which you should be equipped, don't be too disappointed. There is hope for you. It may seem to you that sometimes God takes too much for granted as far as your ability and strength are concerned, that God thinks you are better equipped than you are ... James does not speak of wisdom as the world thinks of it, but speaks of the necessity of the Holy Spirit's indwelling every believer and then, and only then, can he be the master of circumstances. Unless there is within us that which is above us, we shall soon yield to that which is about us ... Ask, therefore; ask for wisdom; ask for help from the Holy Spirit, and it shall surely be given you. (S. Zodhiates) In this context wisdom is understanding the nature and purpose of trials and how to meet them victoriously. Such wisdom is available to the one who will “ask God” for it, not once only, but repeatedly. (F. Gaebelien) We need wisdom so we will not waste the opportunities God is giving us to mature. Wisdom helps us understand how to use these circumstances for our good and God's glory. (W. Wiersbe)

God's generous gift of wisdom is only for the single-minded: the double-minded can expect nothing ... God gives His wisdom to men not only just for the asking but also without chiding a man for his previous sins, many of which the man may not even know he has committed. (J. Adamson) It is the gift of being able to sense that course which is most likely to lead to Christian good for all concerned, the gift of being able to guide people to an understanding of God's will for them in the actual situation in which they find themselves. (C. Mitton) James argues that the gift of wisdom is granted to those who trust God, who are not double-minded. In asserting this, he is arguing that those who compromise their faith, who look to *both* God and the world for their norms and security, are in reality lacking the essence of any faith at all. If they had faith they could have wisdom, which, the context implies, would make them perfect – probably by helping them to discern the situation of testing and react to it properly. (P. Davids) Both the prayer and the wisdom supplied are “trial specific.” (R. Wall) True wisdom involves moral discernment, and this must begin with the knowledge of God, who has revealed His righteous standards. (H. Kent)

Wisdom throughout this homily is the insight which enables a Christian to understand and practice and advance the religious life that is in keeping with the law of God. (J. Moffatt) In 1st century Judaism, wisdom was thought of as embodied in the Jewish Scriptures (Torah) and that man gained it by study. For the Christian, divine wisdom is embodied in the Scriptures, but his study of those Scriptures must be connected with his constant prayer for divine illumination. (D. Hiebert) When James promises wisdom from God, we may be sure this means much more than being sharp or shrewd, or with ample “common sense.” He has already put His wisdom within my reach. I find it in the Scriptures, in the Bible, in the Word of God. So if I want wisdom I must read the Bible. I must study the Bible and get to know it. My heart and mind must be open to let the truth come in. Out of the Bible will come wisdom. That is the place where it is found. When I pray, what will He do? He will show me in His Word. He will show me in the Bible. There I will find the answer as I read and study ... Unless I read and study the Bible I am not really asking. When I read and study and pray I will come to know the mind of God. (M. Gutzke)

James 1:5 Now (transitional), if (protasis, 1st class condition, “and it’s true”) any (Subj. Nom.) of you (Adv. Gen. Ref.) lacks (λείπω, PMI3S, Descriptive; is deficient in) wisdom (Obj. Gen.; experience in the application of Bible doctrine), keep on asking for help (αἰτέω, PAImp.3S, Iterative, Command, Articular; pray for assistance in applying the doctrine that you do know) in the presence of God (Prep. Gen.) - Who gives (δίδωμι, PAPtc.GMS, Iterative, Substantival) to all (Dat. Measure; believers who ask) generously (Adv. Manner; without reserve, no reservations) and (connective) will not (neg. particle) reject your request (ὀνειδίζω, PAPtc.GMS, Futuristic, Substantival; reproach your positive volition) - and (continuative) it shall be given (δίδωμι, FPI3S, Predictive; application assistance) to you (Dat. Adv.).

^{BGT} **James 1:5** Εἰ δέ τις ὑμῶν λείπεται σοφίας, αἰτεῖτω παρὰ τοῦ διδόντος θεοῦ πᾶσιν ἀπλῶς καὶ μὴ ὀνειδίζοντος καὶ δοθήσεται αὐτῷ.

^{VUL} **James 1:5** si quis autem vestrum indiget sapientiam postulet a Deo qui dat omnibus affluenter et non inproperat et dabitur ei

LWB **James 1:6** But keep on asking with confidence, doubting nothing [faith-rest drill], for he who doubts on a recurring basis [spiritual malfunction] is like a wave of the sea [unstable] which is pushed around by the wind [agitated] and tossed all over the place [hurled about emotionally];

^{KW} **James 1:6** But let him be presenting his request in a trusting attitude, not in an expression of that hesitation which vascillates [between faith and unbelief and inclines towards unbelief], for the person who vascillates [between faith and unbelief] is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind;

^{KJV} **James 1:6** 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.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

But if you do ask God for assistance, make sure you keep on asking (Imperative of Command) with confidence, doubting nothing (Perfective Present tense). "Doubting nothing" (Latin: not hesitating) is a result of the proper use of the faith-rest drill. The person who doubts on a regular basis (Iterative Present tense) rather than trusts in God, exhibits a malfunction in his execution of the faith-rest drill. His prayers are futile. He is like a wave of the sea which is constantly unstable (Latin: fluctuating). This verb points to emotional instability rather than objective truth in the soul. The reversionist is constantly agitated, like a wave that is pushed about by a mighty wind. He is hurled about emotionally, like a wave that is tossed here-and-there without rhyme or reason. The Latin "circumference" points to a person repeatedly going in circles and ending up right where he started, only to go around again. The waves of the ocean are used metaphorically by James (Dramatic Present tense) to portray an unstable believer in emotional revolt of the soul. This is not the frame of mind to have when praying to God for assistance in applying doctrine.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The presence of "faith" with the request establishes God's will to grant "wisdom" to the believer "generously." Part of this "wisdom" for James is an insight into the application of the will of God in life. (T. Cargal) The waverer does not give himself either to God or the world; he does not, and can not, keep the way of life. Neither can his asking avail, for without faith it is meaningless, like the prayer: "O God, make me pure, but not today." We cannot desire good (and God has nothing else to give) unless we desire good alone with *all* our mind and (like God's giving) *without reservation*. (J. Adamson) Although there is nothing in God that prevents Him from giving wisdom to His people, a barrier may exist in them. When they ask, they "must believe and not doubt." (F. Gaebelein) Many Christians live like corks on the waves: up one minute, down the next; tossed back and forth. This kind of experience is evidence of immaturity. Instability and immaturity go together. (W. Wiersbe)

Here is a very apt description of the Christian. He sees through the things he is praying for, and he separates those that seem impossible. When it comes to the humanly impossible, he begins to doubt, and that is why the humanly impossible is not realized many times, in spite of the fact that God is capable of bringing it to pass. What is to blame? Doubting the ability of God. And this is another meaning of the word here translated “wavering.” It is doubting that it will come to pass. It is no use praying for something without expecting its realization after you have prayed for it ... There is, however, a great danger here lest we think that we shall get from God whatever we ask. This is just like demanding that God’s will conform to ours. That is not what this verse teaches. (S. Zodiates) God does not help us by removing the tests, but by making the tests work for us. Satan wants to use the tests to tear us down, but God uses them to build us up. (W. Wiersbe)

James 1:6 But (adversative) keep on asking (αἰτέω, PAImp.3S, Iterative, Command) with confidence (Instr. Manner), doubting (διακρίνω, PMPTc.NMS, Perfective, Modal; intellectual uncertainty) nothing (Acc. Dir. Obj.; faith-rest drill), for (explanatory) he (Subj. Nom.) who doubts on a recurring basis (διακρίνω, PMPTc.NMS, Iterative, Substantival; malfunction of faith-rest) is like (ἔοικα, Perf.AI3S, Descriptive; resembles) a wave (Dat. Comparison) of the sea (Gen. Place; unstable) which is pushed around by the wind (ἀνεμίζω, PPPTc.DMS, Dramatic, Attributive; agitated, driven) and (connective) tossed all over the place (ῥιπίζω, PPPTc.DMS, Dramatic, Attributive; hurled about emotionally, blown here and there);

^{BGT} **James 1:6** αἰτείτω δὲ ἐν πίστει μηδὲν διακρινόμενος· ὁ γὰρ διακρινόμενος ἔοικεν κλύδωνι θαλάσσης ἀνεμιζομένῳ καὶ ῥιπιζομένῳ.

^{VUL} **James 1:6** postulet autem in fide nihil haesitans qui enim haesitat similis est fluctui maris qui a vento movetur et circumfertur

LWB James 1:7 **For that man [the one who fails to execute the faith-rest drill] must stop presuming that he shall receive anything [assistance in passing pressure tests] from the Lord,**

^{KW} **James 1:7** For let not that individual be supposing that he shall receive anything from the presence of the Lord,

^{KJV} **James 1:7** For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

The phrase “that man” is a derogatory reference to the reversionistic believer. The man who fails to execute the faith-rest drill must not presume (Imperative of Prohibition) that he will receive any assistance (Predictive Future tense) in passing pressure tests from the Lord. If a believer

neglects doctrine and can't even utilize the faith-rest drill during prayer, he is profoundly arrogant and presumptuous to think the Lord will rescue him during troubled times. The man who continues to circumvent the Word of God, the filling of the Spirit, and the faith-rest drill will not receive blessing or deliverance from the Lord.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Although God will give wisdom “generously,” it is not given automatically. Rather, one must “ask with faith, without doubting” before God’s will is established to grant the wisdom one lacks ... To “ask with faith” would be to ask with consistent and proper desire, but to “ask with doubt” is to have improper desire and mixed motivations for making the request ... This is against the view of some that there are no conditions to God’s giving. (T. Cargal) He (the doubting man) comes to a liberal God doubtfully and then has the audacity to expect something from God. Let him not even think or suppose or imagine that he will receive anything. (S. Zodiates) It must not be assumed that the answer to a prayer for wisdom will come like a bolt of lightning the moment it is requested ... One can expect God to answer his prayer for wisdom through the very trial itself, as he endures it until God’s perfect work in him is done. (Z. Hodges)

God will not impose His blessings on unwilling people. So if individuals want to receive anything from God, they must trust Him for it ... Some people go astray by relying on personal experience or feeling. Other people have faith in faith – the important thing, they hold, is not what you believe but whether you believe. These gods are false. (J. McQuilikin) This sort of instability is not only apparent when the man prays, it marks “all he does.” In his personal life, his business life, his social life, as well as in his spiritual life, indecisiveness negates his effectiveness. (F. Gaebelein) Complete faith requires that we know what is in the Word of God ... When we waver, we are then without confidence and could be affected by public opinion. (M. Gutzke)

James 1:7 For (explanatory) that (Nom. Spec.) man (Subj. Nom.; the one who fails to execute the faith-rest drill) must stop (neg. particle) presuming (οἶομαι, PMImp.3S, Gnostic, Prohibition, Deponent; expecting, supposing) that (introductory) he shall receive (λαμβάνω, FMI3S, Predictive) anything (Acc. Dir. Obj.) from the Lord (Abl. Source),

^{BGT} **James 1:7** μὴ γὰρ οἰέσθω ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐκεῖνος ὅτι λήμψεταιί τι παρὰ τοῦ κυρίου,

^{VUL} **James 1:7** non ergo aestimet homo ille quod accipiat aliquid a Domino

LWB **James 1:8** *Being a double-souled man [in emotional revolt], unstable [bored & restless] in all his ways.*

^{KW} **James 1:8** [Being] a dubious, undecided man, vascillating in all his ways.

^{KJV} **James 1:8** A double minded man *is* unstable in all his ways.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

The person referred to in the prior verse, the one who failed to execute the faith-rest drill, is also a double-souled man. This means he is a reversionist in emotional revolt of the soul. The Latin *duplex* and the Greek *di-psycho*s point to a form of spiritual schizophrenia. This believer is not filled with the Spirit, does not know much doctrine, and is always going back-and-forth from positive to negative (Latin: inconstant) when it comes to spiritual matters. He is bored, restless, fickle, turbulent – any number of words can be used to describe the instability of his way of thinking and living. This kind of person is presumptuous to think God is going to answer his prayers for assistance in the spiritual life.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Most scholars agree that the word “dipsycho” derives from the Jewish ideas of the divided heart and the two inclinations ... The presence of “doubt” in the request fails to establish God’s will to give “anything” to the doubter, who is a “double-minded person, unstable in all his or her ways,” (T. Cargal) lacking constancy of direction and consistency of purpose. (J. Adamson) If one does not know that God is sovereign and controls all things and that He made certain promises to His children in Scripture, adverse circumstances can be frightening indeed. A sense of hopelessness, despair, panic, or depression is often the result. Such a doubter tends to view himself as a victim of his circumstances, rather than a participant in the life and program of God, who controls our circumstances. (H. Kent) This double-mindedness, one soul drawn upward to God, the other drawn downwards to the world, causes nothing but instability, and cannot result in that joy which is to be our attitude in trial. (H. Alford)

Jame’s concept of evil desires drives the actions of those who have not been changed internally by the implanted Word ... The identified double-mindedness is the desire to live by both measures (the standard of the evil world and the standard of the divine will) at the same time, to be friends with everyone. (T. Cargal) The road to salvation is beset with bifurcations, and the first thing we have to learn – a thing so obvious that many never see it – is that we cannot go down both forks at the same time. So we have to fork “right;” if not – as poor “Christian” found ere he had scarce begun his pilgrim way – there will be Satan to pay. (J. Adamson) The Christian who cannot make up his mind to leave his need for wisdom confidently in God’s hands is spiritually unstable ... One part of him knows that he must leave this need for discernment with God, while the other part still feels that he can, and must, solve the puzzle by himself. The result of such an inward division in perspective is likely to be a zigzag course of action filled with mistakes and false starts. (Z. Hodges)

James 1:8 Being (ellipsis) a double-souled (Descr. Nom.) man (Subj. Nom.; reversionist in emotional revolt of the soul), unstable (Descr. Nom.; bored, restless, fickle, turbulent) in all (Dat. Measure) his (Poss. Gen.) ways (Loc. Sph.; way of life).

^{BGT} **James 1:8** ἀνὴρ δίψυχος, ἀκατάστατος ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ὁδοῖς αὐτοῦ.

^{VUL} **James 1:8** vir duplex animo inconstans in omnibus viis suis

LWB **James 1:9** However, may the genuinely humble brother [who knows how to execute the faith-rest drill] keep on celebrating in the sphere of his high [spiritual] position.

^{KW} **James 1:9** Moreover, let the brother who is in lowly circumstances [poor and afflicted] be glorying in his exalted position [namely, in the midst of trials which teach him patience].

^{KJV} **James 1:9** Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted:

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

James contrasts the believer in genuine humility with the believer in emotional revolt of the soul. The genuinely humble believer who knows how to execute the faith-rest drill is compared with the double-souled believer (in verse 8) who does not know how to approach God with the appropriate mental attitude. The double-souled believer is divorced from reality; the genuinely humble believer is to keep on celebrating (Iterative Present tense) in his current spiritual status. James doesn't *command* the humble believer to celebrate, but *hopes* that he will (Hortatory Imperative). The believers contrasted in this section of James are not financially rich or poor; they are spiritually rich or poor. The contrast is between their respective stages of spiritual growth: one exhibits positive momentum in the spiritual life, the other has gone the way of reversionism. James will continue this contrast in the verses that follow, using financial terms often used to describe the "rich" and "poor" as *comparative metaphors for the spiritual realm*.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

If one focuses on the contrast between persons in James 1:9-11, there seems to be a socio-economic designation contrasting the "poor brother or sister" with "the rich." However, if one focuses on the contrast between their respective states, then there would seem to be a moral or ethical term ... designating the moral quality of unpretentious behavior, suggesting a total lack of arrogance or pride. (T. Cargal) To be sure, James was aware of the Jewish "piety-poverty equation;" but to say "Poverty is real wealth" only obscures the train of thought – which is the happiness and joy of Christian faith and life. Happy are they who encounter trying assaults of evil and withstand them, making progress toward their ideal. If they have faith, they will receive wisdom generously and without chiding, and (to anticipate) by constancy in endurance win the crown of life. (J. Adamson)

"Kaukaomai" means to profess loudly something that you have a right to be proud of, the companionship of God in your trials, which while you are so low makes you so high. Praise God for the measure of our stature in Christ Jesus. Christian, do not hesitate to declare your height in Him; in fact you are commanded to do so. When you go through trials and tribulations and you come out victoriously, you know that it is not because of your own strength but because of Him through whom you can do all things. It is therefore in our humility that we boast of our height in Him. (S. Zodhiates) If verses 2-8 exhort readers to a

certain perception of testing based on what they “know,” verses 9-12 provide the content of that knowledge. (L. Johnson) James uses the term here to denote his present exalted spiritual position as a Christian ... He is the possessor of spiritual riches which more than counter-balance his material poverty. (D. Hiebert)

James 1:9 However (contrast), may the genuinely humble (Descr. Nom.) brother (Subj. Nom.; who knows how to execute the faith-rest drill) keep on celebrating (καυχάομαι, PMImp.3S, Iterative, Hortatory, Deponent) in the sphere of his (Poss. Gen.) high position (Loc. Sph.; exalted in the spiritual life).

^{BGT} **James 1:9** Καυχάσθω δὲ ὁ ἀδελφὸς ὁ ταπεινὸς ἐν τῷ ὕψει αὐτοῦ,

^{VUL} **James 1:9** gloriatur autem frater humilis in exaltatione sua

LWB **James 1:10** **But the wealthy one [spiritually] in the sphere of his genuine humility – like the wild flower of the grass [which stands out beautifully on the background landscape] – may eventually disappear [invalidates his spiritual progress through neglect],**

^{KW} **James 1:10** But the one who is wealthy, let him be glorying in his humiliation [brought on by his trials and resulting in his being reduced to the level of the man who is poor and afflicted], because as the flower of the grass he shall come to an end;

^{KJV} **James 1:10** But the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

There are many commentators who see nothing but a contrast between a financially rich man and a poor man (an etymological reductionist error), as if this section was saying negative things about a person who has money. But this isn't a treatise on economics! James is talking about a *spiritually wealthy* man, one who is living in the sphere of genuine humility. In the previous verse, James is encouraging the man who is genuinely humble to celebrate in the success of his passing pressure tests. He continues in this verse with a subtle warning: there is always the possibility that a spiritually wealthy man can lose what he has accomplished in the spiritual life. The man who knows how to execute the faith-rest drill is like a wild flower that stands out beautifully against a landscape of reversionists.

The man (or woman) who knows how to execute the faith-rest drill stands out like a beautiful flower when compared to a human landscape full of arrogant, prideful men and women. But if he focuses on his accomplishments too much, there is a possibility that he might think he has arrived at the pinnacle – that there is nothing left for him to do but bask in victory. There is always a possibility (Deliberative Future tense) that he might begin neglecting the spiritual life, eventually invalidating his progress to date. His relaxed mental attitude and genuine humility may disappear like a wild flower on a grassy plain. This is a warning not to become complacent

in the spiritual life, not to become a *spiritually impoverished* believer; again, this is not a conflict between the financially rich and poor.

I completely reject the “ingrained antipathy” against rich people and the “unfounded romance” with poor people that some commentators espouse. I have found many rich people to be honorable, ethical and virtuous people; I have found many poor people to be arrogant, unethical, viciously evil people. The “piety of the poor” is a ridiculously ignorant notion, usually presented by communists and socialists as a means to foist their satanic economic policies on others. Possessing or not possessing money is irrelevant to this passage; there is no virtue in being rich or poor. Money doesn’t make a man a winner, nor does lack of money make a person a loser. The entire interpretation of this pericope in financial, socio-economic terms is a red herring.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The drift, then, is not that trials produce steadfastness, but that they provide the opportunity for steadfastness to have its full effect, to lead to the prayer of faith (verses 4-5) and thence to wholeness and completion. (E. Sidebottom) The key word in this quote is “opportunity.” There is no *guarantee* of spiritual success, only an *opportunity* for spiritual success. You must be consistent in your intake, metabolization and application of Bible doctrine. You must be filled with the Spirit as often as possible. When pressures seem to be overtaking you, acknowledge your sins to God (1 John 1:9) and then ask Him for assistance in applying the doctrine you know to the situation at hand. This is the only way to ensure that you do not begin the *downward slide* into reversionism, invalidating your spiritual progress to date. (LWB) The lowering of the rich brother is as inward as the raising of the poor brother. (J. Moffatt) Trials can be used by God to remind him of the transience of his own earthly life and of how quickly all his material belongings can be lost. (Z. Hodge)

The word ‘rich’ denotes “one who does not need to work for a living.” If the exaltation of the poor brother has a spiritual basis, the experience of the rich brother has a spiritual basis, the experience of the rich brother being brought into a humble station also should be understood spiritually ... The attitude of both the poor and rich brother is the result of the spiritual wisdom which each has attained. The results look in opposite directions. (D. Hiebert) They cannot achieve the “wisdom” they “lack” by being “patient” students of divine “reprimands” and instruction. Rather, “wisdom” is a “generous gift” given by God to those who “ask with faith” (1:5), with a singleness of desire and motivation. (T. Cargal) When he exalts himself, God humiliates him, but when he repents, He exalts him. (J. bar Hama) Christian humility can only be learned from Christ, and has been well defined as “the extension of Christology into living.” (J. Adamson)

James 1:10 But (adversative) the wealthy one (Subj. Nom.; spiritually), in the sphere of his (Poss. Gen.) genuine humility (Loc. Sph.) - like (comparative) the wild flower (Ind. Nom.) of the grass (Adv. Gen. Ref.; details of life) - may eventually disappear (παρέρχομαι, FMI3S, Deliberative, Deponent; comes to an end by neglect, invalidates his spiritual progress),

^{BGT} **James 1:10** ὁ δὲ πλούσιος ἐν τῇ ταπεινώσει αὐτοῦ, ὅτι ὡς ἄνθος χόρτου παρελεύσεται.

^{VUL} **James 1:10** dives autem in humilitate sua quoniam sicut flos faeni transibit

^{LWB} **James 1:11** For the sun [testing] will rise again with a scorching heat [intense pressure] and the grass [arrogant believer] begins to wither and the wild flower [genuinely humble believer] begins to fall apart [drifts off course] in the same manner [the arrogant and genuinely humble believers both flunk the next round of pressure tests] and the beauty of its face [the spiritual status of the genuinely humble believer] begins to fade away [loss of reflected glory]; also, in this manner, the wealthy one [genuinely humble believer] during his journey [spiritual life] may wither [begin losing everything he has accomplished so far].

^{KW} **James 1:11** For the sun rises with its scorching heat and the grass withers and its flower falls off and the beauty of its appearance is destroyed. So shall also the wealthy person fade away together with his undertakings.

^{KJV} **James 1:11** 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.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Let me say this again: Verses 10-11 have nothing to do with financially rich or poor people. James is continuing his *spiritual* and *metaphorical* comparison between the believer who knows how to execute the faith-rest drill during pressure testing and the believer who does not know how to execute the faith-rest drill during pressure testing. The believer who knows how is genuinely humble and is making progress in the spiritual life; the believer who doesn't know how is a reversionist in emotional revolt of the soul. The reversionistic believer is the background grass or landscape; the beautiful wild flower is the genuinely humble believer. The sun will rise again with a scorching heat over both types of believer (Futuristic Aorist tense). The "sun" is a metaphor for "testing" while "scorching heat" is a metaphor for the "intense pressure" that often accompanies testing. This is a comparison between spiritual lives, not a comparison between the financial, materialistic status that believers might find themselves in.

As the sun rises again with scorching heat (intense pressure tests), the arrogant believer who does not know how to execute the faith-rest drill begins to wither (Ingressive Aorist tense). He does not have the doctrinal resources to hold up under pressure and the Lord does not help him because he is not filled with the Spirit. He falls apart in emotional revolt of the soul. The genuinely humble believer, in the same manner as the arrogant believer, begins to fall apart (Ingressive Aorist tense). He had enough doctrinal resources along with the filling of the Spirit to pass the last round of pressure testing, but this time he runs aground (drifts off course) and flunks the test just like the reversionistic believer. The beauty of the wild flower's face begins to fade away; the spiritual success of the believer who was previously exhibiting genuine humility becomes a distant memory. The reflected glory of Christ from former successes in passing pressure tests begins to fade.

The metaphor is explained in the last phrase of this passage with the comparative “in this manner.” The spiritually wealthy believer, the one who has successfully executed the faith-rest drill in the past, is not *guaranteed* future success, only given the *opportunity* to succeed again. There is always the possibility that a genuinely humble believer can lose his former glory and wither away in the spiritual life (Deliberative Future tense). During his spiritual journey, the positive believer must continue studying the Word of God so his soul has ample doctrine to apply to pressure situations. The positive believer must acknowledge his sins and remained filled with the Spirit so he has divine assistance when intense pressures come upon him. There is no stage in the spiritual life when you no longer need to execute the faith-rest drill. It is a problem-solving device for spiritual babes, adolescents, and wise men alike. Just because you passed the last test, doesn’t mean you will pass the next one.

It is possible to translate these aorists as gnomic; those translators who see a financial metaphor here do. I prefer the ingressive aorist, in conjunction with a deliberative future in the last phrase. If the withering was certain, I would vote for the gnomic aorist and predictive future. But I think the withering is uncertain, therefore ingressive and deliberative. If a believer who previously exercised genuine humility withers during his spiritual journey, it does not happen all at once. His slide into reversionism had a beginning; hopefully it ends immediately by his return to fellowship with the Lord. Withering is gradual; fading beauty has a start. The gnomic is something which happened in the past and is continuing to happen in the present. It is not a “maybe,” but a “certainty.” The believers James is addressing have made some progress; they have passed some tests. If they fail the next test, it is not a *certainty* that they will fail the one after that. It is a possibility, but not a certainty.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

They lack “wisdom” because of their “double-mindedness” (1:8). James warns them that if they continue in this way ... they will die in the midst of their pursuits. (T. Cargal) It is difficult to resist the conclusion that James had often seen the flowers blooming on the Galilean hills wilt and perish in the intense scorching wind. (J. Adamson) The mature person is patient in trials. Sometimes the trials are testings on the outside, and sometimes they are temptations on the inside. Trials may be tests sent by God, or they may be temptations sent by Satan and encouraged by our own fallen nature ... When our circumstances are difficult, we may find ourselves complaining against God, questioning His love, and resisting His will. At this point, Satan provides us with an opportunity to escape the difficulty. This opportunity is a temptation. (W. Wiersbe)

James 1:11 For (explanatory) the sun (Subj. Nom.; testing) will rise again (ἀνατέλλω, AAI3S, Futuristic) with a scorching heat (Instr. Manner; metaphor for intense pressure) and (continuative) the grass (Subj. Acc.) begins to wither (ἀνατέλλω, AAI3S, Ingressive; arrogant believer) and (continuative) the wild flower (Subj. Nom.; genuinely humble believer) begins to fall apart (ἐκπίπτω, AAI3S, Ingressive; runs aground, drifts off course) in the

same manner (Gen. Comparison; both flunk the next round of pressure tests) and (continuative) the beauty (Subj. Nom.) of its (Poss. Gen.) face (Adv. Gen. Ref.; spiritual status) begins to fade away (ἀπόλλυμι, AMI3S, Ingressive; disappears, loss of reflected glory); also (adjunctive), in this manner (comparative adv.), the wealthy one (Subj. Nom.; genuinely humble believer) during his (Poss. Gen.) journey (Loc. Time; spiritual life) may wither (μαραίνω, FPI3S, Deliberative; disappear, fade away, lose everything he has accomplished thus far).

^{BGT} **James 1:11** ἀνέτειλεν γὰρ ὁ ἥλιος σὺν τῷ καύσωνι καὶ ἐξήρανε τὸν χόρτον καὶ τὸ ἄνθος αὐτοῦ ἐξέπεσεν καὶ ἡ εὐπρέπεια τοῦ προσώπου αὐτοῦ ἀπόλετο· οὕτως καὶ ὁ πλούσιος ἐν ταῖς πορείαις αὐτοῦ μαρανθήσεται.

^{VUL} **James 1:11** exortus est enim sol cum ardore et arefecit faenum et flos eius decedit et decor vultus eius deperit ita et dives in itineribus suis marcescet

LWB James 1:12 Spiritually happy and prosperous is the man who remains under pressure [passes tests that accelerate spiritual growth], for after being tested for approval, he shall receive the crown of life [awarded at the Evaluation Seat of Christ for good production], which was promised [by the Lord in eternity past] to those [mature believers] who continue to love Him [occupation with Christ].

^{KW} **James 1:12** Spiritually prosperous is the man who remains steadfast under trial, because after he has met the test and has been approved, he shall receive the crown, namely, that crown which has to do with the life [eternal life], which [crown] He promised to those who love Him.

^{KJV} **James 1:12** 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.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

The man who remains under and endures pressure testing (Durative Present tense) - whether it is providential preventative suffering, momentum tests, or evidence tests – is spiritually happy and prosperous. Whichever level of tests you pass, there is happiness and spiritual prosperity that follows. There is a graduated, accompanying gift of happiness in spiritual self-esteem, spiritual autonomy, and spiritual maturity. Each stage of progress in the spiritual life has a series of pressure tests (Latin: suffering, temptations) that precede it. In turn each stage of progress in the spiritual life has a gift of inner happiness that follows the passing of those pressure tests.

At the Evaluation Seat of Christ, every believer will be tested for approval by the Lord. After being tested and approved (Culminative Aorist tense), he will receive the crown of life (Predictive Future tense). The crown of life is awarded for divine good production (good works according to divine standards). The crown of life was promised by the Lord in eternity past (Constative Aorist tense) to those believers who love Him. The durative present means this love or occupation with Christ covers a long period of time. You don't truly love Christ unless your

soul is saturated with His thinking, Bible doctrine. Occupation with Christ is an advanced stage in the spiritual life; it is not an emotional buzz.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Surely we possess the inherent happiness of God since we are partakers of His nature. That explains the secret of happiness of the Christian. No matter what happens in the outside world, the Christian is happy because God is within, because he is a partaker of the divine nature. (S. Zodhates) This exaltation is the “crown of life,” the “salvation of the final consummation,” that has been promised to those who love God. “Trials” are a “blessing” because they, in and of themselves, produce “patient endurance” which ultimately assures them of a “crown of life.” (T. Cargal) Only the single-minded person can face and pass the test ... The first part of genuine wisdom is to know God; we must begin with a conviction of God with which there is inevitably joined a conviction of right. The Christian has a different set of values from the non-Christian, being energized by a different Spirit and a different wisdom – the “wisdom from above.” (J. Adamson) With each test there comes the temptation to resist God’s will in sending the trial at all or, at least, the temptation to resent it and thus refuse to allow God to do the character-building work He desires to perform. (Z. Hodges)

This verse is definitely to be connected both linguistically and in thought to verses 2, 3, and 4 of this chapter where James speaks of the trials and temptations of life. These we are to meet with all joy, for their effect upon this life, which is patience, perfection, maturity, and wisdom. But that is not all. There is a life to come and it is then that the real reward of the patient and victorious Christian is obtained. It is joy here and blessedness there. (S. Zodhates) The crown, headwreath, chaplet, or circlet was the victor’s prize in the Greek games. Paul and others often use the figure of the race and the crown, but he carefully points out one difference between the runner’s effort and reward and that of the Christian life: they all run, but only one receives the prize. Certainly the Christian is not competing against his fellows as the athlete do; yet the image was felt to be, and is, relevant. (J. Adamson) It is my conclusion that the crown of life means that you are going to have a degree of life in heaven which someone else will not have. (J. McGee)

This passage describes desire for truth, love for God, strength of character, remarkable stability, perseverance, motivation, momentum, and happiness. Such qualities of the inner person are escrow blessings for time. They are escrow blessings supported by the basic capacities of soul developed on the way to maturity ... The precondition for receiving escrow blessings dramatizes God’s objective for the Church Age believer on earth: Learn Bible doctrine, gain spiritual momentum, grow up, attain maturity! In other words, come to love and glorify Christ ... The believer’s occupation with Christ is crystallized and stabilized in the “no mans’ land” of testing in supergrace, through which the mature believer must advance *en route* to ultra-supergrace. The Bravo Cross or “wreath of life” is awarded specifically for using and applying doctrine in the midst of undeserved suffering. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) There are degrees of punishment for the lost. Likewise there are degrees

of rewards for believers. (J. McGee) The Christian whose endurance through trials has cooperated to produce approved character is indeed blessed of God. (Z. Hodges)

There is here the quality of continuity in “loving Him.” It is not those who loved the Lord at one time, but those who love Him to the very end of their lives under all circumstances. (S. Zodhiates) Every Church Age believer is a member of the royal family of God, but even among royalty there is no equality. Volition makes the difference. By our own decisions we advance spiritually and attain supergrace and the other blessings of gate eight of the divine dynasphere, or we retrogress into reversionism. The inequalities among the spiritual nobility of the Church Age will be most dramatic at the Judgment Seat of Christ. There, the mature believer will be rewarded with tremendous eternal blessings, while the immature believer will be admitted to heaven “as if by fire” without rewards of any kind. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) The believer who shows endurance will not question that God is working out His purpose in the test to produce growth and develop graces in his life. To yield is sin; to grumble is to fail; to endure is to learn the lesson God has designed through the test. (C. Rylie)

For some Christians the purpose of God includes severe testing, even martyrdom. This high honor will be duly compensated with a special distinction, the crown of life ... What is this “crown of life?” Since it is the reward given for an accomplishment subsequent to faith, it is probable that it refers to a higher quality of life in the kingdom. It would be the same as the eternal life which can be earned, the special richness of eternal life merited by faithful service on the field of battle. (J. Dillow) The doctrine of rewards is the necessary counterpart to the doctrine of salvation by grace. Since God does not and cannot reckon the believer’s merit or works to the account of his salvation, it is required that the believer’s good works shall be divinely acknowledged. The saved one owes nothing to God in payment for salvation which is bestowed as a gift; but he does owe God a life of undivided devotion, and for this life of devotion there is promised a reward in heaven. (J. Walvoord)

James 1:12 Spiritually happy and prosperous (Pred. Nom.) is (ellipsis) the man (Subj. Nom.) who (Nom. Appos.) remains under (ὑπομένω, PAI3S, Durative; endures) pressure (Acc. Dir. Obj.; passes tests that accelerate spiritual growth), for (explanatory) after being (γίνομαι, AMPtc.NMS, Culminative, Temporal, Deponent) tested for approval (Pred. Nom.), he shall receive (λαμβάνω, FMI3S, Predictive) the crown (Acc. Dir. Obj.) of life (Descr. Gen.; production of divine good rewarded at the Judgment Seat of Christ), which (Acc. Gen. Ref.) was promised (ἐπαγγέλλομαι, AMI3S, Constativative, Deponent; by the Lord in eternity past) to those (Dat. Adv.; mature believers) who continue to love (ἀγαπάω, PAPtc.DMP, Durative, Substantival) Him (Acc. Dir. Obj.; occupation with Christ).

^{BGT} **James 1:12** Μακάριος ἀνὴρ ὃς ὑπομένει πειρασμόν, ὅτι δόκιμος γενόμενος λήμψεται τὸν στέφανον τῆς ζωῆς ὃν ἐπηγγείλατο τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν αὐτόν.

^{VUL} **James 1:12** beatus vir qui suffert temptationem quia cum probatus fuerit accipiet coronam vitae quam repromisit Deus diligentibus se

LWB **James 1:13** Let no one when he is being tempted [allured to sin when the pressure gets too great] say: “I am being tempted by God [allured to sin],” for God is incapable of being tempted by evil [violates His divine essence and character], neither does He Himself tempt anyone [allure to sin].

^{KW} **James 1:13** Let no man be saying when he is being solicited to sin, By God I am being solicited to sin, for God is incapable of being solicited to sin, the source fo the solicitations being evils, [such as soliciting man to sin], and He himself solicits no one to sin.

^{KJV} **James 1:13** 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:

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

“Peirasmos” can be an external “testing” or an internal “tempting” depending on the context. Earlier it referred to external testing; here it means internal temptation. When a believer is being tempted to sin (Temporal Participle), let him not blame it on God (Imperative of Entreaty), saying: I am being tempted to sin by God (Static Present tense). What has “being tempted to sin” got to do with passing pressure tests for spiritual growth? You pass pressure tests by remaining filled with the Spirit as you apply Bible doctrine to the situation. You flunk pressure tests by sin; sin immediately causes the loss of the filling of the Spirit and the application of doctrine to the situation fails. James has already affirmed that God sends pressure to us for the purpose of testing what we have learned from the Word of God, as well as our ability to apply it in daily life. But our success or failure depends on our use of doctrine and the filling of the Spirit. If we succeed in passing a test, it is because we utilized the spiritual resources He has given us; if we fail, it is because we allowed sin and evil to overcome us. If we fail a test by sinning, it is not God’s fault.

We cannot do as Adam did and blame our failure on Eve or on God “for giving her to me.” We sinned, we failed. God wanted us to pass, not fail. He did not put evil in our path. God Himself is incapable of being tempted by evil (Gnomic Present tense). Neither does God Himself tempt anyone to sin (Gnomic Present tense). There is a long-running debate on whether a passive or active voice is in play here. Is God incapable of being tempted by evil? Or is God incapable of tempting (others) by using sin? The verb “to be” is in the active voice, not the passive voice. But the “incapability” is an adjective describing God, not a verb signifying an action He attempts to commit. Many verbals like this can have the force of a perfect *passive* participle as well as an *active* force. Able translators can be found on both sides. The only way to figure this out, in my opinion, is by comparing the results here to the next correlative verse; then we can “read back” by interpretation whether a passive or active voice is required.

The verb “peirazo” can be translated as “test” or “tempt/allure.” When God is leading the action, it is translated as “testing.” When Satan is leading the action, it is translated as “tempting.” God *tests* believers for *benevolent* purposes; Satan *tempts* believers for *nefarious* purposes. God

wants the believer to *pass* pressure tests; Satan wants believers to *fail* pressure tests. God is trying to create spiritual *winner*s as witnesses for the prosecution in the trial against Satan in the Supreme Court of heaven. Satan is trying to create spiritual *loser*s as witnesses for his defense. God provides the *ministry of the Holy Spirit* and *Bible doctrine* to assist us in passing pressure tests. Satan uses the *old sin nature* and its *lusts* to guarantee our failure during pressure tests. Therefore, God is the source of *good*, while Satan is the source of *evil*. So if we fail to pass a pressure test, let's make sure we put the blame where it belongs: on us, not on God. Do not shift the responsibility for your failure upon God.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

None of us should ever blame God for putting into our hearts, into our inner selves, the propensity to sin, the desire to yield to temptation ... God indeed provided the opportunity for Jesus to be tried or tempted, but He also gave Him the moral stamina to be victorious. What James wants to affirm in this first statement of verse 13 is that God does not put into the heart of anyone the direct desire to sin ... Is God to be blamed for the sin in us and the desire to sin? Don't blame God for your sin, for He has nothing to do with it ... There is one further thought consequent to the above. Since God can have no experience of evil, evil things and men cannot prevail over Him and cannot occupy His mind and thoughts ... God will never deliberately lead you to commit sin, for that would be completely contrary to His original and ever present desire and yearning to have His creature be fully in the image of the Creator. (S. Zodiates) The same tongue that blesses and praises God may also curse and blaspheme. If he blessed God one moment and the next moment uses his tongue for cursing, where is such a person's integrity? (J. Adamson)

Though trial in itself is ordered by God for our good, yet the inner solicitation to evil which is aroused by the outer trial is from ourselves ... "Apo" (by) expresses the remoter cause, as contrasted with the nearer cause expressed by "hupo." Eve was the immediate cause of Adam's transgression, but Adam tried to make God the ultimate cause in the words "whom thou gavest to be with me." So the fault is often laid on hereditary disposition, on unfavorable circumstances, on sudden and overpowering *temptation* ... God is incapable of tempting others to evil, because He is Himself absolutely insusceptible to evil; i.e., our belief in God's own character, in His perfect purity and holiness, makes it impossible for us to suppose that it is from Him that our temptations proceed: so far from Himself tempting others to evil, which would imply a delight in evil, He is by His own nature incapable of being even solicited to evil. (J. Mayor) We must resist lust, bring forth the fruits of repentance, and heartily welcome the implanted Word of truth. By God's grace, therefore, we shall overcome the assaults of evil and win the salvation of our souls. (J. Adamson)

God's testing is *benevolent*; God hopes that, like Abraham or Job, we will pass the test. "My son, if you aspire to be a servant of the Lord, prepare yourself for *testing*. Successfully tested, the "happy warrior" emerges a maturer soul, stronger in faith, more constant in endurance, and finally vindicated ... Satan also makes trial of us with sinister intent, hoping that we shall fail. Satan *tempts* people so that they may sin ... Whereas the athletes (Greek games metaphor) have human competitors, the Christian's adversaries are the powers of

darkness, trying to push him off the course and rob him of his crown ... James expounds on the royal goodness of God; and he cautions against error about God's nature and his relation to sin. It is axiomatic that God is good, nothing but good, the sole giver of good, and the giver of nothing but good. No one, when he is tempted, is ever to make excuses and blame God for his solicitation, for sin can make no appeal to God, who is invincible to the assaults of evil, nor can sin originate in Him; therefore He Himself tempts no man. (J. Adamson)

It implies no contradiction to suppose that an act may be an evil act, and yet that it is a good thing that such an act should come to pass ... As for instance, it might be an evil thing to crucify Christ, but yet it was a good thing that the crucifying of Christ came to pass. In other words, the Scriptures lead us to the insight that God can will that a sinful act come to pass without willing it as an act of sin in Himself. (J. Piper) Immutability and impeccability are qualities which distinguish the Creator from the creature. (A. Pink) God is represented as responsible for all events, even though they are accomplished through secondary causes. There are sufficient secondary causes apposite with man's condition, his depravity, and the captivity of Satan ... James 1:13-14 uses language inconsistent with the idea that God efficiently causes sin. (T. Nettles) God did not put sin in Pharaoh's heart, neither did He entice him or lead him to sin. However, God did control and direct the wickedness that was already in Pharaoh's heart for the fulfillment of His purpose. (W. Best) If people were not evil, they would have no such desires and would be free of wrong impulses. (Z. Hodges)

Christian living is a matter of the will, not the feelings. I often hear believers say, "I don't feel like reading the Bible." Children operate on the basis of feeling, but adults operate on the basis of will. They act because it is right, no matter how they feel. This explains why immature Christians easily fall into temptation: they let their feelings make the decisions. (W. Wiersbe) This is the problem of evil thoughts, tendencies to sin, feelings of guilt and discouragement. (H. Kent) All forms of trouble and temptation originate in the human heart. The things we actually prefer will bring about our troubles, since we can be tempted only by what we like. We can be troubled inwardly only because of things we want to do, and the things we desire ... God does not make us want to spend money when we should be saving it. God does not want us to eat and drink what will harm us. We want that car, or want to go on weekend vacations that will cost us lots of money. We ourselves want to do these various things which will not be good for us. It is our wanting and liking the wrong things, that causes trouble. (M. Gutzke)

James 1:13 Let no one (Subj. Nom.) when he is being tempted (πειράζω, PPPTc.NMS, Pictorial, Temporal; allured to sin) say (λέγω, PAImp.3S, Static, Entreaty): "I am being tempted (πειράζω, PPI1S, Static; allured to sin) by God (Abl. Agency)," for (explanatory) God (Subj. Nom.) is (εἰμί, PAI3S, Gnostic) incapable of being tempted (Pred. Nom.) by evil (Abl. Means), neither (adversative) does He Himself (Subj. Nom.) tempt (πειράζω, PAI3S, Gnostic) anyone (Acc. Dir. Obj.; allure to sin).

^{BGT} **James 1:13** Μηδεὶς πειραζόμενος λεγέτω ὅτι ἀπὸ θεοῦ πειράζομαι· ὁ γὰρ θεὸς ἀπείραστός ἐστιν κακῶν, πειράζει δὲ αὐτὸς οὐδένα.

^{VUL} **James 1:13** nemo cum temptatur dicat quoniam a Deo temptor Deus enim intemptator malorum est ipse autem neminem temptat

LWB **James 1:14** **On the contrary, each one is tempted by his own lust pattern [function of the sin nature] when he is dragged away [from the spiritual life] and is being enticed [lured to sin].**

^{KW} **James 1:14** But each one is being solicited to sin when he is taken in tow and enticed by his own craving.

^{KJV} **James 1:14** But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

God does not tempt man to sin; each individual's sin nature tempts him to sin (Gnomic Present tense). The lust pattern of the sin nature drags us away from the spiritual life (Pictorial Present tenses) and entices us to sin. The enticement comes from the inner disposition and desires of the soul. The soul imagines sin to be pleasurable. Sin is always our fault, never God's fault. "Dragging away" is a nautical term, which can be pictured as a large vessel being towed by a pilot ship. Our lust pattern takes us by the nose and tows us out to sea. Or as Robertson called this passage: Snared by One's Own Bait. "Enticed" is a hunting term, which means the trap or snare has snapped shut on us and won't let us go. The two words together have been used as a fishing metaphor, where the fish is lured to take the bait and is then hooked and pulled in. The problem with that metaphor is that the *pulling in* occurs before the *luring* by bait.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The first effect of "epithumia" (lust pattern) is to draw the man out of his original repose, the second to allure him to a definite bait. (J. Mayor) The "springing up" of reaction to a previously forgiven sin has two devastating results. The first is the believer's potential for causing "trouble" for himself by lapsing into reversionism. "Trouble" is self-induced misery. While all temptation to sin originates from the sin nature, the act of sin occurs when the believer uses his volition to succumb to temptation. In other words, any time you are bitter, it is because you *want* to be bitter! Through the recurrence of reversionism, there is a second result from the reaction of bitterness. The "many" who are in the periphery of the reacting believer are "defiled." The believer has poured the sewage of reversionism into his soul and his sewage overflows to others. Under his influence they too will be drawn into reversionism. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) Sin never admits its purpose is deadly, so it has to deceive. (J. Owen)

Inside you there is created the desire to enjoy the attraction of sin, and when the opportunity arises, you are caught. You have heard the expression, "He is hooked." Well, here it is. You are in danger of being hooked when before you there appears something which promises to

satisfy your inner yearning ... Each one is characterized by what we call the idiosyncrasy of his own nature. There may be two Christians looking at the same tempting thing. One falls for it and the other resists it. What makes the difference? The attitude of each one individually. Nothing from without is able to bring sin into any will ... We daily face the outer circumstances of life, full of temptations. What can we do about them? Not very much, when we come down to it. We cannot change the environment where we work and live. We cannot forbid the birds to fly over our heads. There is certainly an inevitability about the sinfulness of our surrounding circumstances. But we can hinder the birds from making nests in our hair. (S. Zodiates)

Sin draws the *mind* away from a duty, but it entices the *emotions*. Negatively, we guard our heart by mortification. Positively, we guard our heart by filling it with better concerns and values ... Do not allow sin to get the least start in your life. Do not say, "I will let it go so far, but no further." If you allow it to have one step, it will take another, for it is impossible to fix limits on sin. It is like water in a channel; if it breaks out, it will follow its own course. (J. Owen) Sin is a child which no one wants to claim. No person in his state of depravity wants to admit that the child is his own. Men are anxious to commit sin, but they are reluctant to acknowledge that they either conceived or gave birth to it ... In every society, men have begun very early in life seeking to cast the burden of sin from themselves to another. Children go forth from the womb speaking lies. (Psalm 58:3) One sin is followed by a greater unless it is recognized and confessed. (W. Best)

Each has his own peculiar lust, arising from his own temperament ... Lust is personified as the harlot that allures man. (R. Jamieson) The biographical scenario of evil's progression is graphically described in terms of human reproductive processes. (R. Martin) The "progression" from desire to death may be rendered as follows (W. Brosend):

One is tempted by one's own desire,
Being lured and enticed by it;
Then when that desire has conceived,
It gives birth to sin, and that sin,
When it is fully grown,
Gives birth to death.

There is no temptation except when a person finds evil desirable in some way. (Z. Hodges)

James 1:14 On the contrary (adversative), each one (Subj. Nom.) is tempted (πειράζω, PPI3S, Gnostic) by his own (Gen. Poss.) lust pattern (Abl. Means; inner disposition and desires of the soul, imagination of the pleasure of sin) when he is dragged away (ἐξέλκω, PPpTc.NMS, Pictorial, Temporal) and (continuative) is being enticed (δελεάζω, PPpTc.NMS, Pictorial, Temporal; lured, trapped).

^{BGT} **James 1:14** ἕκαστος δὲ πειράζεται ὑπὸ τῆς ἰδίας ἐπιθυμίας ἐξελκόμενος καὶ δελεαζόμενος·

^{VUL} **James 1:14** unusquisque vero temptatur a concupiscentia sua abstractus et inlectus

LWB **James 1:15** Then when the lust pattern becomes pregnant, it gives birth to sin; and this sin, when it has been fully realized, brings forth spiritual death.

KW **James 1:15** Then when the aforementioned craving has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and this sin when it is full grown brings forth death.

KJV **James 1:15** Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

James changes his figurative expressions from hunting and fishing to conception and child birth. His use of the word “then” signals a progression, or rather digression, in the birth of sin. When the lust pattern becomes pregnant (Ingressive Aorist tense), it gives birth to sin (Dramatic Present tense). And this sin, when it has been fully accomplished (Culminative Aorist tense), brings forth spiritual death (Gnomic Present tense). This spiritual death happens in stages as a person succumbs to a particular sin over-and-over-again and is bested by it. This is a simple explanation of how lust, temptation, sin and spiritual death come into play. Some of the Latin words are rather interesting. When the lust pattern *becomes pregnant* it is called “conception” and when *when sin has been fully realized* it has been “consummated.” The resulting spiritual death is temporal, not eternal.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

“Epithumia” is personified as a seductress who, having enticed the person to her bed, conceives a bastard child – sin. (T. Cargal) We should pray that the Lord will protect our minds from conceiving evil ideas, from inaugurating desires that may demand sinful fulfillment ... Sin has the ability of growing rapidly, like the physical embryo, to its maturity and completion, and one day it will have to discontinue being in a stage of pregnancy, but the result will not be life, as expected of the physical embryo, but death. (S. Zodiates) The sequence of thought is clear: to say that temptation comes from God is a lie (1:13), for temptation comes from lust (1:14), lust produces sin, and sin brings forth death (1:15). (J. Adamson) The readers’ problem, from James’s point of view, is not *external* trials but *internal* temptations that will ultimately lead to death. (T. Cargal) Sin proceeds in temptation step by step, for it is inherent in sin to gradually advance to its own advantage. Five steps may be distinguished in James 1:14-15: Sin deceives, sin entices, sin conceives, sin develops, sin finishes. (J. Owen)

The likening of reversionism to labor pains forms an apt analogy because there must be pregnancy before there can be a birth. “Pregnancy” occurs when the believer is negative to doctrine. The agents of conception are reaction and distraction, emotional revolt, and the frantic search for happiness. In the beginning, sublimation for the reactor factors is intoxicating. The emotions are stimulated and the frustration, disillusion, self-pity, or boredom are forgotten for the moment. Forgotten also is Bible doctrine. Once you disregard doctrine, the emotional revolt is soon accompanied by pain. The “labor pains” are comparable to warning discipline ... Whatever reactor factors caused you to

become “pregnant” will in time develop into a lifestyle. If you originally succumbed to minor frustrations, you will ultimately emerge a neurotic person. If in the early stage of reversionism you began with indifference, by the time the offspring is “born” apathy will have reached mammoth proportions. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) When the sinful act is brought to perfection in all its consequences, in a series of results following on one another and bringing a man under bondage to his sin – being thus perfected, it brings forth eternal death. (J. Calvin)

Temptation urges over a long period of time, so that the mind becomes accustomed to the evil thought. At first temptation may shock the soul by its ugly appearance. The soul cries out, “Am I a dog to feel like this?” Unless this disgust deepens daily, the soul gradually grows accustomed to temptation’s familiarity and finally asks, “This is just a peccadillo, is it not?” Temptation takes the soul off guard and reaches its climax. Lust then entices and traps the soul. Sin is conceived. (J. Owen) These Christians who are alive are in danger of losing the vitality of their faith and experiencing death ... the deathly consequences of sin ... a dead or carnal spiritual life ... misery, spiritual impoverishment, and severe divine discipline. (J. Dillow) “When it is finished” is not when the course of a sinful life is completed, but when sin has reached its full development. (M. Vincent) The word *death* here primarily means *separation*. Therefore, for a believer it means that when sin is born in this life, when it becomes an action, his fellowship with God is broken. There is a separation. (J. McGee)

James 1:15 Then (Temporal Adv.) when the lust pattern (Subj. Nom.) becomes pregnant (συλλαμβάνω, AAPtc.NFS, Ingressive, Temporal; conceives), it gives birth to (τίκτω, PAI3S, Dramatic) sin (Acc. Dir. Obj.); and (continuative) this (Nom. Spec.) sin (Subj. Nom.), when it has been fully realized (ἀποτελέω, APPTc.NFS, Culminative, Temporal; completely accomplished, point of exhaustion, performed to the maximum, upper limit), brings forth (ἀποκυέω, PAI3S, Gnostic) spiritual death (Acc. Dir. Obj.; to God).

^{BGT} **James 1:15** εἶτα ἡ ἐπιθυμία συλλαβοῦσα τίκτει ἁμαρτίαν, ἡ δὲ ἁμαρτία ἀποτελεσθεῖσα ἀποκύει θάνατον.

^{VUL} **James 1:15** dein concupiscentia cum conceperit parit peccatum peccatum vero cum consummatum fuerit generat mortem

LWB **James 1:16** Stop being deceived, my beloved brethren [Jewish Christians].

^{KW} **James 1:16** Stop being deceived, my brethren, beloved ones.

^{KJV} **James 1:16** Do not err, my beloved brethren.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

The use of the imperative of prohibition means many of his readers were being deluded and it needed to stop immediately. Self-deception and self-justification were commonplace among them. Some of the beliefs and opinions about sin, lust patterns, and evil were wrong and needed

to be corrected. Blaming God for their failure to reject a sinful temptation was not acceptable. They needed to take responsibility for their own decisions and not blame them on God, the environment, or their fellow believers. They were in serious need of some *post-salvation epistemological rehabilitation*. James issues the prohibition, but then softens it by calling his Jewish brethren who are now in the royal family of God as Christians “beloved.”

RELEVANT OPINIONS

It could be translated, “Do not keep wandering in your own minds.” It is too bad you lost the way in this maze called life’s journey. (S. Zodiates) James has sought to make it clear to the readers that the source of their problems was *internal* desire, and not *external* tests and trials. They did not recognize that their *internal* desire for the trappings of power and prestige would lead to sin and ultimately death ... The turmoils of life do not derive from external forces, either demonic or divine. Rather, they are the ultimately deadly effects of internal human desire. The solution is indeed wisdom ... Wisdom appears to be a qualification of ability; it is able to save your souls from the death born of sin and desire. (T. Cargal) When we are in action, and what we are doing turns out well, we want people to appreciate the fact that we did it. Smiling we accept all the praise and the congratulations and consider it as our just due. If it should turn out that the thing we did was bad, we do not want to be told about it. We’d rather blame our mistakes on someone else. This is as natural as it is human. (M. Gutzke)

James 1:16 Stop (neg. particle) being deceived (πλανᾶω, PPImp.2P, Descriptive, Prohibition; deluded, led astray), my (Gen. Rel.) beloved brethren (Voc. Address; Jewish Christians in the royal family of God).

^{BGT} **James 1:16** Μὴ πλανᾶσθε, ἀδελφοί μου ἀγαπητοί.

^{VUL} **James 1:16** nolite itaque errare fratres mei dilectissimi

LWB James 1:17 Every good gift [gradual instilling of wisdom] and every completed present [crown of life] keeps on being from above, coming down from the ultimate source of the Father of lights [intellectual and spiritual light: Bible doctrine], from the immediate source of Whom there is not within Him a hint of variation [no change of course in His grace mechanics] nor an eclipse [of His glory].

^{KW} **James 1:17** Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the lights [the heavenly luminaries], with whom there can be no variableness nor shadow which is cast by the motion of turning [such as that cast by the movements of the heavenly bodies].

^{KJV} **James 1:17** 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.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Every intrinsically good and mature gift keeps on being from above (Durative Present tense). They come down from the ultimate source of the Father of lights (Pictorial Present tense), not from the prince of darkness (Satan). “Lights” is a figure for the Word of God, Bible doctrine. There is not one tiny hint of variation within Him. In other words, He is unchangeable. His policies and plans are set and final. He never changes course; grace mechanics is His constant *modus operandi*. There is no eclipse of His glory. Nothing can reduce His divine essence to a shadow; He cannot be concealed in any way.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

James emphasizes the divine origins of the gifts as opposed to human attainment. What these “gifts” may refer to is left intentionally vague so as to further emphasize that “every” good gift and “every” perfect present comes from God ... God does not vascillate as the astronomical bodies in their courses. (T. Cargal) The belief in God as Creator of lights, celestial and (probably) spiritual, is typical not of pagan astrological fatalism, nor of the Greek concept of the fatherhood of God, but of Jewish religion from its early stages. With it was associated the idea of God as dwelling in the heavens above, as was the notion of all blessings descending thence upon men, like the sun and the rain; but James emphasizes that, unlike the lights, God suffers no change ... *Light* in 1:17 looks back to *wisdom* in 1:5 and forward to *the Word of truth* in 1:18 and 1:21 ... The person who blames God for sending evil assaults might well expect “upbraiding.” (J. Adamson) The Father of lights is the source, not only of light itself, but of all light producers and light-bearers and light givers: the sun, moon, stars, planets, and all the fountains of light contained in earthly substances producing electricity, gas, and light of all kinds. (E. Bullinger)

The former (*gift*) expresses the simple act; the latter (*present*) implies the accompanying generosity of spirit ... We might take as examples of “dosis” here, the gradual instilling of wisdom, of “dorema,” the final crown of life ... “Lights” as intellectual and spiritual light is more connected with the general meaning of the passage ... We may take the word to express the contrast between the natural sun, which varies in position in the sky from hour to hour and month to month, and the eternal Source of all light. The sun, the source of light, though it may be hidden from us by the interposition of some other body, cannot itself be overshadowed ... The meaning of the passage will then be God is alike incapable of change in His own nature and incapable of being changed by the action of others. (J. Mayor) God never changes. His plan is perfect from its inception to its conclusion. That plan unfolds as a sequence of divine administrations called dispensations ... There is no variation or instability in Him, not even a “shadow of turning.” (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

James 1:17 **Every** (Nom. Measure) **good** (Descr. Nom.; of intrinsic value) **gift** (Subj. Nom.; of intrinsic value, gradual instilling of wisdom) **and** (connective) **every** (Nom. Measure) **completed** (Descr. Nom.; mature) **present** (Subj. Nom.; crown of life, edification complex of the soul) **keeps on being** (εἰμί, PAI3S, Durative) **from above** (adv.), **coming down** (καταβαίνω, PAPtc.NNS, Pictorial, Modal) **from the ultimate source of the Father** (Abl. Source) **of lights** (Adv. Gen. Ref.; Bible doctrine), **from the immediate source of**

Whom (Dat. Ref.) **there is not** (neg. adv.) **within Him** (ἔνιμι, ΠΑΙ3S, Gnostic) **a hint** (Pred. Nom.) **of variation** (Adv. Gen. Ref.; no change in course: grace mechanics) **nor** (disjunctive) **an eclipse** (Pred. Nom.; shadow, of His glory).

^{BGT} **James 1:17** πᾶσα δόσις ἀγαθὴ καὶ πᾶν δῶρημα τέλειον ἄνωθέν ἐστιν καταβαῖνον ἀπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς τῶν φώτων, παρ' ᾧ οὐκ ἔνι παραλλαγὴ ἢ τροπῆς ἀποσκίασμα.

^{VUL} **James 1:17** omne datum optimum et omne donum perfectum desursum est descendens a Patre luminum apud quem non est transmutatio nec vicissitudinis obumbratio

LWB James 1:18 According to His determinate will, He regenerated us [spiritual birth] by means of the Word of Truth [quickened by the Spirit through Gospel doctrine] for the purpose of being the first portion of His creatures [first generation of Christians].

^{KW} **James 1:18** In accordance with His deliberate purpose, He brought us into being by means of the Word of truth, resulting in our being a kind of first fruits of His creatures.

^{KJV} **James 1:18** Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Every believer was regenerated (Dramatic Aorist tense) according to the determinate will of God (Predicative Participle). Nothing was left to chance; the day of your regeneration was marked-out in eternity past. The aorist points to His will to regenerate you and me *in eternity past*. It was a “done deal” before we were born. “His will” silences all that philosophical nonsense about our will being the captain of our own salvation. Our regeneration was entirely up to His selective decree long before we had volition to say otherwise. All that fleshly talk about His will not violating our will is blasphemous, straight out of Satan’s mouth. The puny, sinful will of man never overpowers the divine will of God in anything. Our regeneration would be considered a “good of intrinsic value gift,” would it not? He accomplished our regeneration by means of the Word of Truth, the basic doctrines contained in the Gospel message. The ministry of the Holy Spirit and the Word of Truth combined to place us in union with Christ. The purpose for our regeneration was for them to become the first portion (fruits) of His creatures, i.e., the first generation of Christians. Also, “His determinate will” is another way of presenting the doctrines of election and predestination.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

So far from God tempting us to evil, His will is the cause of our regeneration ... As the seed of sin and death is contained in the unrestrained indulgence of man’s lust pattern, so the seed of righteousness and life in the Word of God. (J. Mayor) The stages of the metaphor are thus paralleled in the human act. We yield to lust; conceive (design) the sin, commit it; one sin leads to another, and more, and in time a sinful disposition is established that spells death to the soul. Briefly the sequence is: lust, sin, death. God, on the other hand, is the giver of life rather than death. He chose to give us

birth through the Word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all He created. By origin, nature, and destiny, these two “families” are set in sharpest contrast. (J. Adamson) It is not related to the “will” of man, by which it could be flawed because of the corruption of that “will.” Rather, new birth finds its source in *God’s will (of His own will)* and is effected by the word of truth. (Z. Hodges)

These Hebrew Christians of the dispersion were the precious “firstfruits” in the first century, of the entire world of the redeemed. (C. Jerdan) According to 1:16-18 the *content of faith* is the Word of truth, which by God’s grace we believe ... The Word of truth means the gospel ... James sees God as the compassionate Deity who has provided for our salvation. So we reject an interpretation of 1:18 as expounding a doctrine of people at large (for there were no Jews till Abraham), for such an argument is not properly Christian ... In James the Christian is brought into the same relationship as an heir of the Kingdom by the regenerating “Word of truth.” The Christian’s regeneration is the result of God’s gracious initiative. “Good” in the OT has a redemptive significance, is bound up with personal faith in God, and is used specifically of God’s gift of the Torah or Wisdom. (J. Adamson) As “Word” it reaches our heart, as “truth” it brings us reality, the whole reality, the actual facts about ourselves, about God, about Christ. (R. Lenski)

James 1:18 refers not to the original communication of spiritual life to the soul, but rather to our being enabled to act from that life and induced to love and obey God by means of the Word of Truth, which presupposes a principle of grace already planted in the heart. In His work of illumination, conviction, conversion, and sanctification, the Spirit uses the Word as the means thereto. (A. Pink) Not only do we *begin* to live by God’s Word, but we also *go on* living by God’s Word. Our physical life is created and upheld by the Word of God, and our spiritual life is quickened and sustained by the Word of God. (J. Piper) While the Holy Spirit is the Agent of regeneration, He employs the Word as the instrument. Although the Scriptures are charged with moral power, man’s understanding is so blind, and his affections so corrupt, that they could never by themselves impart life to any soul; but in the hands of the Spirit the doctrines of grace become “living and powerful.” (C. Jerdan)

The “Word of truth” is the whole system of Christian truth found within the confines of the Bible. It is the Word of God, the gospel of Jesus Christ ... It includes the whole of God’s verbal communications to man. (L. Strauss) It is the benefits of God’s will toward believers as contrasted with the effects of “their own desires” that is expressed in verse 18 ... God provides life (a good and perfect gift) rather than death. (T. Cargal) “Having willed it” refers to the counsel and purpose of God as distinguished from His consequent action ... Nothing can stand in the way of God’s will, try as hard as it may. (S. Zodhiates) In a daring appropriation of the language of sexual generation, which he used for desire and sin in verse 15, James says that God “gave birth” to humans “by the Word of truth.” (L. Johnson) James has mentioned “truth’s Word” in verse 18 with a purpose in mind. Being brought forth by it, we are ever to hear and to do this Word. (R. Lenski) Just as human birth requires two parents, so divine birth has two parents: the Word of God and the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God uses the Word of God to bring about the miracle of the new birth. (W. Wiersbe)

By insisting that saving faith is an act of the will, it demolishes the Biblical concept of faith as a reception of God’s truth. Biblical saving faith is a conviction or persuasion about what God says in

the gospel (Rom. 4:21). There is no place here for man's will – even as influenced by God's Spirit. God commands the light of His Word to shine into one's heart and, like blind men suddenly able to see, he perceives it as truth (2 Cor. 4:6). Once received as truth, that is, believed, there is no room for man's will to act. Faith and regeneration have already occurred. The result of this amazing act of God's will and Word is that we who are born again become a kind of firstfruits of His creatures. (Z. Hodges) The solution for temptation is to be found in a close relationship with the Father and a constant response to His Word. One must rest in the unchangeable Lord of light and rely on His life-giving Word of truth. (J. Blue) The Word, not the Wisdom, of God is for James the vital expression of His real purpose and life. (J. Moffatt)

James 1:18 According to His determinate will (βούλομαι, APPTc.NMS, Gnostic, Predicative, almost Causal, Deponent), He regenerated (ἀποκυέω, AAI3S, Dramatic; spiritual birth) us (Acc. Dir. Obj.) by means of the Word (Instr. Means) of truth (Gen. Appos.; doctrine) for the purpose of being (εἰμί, PAInf., Descriptive, Purpose) the first portion (Pred. Acc.; first fruits, first generation) of His (Poss. Gen.) creatures (Adv. Gen. Ref.; Christians).

^{BGT} **James 1:18** βουληθεῖς ἀπεκύησεν ἡμᾶς λόγῳ ἀληθείας εἰς τὸ εἶναι ἡμᾶς ἀπαρχὴν τινα τῶν αὐτοῦ κτισμάτων.

^{VUL} **James 1:18** voluntarie genuit nos verbo veritatis ut simus initium aliquod creaturae eius

LWB James 1:19 Understand *these* [rules for Bible study], my beloved brethren [Jewish Christians]: Every person must keep on being swift for the purpose of hearing [concentrate on doctrinal teaching with eagerness], slow when speaking [shut up in class and don't interrupt the teacher], slow to react in anger [mental attitude sins destroy spiritual momentum],

^{KW} **James 1:19** You know, my brethren, beloved ones, [the aforementioned facts]. Now, let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow with respect to anger,

^{KJV} **James 1:19** Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

James needs to set some ground rules for Bible study, whether they meet in churches, homes, tents or open air meetings. Some of them may already be aware of these rules, but it doesn't hurt to repeat them to protect the privacy of others. His readers need to understand (Intensive Perfect tense) some basic precepts to ensure that everyone has a chance to learn doctrine in a structured, orderly environment. Before he lays down these ground rules, he addresses them as "beloved brethren" again, to communicate to them his care and concern for their wellbeing. Every person must keep on being quick (Iterative Present tense) when it comes to listening to the teaching of the Word (Purpose Infinitive). They need to get to class on time and be eager to learn. They need to be slow and cautious when speaking during class (Infinitive of Contemporaneous Time).

That applies even if they are asking questions for clarification. The best rule is to shut up and save your questions and comments for the appropriate forum. The best way to do this in today's Bible classes is by writing your questions down and submitting them to the pastor later. They must also be slow {Latin: tardy) to react in anger, whether it is against another person or something that has been said by the pastor or teacher. Mental attitude sins destroy spiritual momentum. The idea behind these rules is to protect the privacy of everyone attending class and to give everyone the opportunity to learn in peace and quiet. They should also show respect towards the teacher by not interrupting his message. Put simply: "Quick to learn, slow to speak, slow to get angry."

RELEVANT OPINIONS

It is true that you know a great deal more than the world does, but, as you have just been born into the family of God, you are only a baby. Within the family of God you have a great deal to learn, and the Lord has given you two ears to help in acquiring this spiritual knowledge through the hearing of the Word of truth ... The more of the Word of truth you hear and absorb, the less irritable you are; and the less you say, the less irritable you make others who have to listen to you. (S. Zodiates) Doubtless we are to understand him in the text as deprecating rash and hasty speech on religious subjects ... A grave reverence, modesty and humility, careful previous consideration of the subject on which he has to speak, these seem to be the qualities James requires in a teacher, in contrast with the flippant familiarity, the readiness to pour out prayers or exhortations on the shortest notice, which are often found so attractive ... Guard against the so much loved pious conversations, which are often so unprofitable, often no more than mere idle babbling. Do not *talk away* from your hearts the power and blessing of saving truth. (J. Major) The "Word" in 1:19-27 seems clearly to have the same meaning as in verse 18, the message of God's truth as embodied in the person and work of Jesus Christ ... It must be dominant in nurturing, guiding, and disciplining the life that God implanted by means of the Word. (D. Hiebert)

Anger in this case is an abiding and settled habit of mind with the purpose of revenge. (S. Zodiates) This is not to be understood as enjoining on Christians the habit of Stoic apathy, any more than 'slow to speak' is to be understood as enjoining a Trappist silence ... He is speaking of the way in which men should receive the Word. (J. Mayor) I earlier proposed that the similarities between James 1:5-8 and 17-19 suggested that "wisdom" and the "Word of truth" might be related terms, and further that both were also to be identified with "the implanted Word which is able to save your souls" in 1:21. (T. Cargal) "Swift to hear" refers to the acquisition of religious knowledge, whether in connection with reading or hearing. We should be careful as to the entire matter of our reading, making the staple of it not fugitive literature, far less frivolous books, but such as are solid and improving ... We should embrace every opportunity of hearing in the sanctuary, and be attentive and teachable, and follow up our hearing with reflection and obedience. (C. Jerdan) Each believer should be quick to hear the Word of God, the message of the preacher or teacher. Each should refrain from hurried proclamation and swift retort, and from anger. (R. Ward) Human anger is an instinctive reaction against that which is evil and injurious. The feeling of anger is not always wrong (Mark 3:5). The individual who is never aroused and deeply stirred at evil is gravely deficient in moral character. (D. Hiebert)

To get profit from local teachers and traveling missionaries they must be ready to hear, slow to obtrude themselves, and slow to lose their temper when what is said does not agree with their prejudices. (E. Sugden) The meaning is, be eager to listen, not eager to discourse: the former may lead to implanting or strengthening the new life, the latter to wrath and suddenness of temper, so often found in the wake of swift rejoinder and ready chattering. (H. Alford) The Christian man is urged, in such circumstances, to be ready to listen to arguments and explanations put forward by others, and himself to speak only after he has considered all that others wish to say, and then to speak without annoyance or resentment, since a discussion conducted with hot feelings, even if we imagine they are in the service of God, are not likely to discern His will or further His purpose. (C. Mitton) The reception of the Word demands a readiness to listen. Reluctance at this point will block the acceptance of truth. It also demands restrained speech. Ceaseless talkers may easily degenerate into fierce controversialists. And a fiercely argumentative attitude is not conducive to the humble reception of truth. (F. Gaebelein) James would remind them that their knowledge of the new birth through the Word must lead to a new life directed by the Word. (D. Hiebert)

Since the recipients of the epistle are described as recently converted to the Christian faith, it would be natural for the author to refer to their newly gained knowledge of the gospel. The author recognizes that such knowledge exists, whether it is to be regarded as common Christian knowledge or as a special wisdom, as “gnosis” reserved for the initiated. In either case he stresses that this knowledge must not be misused, but that all should train themselves to listen, rather than to talk ... Apparently, many of the recipients were enthusiastic preachers, with the result that there was a great deal of talking and witnessing on the part of the laymen of the church. The author admonishes these talkative laymen rather to listen humbly when the Word is being proclaimed by its rightful ministers. The worst is, however, that these talkative individuals excite themselves to anger. Even in our day this excitement to anger is noticeable among demagogues who thunder against existing conditions and against their fellow man. (B. Reicke) When we experience stress we urgently need to be attentive to the wisdom that God offers us through His Word or through the counsel of others based on that Word. (Z. Hodges) Human wrath does not further spiritual ends when it appears in the garb of religious zeal. (D. Hiebert)

James 1:19 **Understand** (οἶδα, Perf.AImp.2P, Intensive, Command) **these** (ellipsis; rules for Bible study), **my** (Gen. Rel.) **beloved brethren** (Voc. Address): **Every** (Nom. Measure) **person** (Subj. Nom.) **must keep on being** (εἰμί, PAImp.3S, Iterative, Dependent Clause) **swift** (Pred. Nom.; quick) **for the purpose of hearing** (ἀκούω, AAInf., Constative, Purpose; concentrate on doctrine in church), **slow** (Pred. Nom.) **when beginning to speak** (λαλέω, AAInf., Constative, Contemporaneous Time; shut up when in church), **slow** (Pred. Nom.) **to react in anger** (Adv. Acc.; mental attitude sins destroy spiritual momentum),

^{BGT} **James 1:19** Ἴστε, ἀδελφοί μου ἀγαπητοί· ἔστω δὲ πᾶς ἄνθρωπος ταχὺς εἰς τὸ ἀκοῦσαι, βραδὺς εἰς τὸ λαλῆσαι, βραδὺς εἰς ὀργήν·

^{VUL} **James 1:19** scitis fratres mei dilecti sit autem omnis homo velox ad audiendum tardus autem ad loquendum et tardus ad iram

LWB **James 1:20** For the anger of man [mental attitude sin] does not produce the righteousness of God [fails divine standards].

^{KW} **James 1:20** For a man's wrath does not bring about that which is righteous in God's sight.

^{KJV} **James 1:20** For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Anger is a mental attitude sin. You cannot be angry and be in fellowship with the Lord, with the exception of *righteous indignation* against sin. If you are angry at someone, you are not producing divine good (Gnomic Present tense). Anything you do when you are out of fellowship fails the norms and standards of God. The righteousness of God is a high standard to meet; the justice of God metes out discipline on the believer who remains angry for a protracted period of time. The *righteousness of God* is a way of life for believers and a divine attribute (and standard of justice) for God. The only way to produce fruit that meets that standard (righteousness) is by being filled with the Spirit. When you are angry, the filling of the Spirit ceases and you enter Satan's cosmic system. The focus on anger points to internal sin which only God can see, as opposed to external sin which man is always observing and judging people by.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

There are many born-again Christians who have often left the house of God really angry. They may turn to their fellow Christians and say, "That preacher made me terribly mad today. I am not going to come to hear him again." But all that faithful preacher did was to preach the Word of truth. If it made him angry, that anger is a wicked anger, declares the Word of God ... Many times, motivated by our natural impulses, we become angry; we speak and act angrily. James wants us to know that in our anger we can never render justice in any situation as God would have rendered it. Man's anger is contrary to the character of God. In order for that divine character to be fully formed in us, we must not have any of our own anger ... Perfection and holiness at their highest have a greater right to condemn sin than we who possess little of these divine qualities. God can be angry and not sin, but for us redeemed sinners, who are still capable of sin, *sometimes the thread of separation between righteous indignation and sin is very thin indeed.* (S. Zodhiates) The righteousness of God or God's righteousness flows from God into our lives if we genuinely accept the "implanted Word" in the next verse. (J. Adamson)

Sanctification involves the concentration of thought, of interest, of heart, mind, will, and purpose upon the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus and the engagement of our whole being with those means which God has instituted for the attainment of that destination. (J. Murray) What we need is to get participation, as members of the Kingdom, in the righteousness He alone gives by His Spirit to those who have genuinely accepted Him. (J. Adamson) An angry attitude is not the

atmosphere in which righteousness flourishes. (F. Gaebelein) When a believer experiences stress, he urgently needs to be attentive to the wisdom that God offers through His Word or through the counsel of others based on that Word. But typically people are more eager to talk in times of stress than to listen. Hence the second admonition is to be slow to speak. Eagerness to pour out one's thoughts and feelings under trial needs to be restrained ... The subject of the epistle of James is testing: its theme is the proper behavior under testing. Such behavior consists of eagerness to listen, reluctance to talk, and restraint in the expression of anger. (Z. Hodges)

Now just a few words about the righteous indignation or the anger which is permissible: This anger does not spring from the Adamic nature in man, but from the divine nature which has begun its existence in man at the moment he has received the Lord Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul goes so far as to command us to be thus righteously indignant and angry when he says in Ephesians 4:26, "Be ye angry, and sin not." Such anger is also a characteristic of God. Both the Old and New Testaments are full of expressions which speak of the anger or wrath of God, which wrath may be defined generally as an energy of the divine nature called forth by the presence of daring or presumptuous transgression, and expressing the reaction of divine holiness against it in the punishment of destruction of the transgressor ... Surely as we watch the sin all around us we cannot possibly stand and ignore it. It is our duty to condemn it, and to do it with righteous indignation. (S. Zodiates) A double activity is required on their part. Negatively, they must remove the hindering sins; and positively, they must welcome the Word and permit it to carry out its saving work in their lives. (D. Hiebert)

James 1:20 For (explanatory) the anger (Subj. Nom.; wrath) of man (Poss. Gen.) does not (neg. Adv.) produce (ἐργάζομαι, PMI3S, Gnostic, Deponent) the righteousness (Acc. Dir. Obj.; divine good) of God (Descr. Gen.).

^{BGT} **James 1:20** ὀργὴ γὰρ ἀνδρὸς δικαιοσύνην θεοῦ οὐκ ἐργάζεται.

^{VUL} **James 1:20** ira enim viri iustitiam Dei non operatur

LWB James 1:21 Because of this [sin short-circuiting the spiritual life], after removing every category of pollution [cosmic 1 activity: arrogance complex of sins] and the overflow of wickedness [Cosmic 2 activity: hatred complex of sins], start welcoming in the sphere of genuine humility the implanted Word [Bible doctrine in the soul], which keeps on being able to deliver your souls [sanctification salvation].

^{KW} **James 1:21** Wherefore, having put away every moral uncleanness and vulgarity and wickedness which is abounding, in meekness receive the implanted Word which is able to save your souls.

^{KJV} **James 1:21** Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Anger and other mental attitude sins short-circuit the spiritual life. Therefore, James commands his readers to start welcoming (Ingressive Aorist tense) the implanted Word with genuine humility (Imperative mood). The Word of God is to be implanted in our frontal lobes. This is a command to embrace the Word of God because it is the only thing with the inherent power to deliver your soul from sin (Iterative Present tense). This deliverance is sanctification salvation, not justification salvation. It is entirely experiential, not positional. James is writing to believers, not unbelievers. But there are two prerequisites before listening to the Word of God. The first is to remove every category of pollution from your soul (Culminative Aorist tense); the second is to remove the abundance of wickedness from your soul. Since James tells them to “remove” pollution like dirty clothes, you would think he would then tell them to “put on” some clean clothes. But his answer to victory is not “putting on clean clothes” but is instead welcoming the Word of God into their souls.

Pollution comes from the arrogance complex of sins, known as Cosmic 1; wickedness comes from the hatred complex of sins, known as Cosmic 2. Both power spheres are part of Satan’s cosmic system, his labyrinth of sins designed to kidnap and enslave the unwary believer. There is a category of sin – whether mental, verbal, or overt – for every believer to choose from in his cosmic system. “Different strokes for different folks,” is Satan’s motto. The only way to remove these sins is by acknowledging them to God as commanded in 1 John 1:9. Confession of sin is a parallel to “removing” or “laying them aside.” The believer who obediently acknowledges his sin to God receives the filling of the Spirit that he lost when previously exiting the divine system and entering the cosmic system. But there is a counter-balance to the effects of sin on the soul which must not be forgotten. An active program of *post-salvation epistemological rehabilitation* is in order. They need to be aggressive in their intake, metabolization and application of Bible doctrine.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Sin contains within it an infinite evil, for it is committed against a Being of infinite glory, unto whom we are under infinite obligations. Its odiousness appears in the fearful description in James 1:21, which is an allusion to the brook Kidron, into which the garbage of the temple sacrifices and other vile things were cast. (A. Pink) These are ‘beloved brethren’ who have been “brought forth by the Word of truth” in whom the Word has been “implanted.” They are saved people in the sense of final deliverance from hell. However, these saved people need “salvation.” This salvation is the salvation contextually defined as a deliverance from the death-producing effects of sin and a lack of good works in their lives ... The Word of God is capable of saving them if they will act on it. The word seems to take a meaning very close to sanctification. (J. Dillow) That the Word is described as “planted in you” suggests that the readers were believers who already possessed the truth. The phrase “which can save you” simply describes the truth as saving truth. James is not calling for an initial acceptance of that message, but for a full and intelligent appropriation of the truth as the Christian grows in spiritual understanding. (F. Gaebelin) To take these words as a reference to eternal salvation is to commit an obvious error of eisegesis – reading one’s own ideas into the text. (Z. Hodges)

It is the wrath, and the anger, and the hot temper of man which cannot work the righteousness of God. Now make no mistake; he does not call it by a mild name such as “human weakness” or a “psychological complex.” It is sin, a filthy and wicked sin at that ... When you are self-satisfied, fully believing in your sinless perfection in spite of the anger which exists in your heart, it is difficult to accept the Word of God for your own heart and life. You may like to hear it, but you apply it to someone else ... What this new acceptance actually resembles is the watering and the fertilizing of the ground on which the seed has been planted. How we need to be under the constant teaching and acceptance of this Word, this Christ who must grow to His full stature within us. The worst thing that can happen to a Christian is to allow the Word of truth to remain in the seed stage in his life. God demands growth. Yet how many of us are satisfied to remain at the seed stage. (S. Zodhiates) “Meekness” means a humble readiness to be taught the Word of God without flaring up against the teacher. (J. Adamson) The salvation of the soul has to do with feelings and experience, not, as is usually supposed, with ultimate destiny. (A. Knoch) Obviously James did not believe in a salvation by works, but a salvation by the Word. (H. Kent)

James’s point seems to be that believers must receive the Word and internalize it ... as a corrective to the propensity for evil that is typical of the human nature rather than an affirmation of its original goodness ... Since the threat of death is from an internal source, this “Word of truth” is perceived as an “implanted Word” capable of “saving their souls” by transforming their internal nature. (T. Cargal) Ultimately the key both to responding to trials and resisting temptation is to be found in one’s reaction to God’s Word. Receptivity to the Word, responsiveness to the Word, and resignation to the Word are essential to spiritual growth. One must accept God’s Word, act on it, and abide by it ... The Word is to be ingrown or inborn, rooted in the fertile soil of the soul. It is that Word of God which can save. (R. Blue) The implanted Word is beyond doubt the same as the Word of truth, the gospel in its fullness ... Implanted means the Word whose attribute is awaiting your reception of it to spring up and take up your being into it and make you new plants. (H. Alford) These Christians should receive the instruction of God’s Word, recognizing it as the very thing that had been *implanted* in them by the Gospel. (Z. Hodges) The readers had to go beyond a passive acquiescence to the statements of the Word and, by a definite volitional response, welcome it as an active working force in their lives. (D. Hiebert)

When doctrine has been transferred by faith to the human spirit, you begin to be a “doer” of the Word; you are in the area of divine production. Through *epignosis*, you possess what James calls “the engrafted Word.” In the Greek, this word actually means “impregnated.” In other words, *gnosis* cannot produce; “pregnancy” can result only from *epignosis*. The human spirit is comparable to the womb, and cohabitation is the illustration. Once doctrine is in the human spirit, conception takes place; and when pregnancy occurs, there are “children.” (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) The readers are Christians, the Word has been implanted in them; James is not telling them to accept it for the first time. The acceptance referred to by this aorist imperative of actuality is made clear by verse 22: a full, actual, complete acceptance which does not only hear the Word and formally accept it but actually does the Word. To be sure, the readers are also to hear it again and again. In this epistle James himself continues this implanting. What he means is that they shall completely accept the Word which they have already heard and will continue to hear. (R. Lenski) The ground must be ridded of all that pollutes and chokes it, before the seed can sink in and come to maturity. (H. Alford) This is but one mention of the Bible as the Word of God. (J. Walvoord)

When we say that the “Word of truth” is the gospel, we mean, not the mere narrative of Jesus’ sayings and doings, but the statement of the truth of God, of the truth in and flowing from God, the truth that makes us free. (J. Adamson) The statement “the engrafted Word” suggests a process of propagation. Only as the Word is really implanted does it become united with the heart. Unless the truth becomes rooted in us through faith, the fruit of righteousness cannot be brought forth. As the Word of God roots itself more deeply in us, the new life develops and the old life dies ... The salvation set forth in verse 21 is for the saved. Yes, the saved need to be saved. (L. Strauss) It is sobering to realize that no fruit is borne when the Word is not received by faith. For the Word to be grafted into the heart, there must be an expression of faith by the person. (T. Epp) The Christian must hear the Word and also comprehend its immediate and consequential meaning ... The Word is not planted in our hearts to do some active magic in a passive, inactive mind. We do not become part of the *logos*: the *logos* may become a part of us, but we remain morally responsible creatures, even in the Court of Mercy. (J. Adamson) “Putting aside all filthiness” is a different facet of the doctrine of rebound. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

James 1:21 Because of this (inferential; for this reason), after removing (ἀποτίθημι, AMPtc.NMP, Culminative, Temporal; laying aside) every category of (Acc. Measure) pollution (Acc. Dir. Obj.; filthiness, Cosmic I activity) and (connective) the overflow (Acc. Measure; abundance) of wickedness (Adv. Gen. Ref.; evil, Cosmic II activity), start welcoming (δέχομαι, AMImp.2P, Ingressive, Command, Deponent; receiving with an intimate embrace) in the sphere of genuine humility (Loc. Sph., Instr. Manner) the implanted (Adv. Acc.; impregnated, rooted) Word (Acc. Dir. Obj.; Bible doctrine), which (Acc. Appos.) keeps on being able (δύναμαι, PMPTc.AMS, Iterative, Attributive, Deponent; has the power) to deliver (σώζω, AAInf., Culminative, Result; sanctification salvation) your (Poss. Gen.) souls (Acc. Dir. Obj.; lives).

^{BGT} **James 1:21** διὸ ἀποθέμενοι πᾶσαν ῥυπαρίαν καὶ περισσεΐαν κακίας ἐν πραύτητι, δέξασθε τὸν ἔμφυτον λόγον τὸν δυνάμενον σῶσαι τὰς ψυχὰς ὑμῶν.

^{VUL} **James 1:21** propter quod abicientes omnem inmunditiam et abundantiam malitiae in mansuetudine suscipite insitum verbum quod potest salvare animas vestras

LWB **James 1:22** Moreover, keep on being doers of the Word [metabolized doctrine in the *kardia* applied to daily life] and not hearers only [unmetabolized doctrine stuck in the *nous* or forgotten], deceiving yourselves [malfunction in the *grace apparatus for perception*];

^{KW} **James 1:22** Moreover, keep on becoming doers of the Word and stop being hearers only reasoning yourselves into a false premise and deceiving yourselves,

^{KJV} **James 1:22** But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

James begins his 2nd discursive unit here. More nonsense has come from a misunderstanding of this verse than any other in James that comes to mind. Exegetes have wrestled with it for hundreds of years. The key is breaking it down without any pieces being left out, or the doctrine of the *grace apparatus for perception* will not be seen. Keep on being doers of the Word (Iterative Present tense). James commands this (Imperative mood), so it must be important. A “doer of the Word” is a person who takes the metabolized Bible doctrine in his soul and applies it to daily life. This “doing” can be internal or external. If you are able to apply doctrinal principles and avoid a mental attitude sin, that is “doing” the Word. “Doing” the Word means applying doctrinal principles; the application of Bible doctrine does not have to be “seen” by others. The vast majority of doctrinal application is by thinking. Can you see another person thinking? Of course not. So you cannot always see a fellow believer “doing” the Word. The most profound error I have seen is by those who divorce the word “doers” from “the Word.” They promptly go about “doing” things while completely ignoring “the Word.” Without exception, these individuals all end up in one stage of reversionism or another.

James does not want his readers to be “hearers only.” Notice what James does not say: He does not say, “Do not be a hearer (Latin: audio) of the Word.” The qualifying adverb “only” is crucial to James’s command. All believers need to be hearers of the Word; it’s just that they aren’t supposed to be hearers *only*. A “hearer of the Word” is a believer who listens to the teaching of Bible doctrine. James does not say that the “hearer of the Word” understands anything he heard (receptive comprehension). He does not say he made it his own. The person might have heard the Word and totally rejected it. What I’m trying to get at is that there is nothing in the word “hearer” that points to *agreement* or *understanding*. I learned the Pledge of Allegiance years before I really understood what it meant. I recited it every morning in school with the other children in my class to start the day. But I did not understand the important concepts behind it, so I was unable to apply it to daily life. It was years before I metabolized it, understood it, agreed with it, and was able to apply it when picking up my military draft card at City Hall and getting a physical examination. My elementary experience with the Pledge of Allegiance is how the majority of Christians “hear” the Word only.

There is a stage in the *grace apparatus for perception* (GAP) between hearing and doing, between listening to the Word of God and being able to apply its precepts and principles to daily life. When doctrine is taught by a pastor or teacher and a believer listens to it, it enters the left lobe of his soul called the *nous*. Doctrine in the *nous* has not been understood, agreed with, or metabolized. It is just raw material waiting to be assimilated. When the believer thinks about what he heard, understands it, and agrees with it, it becomes metabolized. This doctrine now belongs to him and is moved to the right lobe of his soul called the *kardia*. It is now doctrine that is waiting to be applied to daily life. It is in temporary storage, so to speak. When the believer meets with an opportunity to apply that doctrine, he becomes a “doer of the Word” by applying what he has learned to a pressure test. The metabolization process is accomplished by the power of the Holy Spirit. The filling of the Spirit is required to move doctrine from the *nous* to the *kardia*. The test can be internal or external.

If a believer is not filled with the Spirit, the doctrine he hears may enter the left lobe of his soul, but it goes nowhere. It is quickly forgotten. He may be able to quote it chapter and verse, but it was never metabolized and cannot be applied properly to daily life. This is what James is warning about in the 2nd half of this verse. He does not want his readers to listen to Bible teaching - perhaps even memorize it - and due to sin, never metabolize it and apply it to daily life. Have you ever met a believer who has memorized a lot of verses, but you can tell he doesn't know what he is talking about when he recites them? I've met a lot of "chapter-and-verse believers" who can recite entire portions of the Bible, but who are clueless about what the words mean when you ask them questions. These believers are hearers only, not doers. They are deceiving themselves (Durative Present tense) because they think they are making spiritual progress due to memorization. There is a malfunction of GAP in their soul because they are rarely (if ever) filled with the Spirit. A believer must first listen to (hear) the Word of God and then metabolize it in the filling of the Spirit if he is ever going to apply (do) it during pressure testing, whether inwardly (temptations) or outwardly (trials).

If you think you can be a doer of the Word without first saturating your soul with Bible doctrine, you are deceiving yourself. Your works are dead; they will be heaped into a great bonfire as wood, hay and stubble to be burned at the Judgment Seat of Christ. I've met hundreds of believers who have no doctrine in their soul, but who are "working their buns off" doing thing around the church, handing out tracts on streetcorners, etc. They have deceived themselves into thinking that God looks favorably on their works (doing), because there is no "hearing of the Word" behind them. These believers are reversionists living in Satan's cosmic system. Some of them sit under a reversionistic pastor every Sunday who cares nothing about the Word, but is only interested in the power he wields by guilt-tripping his parishioners into "doing things for God." He like to see people busy, doing things he can observe. He wants to "glory in *their* flesh." His message to them is perform, perform, perform; but the kind of performance he is demanding has no "hearing of the Word" or filling of the Spirit behind it.

There is no shortage of believers with arms and legs to do things; but there is a shortage of believers who have souls saturated with Bible doctrine who can endure all kinds of pressure tests and come out victorious. Therefore, my advice does not follow the traditional route of "get out there and witness" or "stand up and give your testimony this morning." My advice is: Sit down and shut up. Listen to your pastor teach the Word of God. Read a commentary (or fifty) on the book he is currently studying. Outline some chapters; send him some questions in writing on topics of interest. If you are consistent in this for awhile, you will know on the inside by the filling of the Spirit when it is time to get up and start exercising your spiritual gifts. You will know when you are ready to witness or help others. But first, it is your job to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, not to be a whipping boy for some arrogant pastor in approbation lust who wants to "see you perform" and "inspect your fruit." Get some doctrinal resources in your soul, and then you'll be ready to "perform."

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Initially Bible doctrine, communicated by a pastor-teacher, is made understandable to the human spirit by the Holy Spirit. This *pneumatikos* is automatically transferred from the human spirit to the

left (perceptive) lobe of the soul by the Holy Spirit as objective comprehension of doctrine. Called the *nous*, and generally translated “mind,” the left lobe of the staging area of the soul, stores the academic knowledge, *gnosis*. At this point, according to James 1:22, you are only a “hearer” of the Word ... As long as *gnosis* remains in the staging area of the *nous* as academic information, it does not contribute to your spiritual growth and cannot be applied to your experience. For momentum in the spiritual life, positive volition must be exercised. Doctrine must be believed. Academic knowledge must be converted into spiritual knowledge. How? When the believer exercises faith-ception by believing in doctrine, *gnosis* is converted by the Holy Spirit into *epignosis* and doctrine is transferred from the left lobe into the right lobe of the soul. The right lobe is designated by the Greek word *kardia*, translated “heart.” I call this process spiritual metabolism. Only metabolized doctrine that resides in the right lobe of the soul produces spiritual growth. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

While the meaning of *epignosis* in classical Greek is “full knowledge,” in the koine of the NT the word actually becomes a descriptive technical designation for metabolized doctrine residing in the right lobe ... This “over or beyond knowledge” is Bible doctrine that forms divine viewpoint thinking, advances the spiritual life, and becomes wisdom for the believer. Only *epignosis* doctrine has spiritual value and can be applied to every circumstance of life. When *epignosis* enters the stream of consciousness in your right lobe, the application of doctrine can begin. Metabolized doctrine first enters your frame of reference and memory center, the initial staging areas for retaining and storing information. From there it flows into the vocabulary storage compartment where concepts are organized and accumulated. From this doctrine, norms and standards are created in your conscience. Now, you can grow and develop momentum in your spiritual life and manifest wisdom – the application of divine viewpoint to experience. These divine standards fulfill the principle of “taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.” Now you are a “doer of the Word.” (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

James understands “works” to be “doing the implanted Word,” an implication that will be borne out by the exegesis ... The theme of this unit can be stated as “works” of the “Word.” It is only when “faith” is joined with “works” arising from “wisdom” received from the “implanted Word” that there can be any “benefit” in terms of salvation for the believer ... The “Word” has little impact upon those who “only hear” and do not “continue” in it by “doing the Word.” (T. Cargal) Now he calls our attention to a very great danger which exists in swift hearing. Sometimes when we hear a thing very swiftly, it hardly has time to sink in and take effect. Never in the history of the United States have there been so many people attending church, “the church of their choice,” as today. These crowds are mixed: those who hear but let the Word go in one ear and come out the other, and those who hear and do. Those who *do* are those who let the Word come through both ears and descend into the heart, affecting their whole life and behavior. (S. Zodhiates) “Deceiving yourself” means to lead yourself away by false reasoning. (J. Major) The highest praise that can be bestowed upon a Christian minister is not to tell him how much his preaching is enjoyed, but to let him see how well it is being translated into the life on the other days of the week. (E. Gibson)

At 1:22 James turns from the “mind to hear” to the “mind to do.” We must first have the incarnate Word of truth in us if He is going to be outwardly manifested. This lack of knowledge ultimately becomes an improper knowledge which deceives the believer. (T. Cargal) According to 1:22-24, the truth cannot save us if we do not keep it in mind and allow it to guide us in our actions, any more

than food will feed us if we do not remember to eat it. (J. Adamson) There are four kinds of hearers of the Word: Those like a *sponge*, that suck up good and bad together and let both run out immediately; those like a *sandglass*, that let what enters in at one ear pass out of the other, hearing without thinking; those like a *strainer*, letting go the good, and retaining the bad; and those like a *sieve*, letting go the chaff, and retaining the good grain. (S. Zodiates) James encourages believers to grow up, to be doers of the Word and not merely hearers who delude themselves. In other words, intangible advantages mixed with positive volition produce tangible results. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) One who isn't interested in the Word of God or doesn't stay near it – if he is a child of God – is going to get into trouble. (J. McGee) The analogy today would be the Christian who is fascinated by the exposition and study of God's Word but who has assimilated very little of it into his everyday life. (Z. Hodges)

Gnosis can exist to a large extent in any believer without spiritual benefit, since it has no application of divine viewpoint to this life. To be beneficial, doctrine must be transferred to the human spirit and to the right lobe. Some believers, who appear to be great Christians and who seem to know a great deal of doctrine, are in reality advancing very little in their spiritual status ... In His omniscience the Lord Jesus Christ knew that the Laodiceans were not producing divine good according to James 1:22-25 where believers are mandated to be “doers of the Word” and “not merely hearers.” A believer who is a “hearer” only is either a reversionist or an ignorant believer who cannot apply doctrine and cannot produce divine good. A *doer* is one who, under the consistent learning from GAP and application of doctrine, advances to supergrace, and produces divine good. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) “Hearers” means those who listen attentively, those who have a real interest in what they are listening to. They are those who endeavor consciously by listening to increase their knowledge and thus acquire some satisfaction. (S. Zodiates) We are not merely to “do,” but be “doers,” systematically and continually, as your regular business. (R. Jamieson)

To attend so such instruction as *merely hearers* was not enough, as any teacher knows: *the lesson must enter into the hearer's heart and mind*. The implanted Word can only flourish in the soil of true obedience. (J. Adamson) I highlighted Adamson's phrase: “The lesson must enter into the hearer's heart and mind,” because *heart and mind* is the *kardia* or right lobe of the soul. The first half of the thrust of this message is that doctrine must be transferred from the left lobe as raw material to the right lobe as metabolized truth ready for application or the grace perception process has indeed short-circuited. The second half of this message is that this metabolized doctrine in the right lobe of the soul must be applied to daily life in some way, either internally (thoughts) or externally (speech or activity). (LWB) James warns his readers to pay attention to the Word of God. If they neglect to hear God's message, they deceive themselves. They merely listen to the preaching of the gospel and at the conclusion of the worship service walk away as if the Word of God has nothing to say to them. (S. Kistemaker) If we are motivated by an inner desire and are enjoying Spirit-filled living, you and I can go out on the golf course and enjoy playing golf and then enjoy Bible study equally as well – in fact, it will be thrilling to us. (J. McGee)

We will bother to learn sound principles of inductive study so that we can dig deeply into the Word ... We can learn to be regular and habitual, rather than occasional, in our Bible study ... We can study it so as to know its content and to remember it in our daily lives ... We will take Scripture into our thinking, submit our minds to it and formulate our beliefs by what it says. We will make

decisions by Scripture – about how we will respond to trials, what goals we will pursue, how we will spend time and money, how we will use our tongues. We will dare to live by the Word of God. (G. Stulac) That is what is meant by “doing” the Word! (LWB) About what are those who fail to do the Word deluded or deceived? They are deceived by their empty profession of faith, by going through the motions of religion like church attendance, baptism, and superficial good deeds. They do religious activities but fail to experience a transformation of the inner person leading to a revolution in moral behavior. (W. Baker) Note the three stages: they should be hearers of the Word; they should receive it; and they should be doers of the Word. (R. Ward) The doer is he who from the heart embraces God’s Word and testifies by his life that he really believes ... The import of the whole is, that we ought to labour that the Word of the Lord should strike roots in us, so that it may afterwards fructify. (J. Calvin)

I recall a young man who was, by God’s grace, taking some very large steps to walk more thoroughly according to Scripture. His humble acceptance of God’s Word was admirable to me; his resulting spiritual growth was exhilarating to him. One day in my office he said in amazement, “I am internalizing God’s Word so much more now; it makes me wonder how I could have called myself a Christian before. It’s like it was all just head knowledge before.” It is that internalizing of Scripture that James describes now ... James’s analogy places emphasis on the usefulness of God’s Word for our salvation in daily living. Unlike our useless reflection in a mirror, the Word of God is to be taken into our daily decisions and actions. For the analogy of the mirror to be appropriate, James must have believed in both the perspicuity and the applicability of Scripture. (G. Stulac) That is what we call converting *gnosis* to *epignosis* in Greek class, converting the raw material of doctrine from the written page or the message heard into metabolized doctrine in the soul ready for application in daily life. (LWB) Receiving the Word is not the believer’s whole duty. Active obedience must follow. James wants his readers to be individuals who habitually submit to and comply with the requirements of the Word of God. (D. Hiebert)

After World War II the Western world came out of the bomb shelters and went to church – prompted by fear of the bombs but not by fear of God. Church membership and attendance soared to new heights. I am very thankful I had a ministry during that period. I had a full church, and it was to me a glorious, wonderful time for ministry. But at that same time, lawlessness and immorality increased dramatically. Drunkenness, divorce, and juvenile delinquency escalated. And in the lives of Christians there was a total breakdown in separation from the things of the world. What had happened? The church had been getting out the Word of God in the passive voice; it had been giving it out in the subjunctive mood, but God had originally given it in the imperative mood. (J. McGee) Some people, believing Scripture to be a list of performance demands, use it to see how to perform more and more instead of looking into Scripture for truly biblical standards of how God wants us to live ... Others use the Scripture selectively; they accept what they feel comfortable doing while simply ignoring the more difficult steps of faith commanded in the Bible. (G. Stulac) To be a doer of the Word is to do the will of God ... To *do* the Word is *to believe* it to the saving of the soul. The Word ever asks for faith and intends to work faith. (R. Lenski)

James 1:22 Moreover (continuative), keep on being (γίνομαι, PMImp.2P, Iterative, Command, Deponent) doers (Pred. Nom.; cycling doctrine to the kardia, epignosis) of the Word (Obj. Gen.) and

(continuative) not (neg. particle) hearers (Pred. Nom.; gnosis) only (adv.), deceiving (παραλογίζομαι, PMPTc.NMP, Durative, Predicative, Deponent) yourselves (Acc. Dir. Obj.; malfunction of GAP, able to quote doctrine but not apply it);

^{BGT} **James 1:22** Γίνεσθε δὲ ποιηταὶ λόγου καὶ μὴ μόνον ἀκροαταὶ παραλογιζόμενοι ἑαυτοῦς.

^{VUL} **James 1:22** estote autem factores verbi et non auditores tantum fallentes vosmet ipsos

LWB James 1:23 For if anyone keeps on being a hearer [reception to gnosis is successful] of the Word but not a doer [application of epignosis is a failure], this one [who fails to metabolize doctrine: from gnosis to epignosis] is like a noble man who studies his natural face [inner characteristics] in a mirror [comparing his norms and standards to the Word of God],

^{KW} **James 1:23** Because if, as is the case, anyone is a hearer of the Word and not a doer, this one is like a man attentively considering in a mirror the face with which he was born.

^{KJV} **James 1:23** 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:

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

James presents a hypothetical believer with a 1st class conditional clause. This believer continues to be a hearer of the Word (Iterative Present tense), which is an absolute necessity in order to grow in the spiritual life. This believer listens attentively to the teaching of doctrine and stores raw material (gnosis) in the left lobe of his soul (nous). However, he does not metabolize that doctrine – chewing on it and making it his own – and therefore short-circuits the *grace apparatus for perception*. He does not study what he has heard until it becomes doctrine on the launching pad (epignosis) of the right lobe of his soul (kardia). Therefore, since he is not transferring the raw teaching into the right lobe of his soul, he has nothing to apply to daily life. He is not filled with the Spirit and is not being a “doer” of the Word. His mental, verbal and overt applications of doctrine do not exist. He is in carnality or an even worse stage of reversionism. Any self-analysis he might engage in will be fruitless and corrupted; he is self-deceived as stated in verse 22.

Meanwhile, using a self-analysis metaphor, he resembles a noble man (Descriptive Perfect tense) who repeatedly observes his God-given face in a mirror. The mirror is a figure for the norms and standards of the Word of God. This reversionistic believer who has short-circuited the *grace apparatus for perception* is looking into the Word of God as a mirror to see how he ‘stands up’ according to divine standards. His natural (Latin: native) face is a metaphor for his inner characteristics. In other words, this believer is looking in the Bible with the purpose of self-analysis. Unfortunately, because all he has is raw material in the left lobe of his soul, what he sees in the Word of God is fuzzy and corrupted. There is no understanding of divine norms and standards in what he reads. His own reflection is so blurred as to be unrecognizable. Due to lack

of metabolization, what little he has learned cannot be applied to what he sees in the mirror. He walks away with no understanding of himself or how to apply anything he has heard to daily life.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Here is the point of comparison. The person who looks into the mirror to see his own image and promptly forgets is like a person who hears the Word of God proclaimed but fails to respond to it. He sees his reflection in the mirror, quickly adjusts his external appearance, and walks away. He hears the gospel preached, makes minor adjustments, and goes his own way. (S. Kistemaker) Now who is more to blame: the man who is sick and doesn't have enough sense to go to the doctor, or the man who has enough sense to go to the doctor, but who, after he hears what the doctor prescribes for his health and strength, flatly refuses to obey? This is exactly the force of James' argument against the hearer who, as he looks at the mirror, the Word of truth, the Word of God, understands fully his condition and his need, but refuses to obey, to do that which he is supposed to do. One may have the brightest mind in the world, but if the will is evil and unyielding, that brightness is a curse instead of a blessing. (S. Zodhiates) All doctrine is practical. (C. Ryrie) Hearing the Word is not united with obedience to it. (D. Hiebert)

As a man beholds his *natural* face in a mirror, so the hearer perceives his *moral* visage in God's Word. This faithful portraiture of man's soul in Scripture is strong proof of its truth. In it we see mirrored God's glory as well as our natural vileness. (R. Jamieson) Heavenly doctrine is indeed a mirror in which God presents Himself to our view; but so that we may be transformed into His image. But here he speaks of the external glance of the eye, not of the vivid and efficacious meditation which penetrates into the heart. It is a striking comparison, by which he briefly intimates, that a doctrine merely heard and not received inwardly into the heart avails nothing, because it soon vanishes away. (J. Calvin) The "Word of truth" is the spiritual glass in which we may see the reflection of our own souls. The Bible not only reveals the holy God to man; it also discovers sinful man to himself. But the mere hearer, after he has momentarily recognized himself in it, goes on his way and forgets his moral uncomeliness. (E. Gibson) "Looks" means "attentive scrutiny of an object." (F. Gaebelein) We have these hearers to contend with in all our preaching; the real power of the Word does not penetrate them. (R. Lenski)

James 1:23 **For** (explanatory) **if** (protasis, 1st class condition, "and it's true") **anyone** (Subj. Nom.) **keeps on being** (εἰμί, PAI3S, Iterative) **a hearer** (Pred. Nom.) **of the Word** (Obj. Gen.; gnosis) **but** (adversative) **not** (neg. adv.) **a doer** (Pred. Nom.; epignosis), **this one** (Nom. Appos.; fails to metabolize doctrine, apostasy) **is like** (ἔοικα, Perf.AI3S, Descriptive; resembles) **a noble man** (Dat. Ind. Obj.; born into the royal family of God) **who studies** (κατανοέω, PAPtc.DMS, Iterative, Substantival; observes) **his** (Gen. Poss.) **natural** (Gen. Spec.; born with) **face** (Acc. Dir. Obj.; his inner characteristics) **in a mirror** (Loc. Place; comparing his norms and standards to the Word of God),

^{BGT} **James 1:23** ὅτι εἴ τις ἀκροατῆς λόγου ἐστὶν καὶ οὐ ποιητής, οὗτος ἔοικεν ἀνδρὶ κατανοοῦντι τὸ πρόσωπον τῆς γενέσεως αὐτοῦ ἐν ἐσόπτρῳ·

^{VUL} **James 1:23** quia si quis auditor est verbi et non factor hic comparabitur viro consideranti vultum nativitatis suae in speculo

LWB James 1:24 For he observed himself [in the mirror] and then he departed [off he goes into apostasy] and immediately disregarded [forgets] what sort of person he originally was [that initial, brief look in the mirror that shouted: *reversionist!*].

^{KW} **James 1:24** For he took one look at himself and was off, and he immediately forgot what sort of a person he was.

^{KJV} **James 1:24** For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Again, that initial but brief observation (Latin: consideration) in the mirror points to a superficial interest in the Word of God. His initial look in the mirror (gnosis) gave him a superficial view of the type of person he truly was (Inceptive Imperfect tense). It was as blurred an image of himself as compared to the norms and standards of the Word of God as he could get. After this brief look in the mirror, he decides to go his own way into reversionism (Consummative Perfect tense). He concludes upon faulty information (no metabolization) that everything was just fine. And after turning away from the mirror of the Word of God, he immediately disregards and soon forgets (Gnomic Aorist tense) the feedback he received from it. The loser believer merely “glances” in the mirror of the Word of God (“out of sight, out of mind”), while the winner believer “gazes” into the mirror of the Word and applies what he sees to life.

When the loser believer first looked into the mirror (Word of God), it gave him a brief negative evaluation. But he ignored what he saw and gave up on the spot. He did not learn anything about himself or change anything in his life (failure to metabolize doctrine). He did not have any doctrine in the right lobe of his soul (epignosis), so he merely shrugged his shoulders and walked away. All he did was give it a quick glance ... and everything looked OK. A brief, superficial hearing of Bible doctrine (hearer only), without the follow-up of metabolization which makes that doctrine (gnosis) your very own precepts and principles available for use (epignosis), leaves you with nothing to apply to daily life (doer) and a certain abandonment of the *grace apparatus for perception* which is crucial for forward momentum in the spiritual life.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Many people hear a sermon on a given Sunday and a week later cannot remember a single word of that sermon. The person who only listens to the Word goes away and fails to respond to its demands. (S. Kistemaker) The mere hearer soon dismisses the thought of the spots and blemishes which he saw upon his spiritual features when he glanced at them in the gospel mirror. But the wise hearer looks carefully and continuously, because he wants to know himself, and because it is his purpose to be always a “doer.” He has learned that it is the business of his life to obey the perfect law of liberty. By the doing of this work he will attain both self-knowledge and self-government. (C. Jerdan) The

language recognizes that the Word addresses the individual and he knows that it does. But the mere hearer gives himself a glance and hurries off; and away from the mirror he at once forgets what he saw – though his face was dirty. He does not receive the Word and act on it. (R. Ward) If a person does not conduct himself in accordance with the “Word,” then what he has heard sticks with him about as much as the mirror image sticks with a person who has observed himself in a mirror: he forgets it. (M. Dibelius)

He went through the motions to satisfy his pride but never intended to make any changes in his appearance. (W. Baker) The tenses thus present a vivid and lifelike picture of the careless listener to preaching, Christ’s wayside hearer. (A. Robertson) Here his emphasis is, “Don’t be so quick or hasty as you look into the mirror.” The thought in being “swift to hear” is to give it all your attention, to be alert to the Word of God. What James is saying here is, “Don’t treat it casually. Don’t go over it hurriedly like that ...” Folk who do not like to read in the Bible the fact that they are sinners, simply pass over those sections. That is the reason, I think, that textual preaching is outmoded. I feel that we need to go through the entire Word of God and not pull out nice, sweet verses here and there. God did not give His Word in verses; verses are man-made. We need to take the Word of God as it is ... God has given you His Word, and you are responsible for your response to it. To a man who has been born again, the Word will say, “Look, you are no longer growing. You are actually leaving your first love.” God uses His Word to remind us of Himself and to call us back. (J. McGee)

James 1:24 **For** (explanatory) **he observed** (κατανοέω, AAI3S, Gnostic) **himself** (Acc. Dir. Obj.; gnosis) **and then** (continuative) **he departed** (ἀπέρχομαι, Perf.AI3S, Consummative, Deponent; goes his own way: reversionism) **and** (continuative) **immediately** (temporal) **disregarded** (ἐπιλανθάνομαι, AMI3S, Gnostic, Deponent; neglects, forgets) **what sort of person** (Pred. Nom.) **he originally was** (εἰμί, Imperf.AI3S, Inceptive; apostasy).

^{BGT} **James 1:24** κατενόησεν γὰρ ἑαυτὸν καὶ ἀπελήλυθεν καὶ εὐθέως ἐπελάθετο ὅποιος ἦν.

^{VUL} **James 1:24** consideravit enim se et abiit et statim oblitus est qualis fuerit

LWB James 1:25 **But the one [believer with positive momentum] who has looked [deep concentration] into the mature law [principle] of freedom [Church Age doctrine rather than the Mosaic Law] and has persisted [continued with the function of the grace apparatus for perception on a daily basis], not having become a forgetful hearer [failure to convert gnosis to epignosis], but a doer of work [applies epignosis to life after looking into the mature law of freedom and advances to maturity], this one shall be happy during application [doing the Word].**

^{KW} **James 1:25** But he who with eagerness and concentration has pored over the perfect law, the law of liberty, and has continued in it, not having been a hearer who forgets but a doer who works, this person shall be prospered spiritually in his doing.

^{KJV} **James 1:25** 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.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

James described the reversionistic believer who failed to convert the teaching he heard from *gnosis* to *epignosis* in verses 23-24 as a warning. This believer listened to the Word of God being taught, but only briefly, and he did not study it further to make what he heard “his very own.” He tossed it aside after a brief look in the mirror and went on his way into apostasy thinking everything was just fine. Now James focuses on the positive believer who did far more than just listen to the Word of God briefly and go on his way. This believer looked intently - a mental and spiritual analysis of his character - into the mature law of freedom (Culminative Aorist tense). This believer studied the doctrinal message he heard, concentrated on its meaning and compared it to other passages in Scripture. This believer converted the raw material he heard (*gnosis*) into a categorical system of precepts and principles in his soul (*epignosis*). He made the Word of God his very own and was prepared to apply it to daily life. He continues to confess His sin to God, re-enters the divine system, and lives a vibrant spiritual life in the filling of the Spirit.

The perfect law or principle of freedom (Latin: liberty) is a way of describing precepts and principles from the Word of God for Church Age believers. Christians are not now and never have been under the Mosaic Law. The Jewish Christians that James was writing to were no longer under the law either. They were Jews under the authority of the Mosaic Law before they became believers, but after they became Christians the Mosaic Law ceased to be their rule of life. The precepts and principles contained within the Mosaic Law were restated *with grace emphasis* for the new dispensation they found themselves in. Instead of living under a set of burdensome rules and regulations, they now lived under the mature law of freedom. In a way, the law was made *mature* after its conversion under grace principles. The norms and standards of God still existed, but their *modus operandi* was transformed from the *energy of the flesh* to the *filling of the Spirit*. So what is the “work” that the “work doer” does in the next phrase of this verse? The “work” is looking into the mature law of liberty and making adjustments in your spiritual life to conform you to the image of God rather than your sorry reflection in a mirror.

The believer with positive momentum (Latin: permanency) in the spiritual life did not become a forgetful hearer (Culminative Aorist tense). He did not listen to a sermon and then forget about it one hour later (Latin: oblivious). He did not leave it as raw material (*gnosis*) in the left lobe of his soul (*nous*), but metabolized it and converted it to doctrinal precepts and principles (*epignosis*) in the right lobe of his soul (*kardia*) so it could be applied in daily life. He did not short-circuit the *grace apparatus for perception* but persisted until the process was complete (Culminative Aorist tense). Because of this persistence, this follow through, he becomes a “doer of work.” A “work doer” is the believer who looks into the Word of God, observes his sin, confesses it, and continues to be conformed to the image of Christ in the filling of the Spirit. And because he has a supply of metabolized, categorized doctrine in his soul, he will have (Gnomic Future tense) tremendous inner happiness during the application of that doctrine to life. For those who persist in the intake, metabolization and application of doctrine on a continual basis, this inner happiness is both a prediction and a certainty.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Look at the contrast. The person whose ears and heart are open to what God has to say, literally bends over to look into the law of God, much the same as he does when he looks into the mirror that is placed horizontally on a table. However, the difference is that while he studies the perfect law of God he does not walk away from it, as does the person who casts a fleeting glance into a mirror. He continues to look intently into the Word. He meditates on it and obediently puts it into practice. James resorts to using a synonym for the Word of God. He calls it the “perfect law.” (S. Kistemaker) Christians should aim at a higher standard than was generally understood under the law. The principle of love takes the place of the letter of the law, so that by the Spirit they are free from the yoke of sin, obeying by spontaneous instinct. (R. Jamieson) The man who looks into it seriously is the man who perseveres. This quickly changes the metaphor. He so plunges into the Word and becomes steeped in it that he proves to be not a hearer that forgets but a doer that acts. (R. Ward)

The criterion for eternal rewards will not be what you produced but your attitude toward doctrine. You will be judged according to your function under the *grace apparatus for perception* while a believer on earth. Logistical support and confident anticipation of blessings in time will spur the believer to fulfill the plan of God, reach maturity, and obtain happiness in the process. Divine blessing based on doctrine in the soul plus his new hope of greater blessings in eternity will elicit reward and happiness in eternity. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) Receptivity to the Word and responsiveness to its revelation must be coupled with a new approach to life. One must be resigned to continued obedience and perpetual practice. (J. Blue) So the Christian man who looks into ... and continues in God’s Word is a man who submits to divine authority, yet in so doing finds himself truly free. (Z. Hodges) The mind must be engaged fully with a desire on our part to be more fully conformed to the image of Christ. “Law of liberty” is a strikingly descriptive term for the Word of God. (W. Baker)

Freedom is the heritage of the new birth or regeneration, which gives the believer the complete love complex, the realm of spiritual freedom. With reference to gate one: “where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom” (2 Cor. 3:17), and regarding gate four: “you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). Bible doctrine is called the “law of freedom” because doctrine defines the believer’s freedom to glorify God (James 1:25, 2:12). Positive volition toward the Word of God is the basis for freedom, as the Jewish prisoners of 586 B.C. dramatically proved while marching in chains to Babylon. Not even the cruelest tyranny can remove your freedom to think doctrine, nor can any extenuation relieve you of your responsibility for “redeeming the time” inside the divine dynasphere. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) These saved people need “salvation.” This salvation is the salvation contextually defined as a deliverance from the death-producing effects of sin and a lack of good works in their lives. He goes on to say that to receive with meekness the ingrafted Word is simply to apply the Word of God to our lives by acts of obedience. (J. Dillow)

We learn that “law” for James is not a codification of either ethical absolutes or ritual requirements, but the Word of God “implanted” in the believer. (T. Cargal) The doer is characterized by a continuation in his study of God’s Word. “Abides by it” or “continues therein” are renderings of the word that describes a remaining in the activity. The doer gives it full attention and stays with it. He does not become forgetful, but follows through as a doer of the Word. (H. Kent) In the next passage, James “rebukes a religious *doing* that leaves the inner life unchanged.” (D. Hiebert) It should be obvious why and how some of us have developed a deep rooted depression about our spiritual life

... Some referee ought to blow the whistle on us and give us a five-yard penalty for delaying the game. (M. Gutzke) God is not interested in how much work we are doing, but in the net product of our work. (S. Zodiates) Nothing is gained by referring to the term Torah when speaking of *nomos* ... No doing of any system of legalism ever brought true liberty or blessing to save the soul. (R. Lenski)

James 1:25 But (contrast) the one (Subj. Nom.) who has looked intently (παρακίπτω, AAPtc.NMS, Culminative, Substantival, Articular; profound study, deep concentration) into the mature (Compl. Acc.) law (Prep. Acc.; principle) of freedom (Gen. Spec.; liberty, the Bible when taught) and (continuative) has persisted (παραμένω, AAPtc.NMS, Culminative, Substantival, Articular; continued with the function of GAP on a daily basis), not (neg. adv.) having become (γίνομαι, AMPtc.NMS, Culminative, Result, Deponent) a forgetful (Gen. Disadv.; failure to metabolize: gnosis to epignosis) hearer (Pred. Nom.; gnosis), but (contrast) a doer (Pred. Nom.; epignosis to application) of work (Obj. Gen.), this one (Nom. Appos.) shall be (εἰμί, FMI3S, Predictive & Gnostic) happy (Pred. Nom.) during application (Loc. Time, Sph.; of Bible doctrine, doing).

^{BGT} **James 1:25** ὁ δὲ παρακίψας εἰς νόμον τέλειον τὸν τῆς ἐλευθερίας καὶ παραμείνας, οὐκ ἄκροατῆς ἐπιλησμονῆς γενόμενος ἀλλὰ ποιητῆς ἔργου, οὗτος μακάριος ἐν τῇ ποιήσει αὐτοῦ ἔσται.

^{VUL} **James 1:25** qui autem perspexerit in lege perfecta libertatis et permanserit non auditor obliviosus factus sed factor operis hic beatus in facto suo erit

LWB James 1:26 **If anyone [a self-righteous do-gooder] has the subjective opinion [his self-analysis is corrupt and unbiblical] that he is religious, not holding his own tongue in check with a bit and bridle [runs doctrinal people down], but is constantly deceiving the mentality of his own soul [his right lobe has been seduced by self-righteous, legalistic arrogance], his religion [of human good] is empty [useless].**

^{KW} **James 1:26** If, as is the case, anyone imagines himself to be religious, not holding in check his tongue [with bit and bridle], but is deceiving his own heart, this person's religion is worthless.

^{KJV} **James 1:26** If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion *is* vain.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

James knows there is a self-righteous, legalistic type of do-gooder Christian among his readers (1st class conditional clause) that fits the description of the believer in verse 24. This type of believer looked briefly in the mirror of the Word of God and walked away with a totally distorted analysis of himself. He has the subjective opinion that he is religious (Pictorial Present

tense). There is virtually no raw doctrinal material (gnosis) in the left lobe of his soul (nous). What Bible verses he has heard have been so twisted and distorted as to make him think he can perform external deeds that everyone can see and be considered a spiritual giant by others. He doesn't need the Word of God, and he doesn't like those who have made doctrine their #1 priority in life. He runs them down whenever he gets the chance, not holding his tongue in check with a bit and bridle (Durative Present tense). He gossips, maligns and slanders those who attend Bible study for the purpose of learning the *mind of Christ* because he detests what the *mind of Christ* in the Word of God says about him. The self-righteous, arrogant do-gooder is not interested in Bible doctrine because it convicts him of sin. He can't stand the accurate analysis of his sin nature.

What few verses this reversionistic believer thinks he knows in Scripture have been taken out of context. He converts those corrupted verses into a form of external deeds that he calls "religion." Doctrinal inculcation in the filling of the Spirit is jettisoned from his newly-created religion of rituals, observances, programs and other church activities. In the process, he is constantly deceiving the mentality of his soul (Iterative Present tense). The right lobe of his soul (kardia) does not contain accurate Bible doctrine converted by the filling of the Spirit into precepts and principles for living the spiritual life (epignosis). Instead, this "do-gooder religion of his own creation" continually seduces him. His self-created, legalistic religion of human good is empty, useless and vain. The Greek word "matiotēs" means he has opened the mentality of his soul to a vacuum which has sucked-in every kind of gutter nonsense and garbage imaginable. For recently converted believers coming out of Judaism, this self-righteous, do-gooder religion was an easy thing to create in the energy of the flesh. And in fact, this is exactly what this believer has done; he has replaced the *grace apparatus for perception* of Christianity with a *human works for observation* religion that is comfortable with his former Judaism.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

He tells us that it is not enough to work, to do, but that we should be very careful as to the motive of our worship or service to God. (S. Zodhiates) The word "religion" implies that they may always remain in attendance on public worship. (J. Mayor) They do everything that is required on the outside while ignoring what the mirror of God has told them needs to be fixed on the inside, i.e., whitewashed sepulchers full of dead men's bones. (LWB) The language of appearance, self-deception, and inadequate faith is continued in verse 26 ... Their religion is proven foolish and futile. "In vain do they worship Me." (W. Brosend) Our mental estimate of our own spiritual condition is extremely important. After all, we are affected more by what we think of ourselves than by what others think of us ... What he wishes to say in continuation is that there is an inherent danger even in the one who does a great deal for God. The closer we get to the heart of the Master, the more subtle and persistent become the attacks of the evil one. The devil may not try to make the Christian commit any external sin against others. He will, however, endeavor to tempt the doer of the Word in regard to his own self by creating in him the idea of greatness. And when this idea of greatness of self is inculcated, it will be followed by all kinds of sin in order to maintain it. (S. Zodhiates)

If you did not grow up spiritually and thus did not permit God to bless you in time, your evaluation will be very simple: "worthless." The zero imputed to divine righteousness in time will be parlayed

into a zero imputed to your resurrection body in eternity ... Reversionism is the condition of the believer who is negative toward doctrine and refuses to function under the *grace apparatus for perception*. As a result, he remains in a state of carnality, out of fellowship with God refusing to confess his sins and is, therefore, under perpetual divine punishment (Heb. 12:4-15). Reversionism and evil are actually two sides of the same coin. Evil is what the reversionistic soul thinks. Reversionism is the condition of that soul. Reversionism is always a revolt against God and His plan. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) Not only is reversionism a revolt against God and His plan, it is a substitution of an alternate plan that the sin nature creates with satanic assistance. The self-righteous, arrogant do-gooder creates a legalistic standard of external, observable activities that replaces the divine protocol plan of God. He can then perform these hand-picked activities in conformance with the trends of his sin nature without the benefit of Bible doctrine and the filling of the Spirit. He feels good about his “pseudo-progress” that others can see and admire, while his soul remains unchallenged and unchanged by the Word of God. (LWB)

What a terrible thing it is for the Christian to carry out all the externals of religion and then to throw his weight around, thinking he is a man of consequence ... If we have works which do not spring from faith, our works are nothing before God; but if our works are the natural outcome of our inner faith, then they are acceptable before God and hence there is no need for us to brag of them ... Happiness for a Christian depends not on what he does and what he says, but on the inner secret desires, motives, and dispositions of his heart which can be read only by God ... A ceremonial religion cannot possibly accomplish God’s goal for your life, which is blessedness. (S. Zodhiates) The church or churches to which James was writing were much less than perfect. They probably contained many individuals who considered themselves to be punctilious in the religious observances and thus worthy of the blessing James had just spoken about in verse 25. But it is commonplace for people to reduce obedience to God to the performance of various religious routines. In James’s day these might include regular attendance at Christian worship, as well as prayers and fasting. But James is not concerned with the practice of religious exercises, however valuable they are in their place. (Z. Hodges)

“Threskia” refers properly to the external rites of religion, and so gets to signify an overscrupulous devotion to external forms, almost ritualism. It is the ceremonial service of religion, the external forms ... This depreciatory sense of “threskia” is well seen in a passage of Philo, speaking of some who would fain be counted among the pious on the score of divers washings or costly offerings to the temple. (E. Gibson) The words “religious” and “religion” denote external religious service – the body, or outward attire of godliness, rather than its inward spirit. (C. Jerdan) As a pastor James is fully aware of counterfeit religion that is nothing more than external formalism. He knows that many people merely go through the motions of serving God, but their speech gives them away. (S. Kistemaker) James may appear to change the subject again in verse 26, but he actually continues the theme of the correct use of the Word of God, merely switching to a different word for the misuse of the mirror of God’s Word. That word is “religious.” This use of the word *religious* is equivalent to looking in the mirror of God’s Word, or law of liberty, and then leaving and forgetting what he saw. Once again it is mere ritual and legalism. (W. Baker)

With us, who serve God in spirit, and have no confidence in flesh, ritual is a relapse into the shadows, when we have the substance in Christ. We are warned against it in the epistle to the

Colossians, 2:18. (A. Knoch) A deceived heart sets a false standard, and then convinces itself that it measures up to the standard that it has adopted. The sinner can deceive himself into believing that in his sinful state he can be acceptable to God by the works of his own hands. This is an act of self-deception. (J. Pentecost) The outward ritualistic practices which a person may think are commendable are considered to be worthless, futile, fruitless, useless. (J. Blue) James, as president of the council at Jerusalem (Acts 15:13-21), had decided against ritualism. (R. Jamieson) The picture is not that of a conscious hypocrite but of a self-deceived religionist. The reference is to the erroneous opinion the man has of himself. (D. Hiebert) Whatever they are, the person has the outward practice of religious activities and so considers himself pious. (P. Davids) Doctrine is the basis for the distribution of surpassing-grace blessings in eternity. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

James 1:26 If (protasis, 1st class condition, "and it's true") anyone (Subj. Nom.; a self-righteous do-gooder) has the subjective opinion (δοκέω, PAI3S, Pictorial; supposes, religious pretension, imagines: even though he is anti-doctrinal) that he is (εἰμί, PAInf., Descriptive, Inf. As Dir. Obj. of Verb) religious (Pred. Nom.; pious), not (neg. particle) holding his own (Poss. Gen.) tongue (Acc. Dir. Obj.) in check with a bit and bridle (χαλιναγωγέω, PAPtc.NMS, Durative, Modal; runs doctrinal people down), but (contrast) is constantly deceiving (ἀπατάω, PAPtc.NMS, Iterative & Durative, Modal; seducing) the mentality of his own (Poss. Gen.) soul (Acc. Dir. Obj.; his right lobe is in reversionism), his (Poss. Gen.) religion (Acc. Dir. Obj.; system of human good) is (ellipsis) empty (Pred. Nom.; vain, useless, matiototes: vacuum).

^{BGT} **James 1:26** Εἴ τις δοκεῖ θρησκὸς εἶναι μὴ χαλιναγωγῶν γλῶσσαν αὐτοῦ ἀλλὰ ἀπατῶν καρδίαν αὐτοῦ, τούτου μάταιος ἡ θρησκεία.

^{VUL} **James 1:26** si quis autem putat se religiosum esse non refrenans linguam suam sed seducens cor suum huius vana est religio

LWB **James 1:27** Pure [nothing added] and undefiled [non-legalistic] spirituality [genuine Christianity] in the sight of God, even the Father, is exemplified by this: Take care of orphans and widows in their difficult circumstances [they had been abandoned during the dispersion]; keep yourself without blemish [guard against false doctrine and scar tissue of the soul] from the cosmic system.

^{KW} **James 1:27** Religion which is pure and undefiled in the sight of God, even the Father, is this: to look after orphans and widows in their affliction with a view to ascertaining their needs and supplying them, and to be keeping one's self unspotted from the world.

^{KJV} **James 1:27** 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.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

James gives two examples of what pure and undefiled spirituality looks like in the sight of God: one external and one internal. Genuine spiritual growth can be visible and invisible. It can be assessed by what people do and by what they think, though it is often difficult to determine because these two do not always go together. For instance, a good deed can be done by an unbeliever and it does not qualify as genuine spirituality. Genuine spirituality (religion) must be pure, which means nothing should be added to it (no foreign admixture); and it must be undefiled, which means they are not to import Judaism, paganism, or anything else to it. The Greek word “miano” is especially bold in its prohibition; anything that is added to pure Christianity is compared to human excrement on clean white clothes. Divine good, not human good, is the standard.

Externally, he commands his readers to take care of (Infinitive of Command) orphans and widows who were trying to survive under most difficult circumstances during the dispersion. They were basically ‘run out of town’ with nothing but the clothes on their backs and nobody to provide for them. Care for fellow believers who are too young or too old to care for themselves (Latin: visitation) is an outward sign of genuine spirituality. The spiritual gifts of helps and encouragement are especially welcome during circumstances (Latin: tribulations) such as these. Internally, he commands his readers to guard themselves (Infinitive of Command) from false doctrine and scar tissue of the soul – any kind of spot or blemish that has its source from Satan’s cosmic system. The inner and outer dimensions of genuine spirituality should be in sync.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Verse 27 is not, and is not intended to be, a comprehensive definition of Christianity: it is an assertion of one element positively but not exclusively indispensable in that religion ... Observance of outward ritual is no substitute for interior righteousness, nor attendance at church services for performance of Christian service, even though attending what we call “divine service” should mean that we *do* something for God. (J. Adamson) The heavenly standard is appealed to here. (J. Mayor) James makes it very clear that we can perform great religious services, and be great philanthropists and great benefactors, and still be unhappy and not please and glorify God ... We may do a great deal of good, but that does not mean that we are good in the sight of God. I have personally known people who have built orphanages and hospitals in the hope of winning heaven. But they never will arrive there merely because of these deeds ... Let us note that this has nothing to do with salvation, but only with Christian service; it is the demonstration of the doing of the Word. (S. Zodhiates)

Worship must be related to life, in the sense of being contemporary and relevant but also essentially practical. By its very nature, however, Christian worship is redeemed from that barren moralism of which George Tyrrell spoke, “the kind of doing good which is chiefly going about.” (J. Adamson) There is a special curse on those who afflict the fatherless and widow (Deut. 26:19). In Luke 20:47 the Pharisees are charged with devouring widow’s houses. (J. Mayor) We must remember that in those days there were no insurance policies and social security which the bereaved could draw upon when the breadwinner of the family passed away. (S. Zodhiates) The faith that humbly receives God’s saving Word, the faith that abides in the knowledge of that Word day and night, the faith that works itself out in the religiousness of a holy love – this is the sum of the whole matter, this is the very essence of the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ. (T. Lockyer) Careful attention to God’s Word,

followed by a conscious effort to obey its precepts, enables the believer to remain uncontaminated by the evil that surrounds him. This is true religion, not just religiosity. (H. Kent)

The word unstained represents a Greek word that means to keep free from the evil influences in the surrounding culture that would alter a believer's values and pursuits. (W. Baker) For those who are not "in Christ," all the visiting of all the widows and fatherless in the world will never accomplish the stupendous miracle of Divine grace. (E. Bullinger) This is not a definition of religion or religious worship, but only a pertinent illustration of the right spirit of religion. (A. Robertson) Again, the goal is a mature Christian walk and practical holiness. (J. Blue) Orthodoxy is correct belief. Orthopraxy is correct action. (G. Fee) The Satanic world system is invariably presented in Scripture as inveterately evil in character, according to God's appraisal, not only in those conditions which the world confesses to be morally wrong, but also in those which it considers to be ideal. (M. Unger) James is certainly not trying to give a comprehensive list of all acts that make up pure and faultless religion; rather, these are just two examples of the kinds of acts needed. (G. Stulac) James gives us not a precise definition in this verse but rather a principle. (S. Kistemaker)

James 1:27 Pure (Descr. Nom.; true, heavenly, Christian, nothing added) and (connective) undefiled (Descr. Nom.; no excrement on your clothes: no Judaistic legalism) spirituality (Subj. Nom.; religion is bad, spirituality is good) in the sight of God (Prep. Dat.; as opposed to what man sees), even (ascensive) the Father (Dat. Appos.), is exemplified by (εἰμί, PAI3S, Descriptive) this (Pred. Nom.): Take care of (ἐπισκέπτομαι, PMInf., Iterative, Command, Deponent; concern yourself with, graciously visit) orphans (Acc. Dir. Obj.) and (connective) widows (Acc. Dir. Obj.) in their (Poss. Gen.) difficult circumstances (Loc. Sph.); keep (τηρέω, PAInf., Iterative, Command; guard) yourself (Acc. Dir. Obj.) without blemish (Compl. Acc.; scar tissue of the soul from false doctrines) from the cosmic system (Abl. Source).

^{BGT} **James 1:27** θρησκεία καθαρὰ καὶ ἀμίαντος παρὰ τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ αὕτη ἐστίν, ἐπισκέπτεσθαι ὀρφανούς καὶ χήρας ἐν τῇ θλίψει αὐτῶν, ἄσπιλον ἑαυτὸν τηρεῖν ἀπὸ τοῦ κόσμου.

^{VUL} **James 1:27** religio munda et immaculata apud Deum et Patrem haec est visitare pupillos et viduas in tribulatione eorum immaculatum se custodire ab hoc saeculo

Chapter 2

LWB **James 2:1** My brethren [members of the royal family], stop holding on to loyalty in the sphere of personal favoritisms [over-zealous commitment towards friends] with reference to our Lord Jesus Christ, the honorable One [everyone else is sub-par].

^{KW} **James 2:1** My brethren, stop holding your faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of the glory, in connection with an act showing partiality [to anyone].

^{KJV} **James 2:1** My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord* of glory, with respect of persons.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Some of James’s readers gave special treatment to their personal friends. Apparently it was often done in a snobbish fashion, with no respect for others. James addresses these individuals politely, calling them brethren, before issuing this prohibition (Imperative mood). He wants them to stop this unfair practice, treating some close friends in a public assembly with favoritism. They were being overly zealous in conferring special privileges (partiality) upon one believer to the exclusion of another believer. Relatively new Christians from all walks in life were meeting together to give honor, respect and glory to the Lord Jesus Christ. The believers who were “playing favorites” need to remember that He alone (Jesus Christ) is the truly honorable One. All other believers should be treated with equal respect, regardless of wealth, race, gender, etc.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Whenever James is about to scold the believers of his day, he likes to preface the scolding with a word of love, and that word is “my brethren.” (S. Zodhiates) The plural form of partiality here gives the impression that there had been several manifestations or varied forms of partiality practiced in the community. (T. Cargal) Faith in the One who belongs to “Glory” makes all deference to rich people on earth look shabby and cheap. (Z. Hodges) We judge people so easily by the clothes they wear, by the words they speak, by their appearance, instead of taking the trouble to find out what they really are, and whether there is any good reason for their acting as they do ... Our standing within that community is not according to what we possess in material things or fame, but according to the common redemption in Jesus Christ. (S. Zodhiates)

Since there is also considerable confusion about Chapter 2 in the world of commentators, I’m providing a brief outline to accompany Cargal’s high-level outline in the *Introduction*. Perhaps this will help you follow the flow of James’s thoughts.

- 1 Favoritism is a malfunction of grace (part 1)
- 2 Contrast between the rich and poor is erroneous
- 3 Treating the rich and poor differently is a malfunction of grace
- 4 Evaluating others by human instead of divine standards is erroneous
- 5 Being an “heir” requires the exercise of *agape* love
- 6 Misapplying Bible doctrine by honoring the rich and dishonoring the poor
- 7 Favoritism is a malfunction of grace (part 2)
- 8 Good works = the implanted Word and the exercise of *agape* love
- 9 Reversionists are violators of the Word of God
- 10 Legalists fail to keep the entire law

- 11 All or nothing: fail in one part of the law and you fail in all of it
- 12 Verbal and overt production must be free of sin in order to receive a reward
- 13 Mercy will triumph at the Judgment Seat of Christ
- 14 Faith without doctrine does not produce good works
- 15 Believers with insufficient food and clothing need more than a prayer
- 16 Doctrinal misapplication: advice is given instead of actual help
- 17 Faith without the metabolization and application of doctrine is dead
- 18 The reversionist creates his own religion: brags about his works of the flesh and rejects the *grace apparatus for perception*
- 19 Judaizers and demons believe *something*, even though it is wrong
- 20 Faith without doctrinal application is unemployed
- 21 Abraham was vindicated by doctrinal application
- 22 Metabolized doctrine + the application of doctrine = completed faith
- 23 Abraham's obedience was reckoned to his account, making him a friend of God
- 24 Doctrinal application + faith = vindication before God and man
- 25 Rahab the prostitute was vindicated by doctrinal application
- 26 Faith without doctrinal application is dead

James 2:1 My (Gen. Rel.) brethren (Voc. Address; members of the royal family), stop (neg. particle) holding on to (ἔχω, PAImp.2P, Iterative, Prohibition; viewing with a lens of) loyalty (Acc. Dir. Obj.; over-zealous commitment to personal friends) in the sphere of personal favoritisms (Loc. Sph.; partiality) with reference to our (Gen. Rel.) Lord Jesus Christ (Adv. Gen. Ref.), the honorable One (Gen. Appos.).

^{BGT} **James 2:1** Ἀδελφοί μου, μὴ ἐν προσωποληψίαις ἔχετε τὴν πίστιν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τῆς δόξης.

^{VUL} **James 2:1** fratres mei nolite in personarum acceptione habere fidem Domini nostri Iesu Christi gloriae

LWB James 2:2 For if [suppose] a gentleman [patrician] enters into your local assembly with a gold ring on his finger, in magnificent apparel [exquisite toga], and a working man [plebian] also enters in filthy [stinking] clothes,

^{KW} **James 2:2** For if there comes into your synagogue [the meeting-place of Christian Jews] a man whose hand is conspicuously loaded with gold rings [and] in brightly shining clothing, and there comes in also a poor man in dirty clothing who is dependent on others for support,

^{KJV} **James 2:2** 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;

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

James provides a hypothetical example (Potential Subjunctive mood, 3rd class condition clause) of two men entering into the local assembly (Ingressive Aorist tense). One of them is a

gentlemen (patrician) with a gold ring(s) on his finger(s) and magnificent apparel, while the other is a working man (plebian) with filthy, sweaty (Latin: sordid) clothes. The first man lives a life of relatively ease; the other man works seven days a week. One is white collar, the other blue collar. Obviously, James is providing a comparison between two types of believer, to explain why he does not want them to play favorites with friends or those who are dressed ostentatiously. Both believers should be treated with respect because they are both in Christ. The well-dressed believer should not be given special treatment over the man who just got off work and didn't have time to clean up. The man in the nice suit and tie should not be treated differently than the man in blue jeans and a T-shirt. What they are wearing on the outside has nothing to do with spirituality; their outward appearance is not a distinguishing factor in how they should be treated.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

When we meet as brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ, we should forget our social distinctions and classes and remember only that which has brought us together, the common bond of redemption through the blood of Jesus Christ. (S. Zodhiates) The community treats the richly attired person with every mark of worldly honor: This person is invited to come close, to sit, and to be comfortable. The shabbily dressed person is treated with scorn and degradation, put at a distance and made to stand – or worse, made to sit in a position of submission. (L. Johnson) Wetst has accumulated evidence of the practice of overloading the fingers with rings. (H. Alford)

James 2:2 For (explanatory) if (protasis, 3rd class condition, hypothetical, “maybe there is, maybe there isn’t”) a gentleman (Subj. Nom.; patrician) enters (εἰσέρχομαι, AASubj., Ingressive, Potential, Deponent) into your (Poss. Gen.) local assembly (Loc. Place; meeting place, gathering, synagogue) with a gold ring on his finger (Nom. Poss.; a sign of wealth), in magnificent (Dat. Adv.) apparel (Instr. Manner; robes), and (continuative) a poor working man (Subj. Nom.; plebian) also (adjunctive) enters (εἰσέρχομαι, AASubj., Ingressive, Potential, Deponent) in filthy (Dat. Disadv.; sweaty, stinking, shabby) clothes (Instr. Manner),

^{BGT} **James 2:2** εἰάν γὰρ εἰσέλθῃ εἰς συναγωγὴν ὑμῶν ἀνὴρ χρυσοδακτύλιος ἐν ἐσθῆτι λαμπρᾷ, εἰσέλθῃ δὲ καὶ πτωχὸς ἐν ῥυπαρᾷ ἐσθῆτι,

^{VUL} **James 2:2** etenim si introierit in conventu vestro vir aureum anulum habens in veste candida introierit autem et pauper in sordido habitu

LWB **James 2:3** And you extend preferential treatment to the one who wears magnificent apparel, and you say: “You, please sit in this honorable place,” but you say to the working man, “You, stand over there or sit beside my footstool,”

^{KW} **James 2:3** And you look upon the one wearing the clothing which is brightly shining with respectful consideration, and say, As for you, be sitting down here in this place of honor, and say to the poor man, As for you, stand in that place or be sitting down beside my footstool,

^{KJV} **James 2:3** 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:

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

James continues with his hypothetical comparison of two believers who are not treated in the same way by carnal Christians. Carnal believers are extending preferential treatment to the gentleman who is wearing magnificent apparel (Ingressive Aorist tense). They ingratiate themselves, bowing and scraping, by asking him to please (Imperative of Entreaty) sit in this honorable place (Pictorial Present tense). Then they tell the working man in dirty clothes with an air of disrespect (Imperative of Command) to either stand over there in that inconspicuous place (Ingressive Aorist tense) or sit here on the floor next to my footstool (Pictorial Present tense). If this scene was anything like our church assembly today, the “meet-and-greet” person (usher) sits in the back of the church by the door. Therefore, the place of honor would be in the first few rows and the place of dishonor would be in the back rows. James is using this example to show how unscriptural it is to treat two people differently because of the clothes they wear.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The effect is to contrast an exaggerated courtesy in greeting the first visitor, with a dismissive “Stand there” when greeting the second, (W. Brosend) a contrast between the high and comfortable seat for the one, and, for the other, none at all – or an ignominious squat on or near the floor, under someone’s stall ... To come under or to lick the shoe for the Jew meant slavish subjection and even conquest ... In church, even where we have abolished seat rents, we may still be tempted to covet “a good place,” or to think uncharitably of a visitor who has innocently usurped our favorite corner pew. (J. Adamson) The world’s standard of values is far different from God’s. The world makes heroes of people of wealth and fame. The Bible condemns this respect of persons. (L. Strauss)

James 2:3 And (continuative) you extend preferential treatment (ἐπιβλέπω, AASubj.2P, Ingressive, Potential; consideration, regard, favor) to the one (Acc. Gen. Ref.) who wears (φορέω, PAPtc.AMS, Descriptive, Substantival; carries robe on his arm) magnificent (Compl. Acc.) apparel (Acc. Dir. Obj.; on his arm), and (continuative) you say (λέγω, AASubj.2P, Ingressive, Potential; bowing and scraping): “You (Subj. Nom.), please sit in (κάθημαι, PMImp.2S, Pictorial, Entreaty, Deponent) this honorable (adv.) place (Adv. Place),” but (adversative) you say (λέγω, AASubj.2P, Ingressive, Potential; with an air of disrespect) to the working man (Dat. Disadv.): “You (Subj. Nom.), stand over (ἵστημι, AAImp.2S, Ingressive, Command) there (Adv. Place; against the wall) or (disjunctive) sit (κάθημαι, PMImp.2S, Pictorial, Command, Deponent) beside my (Poss. Gen.) footstool (Acc. Place),”

^{BGT} **James 2:3** ἐπιβλέψητε δὲ ἐπὶ τὸν φοροῦντα τὴν ἐσθῆτα τὴν λαμπρὰν καὶ εἶπητε· σὺ κάθου ὧ δε καλῶς, καὶ τῷ πτωχῷ εἶπητε· σὺ στήθι ἐκεῖ ἢ κάθου ὑπὸ τὸ ὑποπόδιόν μου,

^{VUL} **James 2:3** et intendatis in eum qui indutus est veste praeclara et dixeritis tu sede hic bene pauperi autem dicatis tu sta illic aut sede sub scabillo pedum meorum

LWB James 2:4 Have you not discriminated within yourselves [shown favoritism based on erroneous, external human standards instead of divine standards] and have you *not* become judges with corrupt decisions [evil opinions]?

^{KW} **James 2:4** Are you not divided in your own mind [expressing a doubt as to the requirements of the faith you have in the Lord Jesus], and have become judges with pernicious thoughts?

^{KJV} **James 2:4** Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

James asks an obvious question at the end of his scolding (Interrogative Indicative). They have treated two individuals who have entered the assembly quite differently. The one who was externally dressed in expensive clothing was given preferential treatment and a seat of honor, while the one who came in with dirty work clothes was told (in a rather harsh tone of voice) to stand in the back or sit on the floor. Did they know anything about the spiritual state of either man? Apparently not. Did they know anything about their character? Apparently not. Did they know anything about where they stood on issues of the day that affected Christianity? Apparently not. In other words, they focused their attention on the outer man rather than the inner man. They showed favoritism towards the one with “better packaging.” James calls this misguided favoritism evil (Latin: iniquity). Evaluations of people should not be taken lightly.

The use of “diakrino” (discriminates), “krites” (judges), and “dialogismon” (official decisions) are all legal or political terms. They are often used of a judge or panel of judges evaluating (Latin: cogitating) a plaintiff and defendant to determine which one is telling the truth and which one is lying. If all they did was look at outer clothing and ignore their character and personal beliefs, their judicial verdict would always favor the best-dressed person who is skilled at public speaking – rather than the person who may not be groomed as well and is not adept in presenting himself. They have ignored the common sense warning, “It’s the message, not the man.” Another use of these terms is in the political realm where citizens are allegedly sizing up the candidates and voting with intelligence. In this case, they would be ignoring the common sense warning, “It’s the platform, not the personality.” James’s readers were operating on the same level as these two scenarios: they were “wrong considering judges” or “erroneously persuaded voters.”

The question James asks them has an understood answer of “Yes, you have done these terrible things.” They have evaluated the two men (Culminative Aorist tense) based on erroneous, human standards rather than divine standards. In reversionism, they have not used biblical norms and standards to compare the two men. If they had remained in the filling of the Spirit, they would have treated both men equally as believers (or potential believers) in Christ. They used superficial evidence (outward appearance) and judged the man who wore fine apparel as worthy of greater honor than the man who wore coveralls. Their decision was based on inadequate,

corrupt, even evil information - from a mentality without Bible doctrine. As we shall see, some men who were well-dressed and trained to speak in public forums, had brought “working stiff” Christians into court and stole everything they owned by lies and defamation.

As we saw in James 1:8, some of the believers James is writing to are “double minded,” being reversionists in emotional revolt of the soul. As Mayor states, “You have not a single eye, but you are influenced by worldly considerations: you look to the world and not to Christ only.” As I am writing this, the U.S. is in the throes of election year primaries. Somewhere between half and two-thirds of the populace claim to be Christians in this country. That means we should have no problem electing officials with integrity and capability, right? I have often stated that in my estimation 95% of believers in the U.S. are reversionists; they have little-to-no doctrine in the mentality of their souls and are therefore incapable of judging good from evil according to divine standards. That does not bode well for the leadership of this country. A pertinent example relates to the satanic evil of socialism, a euphemism for “stealing” from the working man and woman. The voting populace appears to be favoring the worst of possible candidates.

At this moment, there are eight candidates running for the office of President. One of the candidates is a firm believer in free enterprise capitalism. The other seven candidates are socialists. Setting foreign policy aside and focusing on domestic policy, I placed the names of the candidates in columns and various issues of the day in rows on an Excel spreadsheet. Then I questioned each issue line-by-line and asked myself some a basic constitutional question: Does a candidate’s position on this issue increase personal freedom or take it away? Does a candidate’s position protect me and my family or does it expose us to unnecessary risk of life and limb? After placing an ‘X’ in the boxes, it became quite clear who I should vote for in my state’s upcoming primary. One candidate remains in a field of eight that stands for protecting our constitutional rights of freedom, which originated from men who understood the total depravity of man and other Bible doctrines. The candidate with all the X’s that I should vote for is not a Christian; the Christians who are running for office are reversionistic and are just like the usher in this passage.

There is no Bible doctrine in the mentality of their soul. They are going to heaven, but they are completely enmeshed in Satan’s cosmic system on earth. They dress nice, they speak eloquently, they promise everything. Their platforms, however, are totally corrupt. J. Vernon McGee once said, “I have never voted for a president whom I really wanted. I have always voted *against* the other candidate. I have never known a president who I felt was really capable.” I have found myself in exactly the same position for many years, and it appears it may happen again in this election. Please, I beseech you, take some time to analyze the platforms of the politicians who are running for office. Go beyond their hair-styling, their nice suits, their promises and platitudes. Analyze their positions on at least ten of the top issues of the day and choose wisely – according to the norms and standards of the Word of God. Paraphrasing Adamson below, I don’t want it to be said that “*Such judges (voters) are said to have caused the Shechinah to depart.*”

RELEVANT OPINIONS

You classify people in your mind, not according to their real spiritual worth, but according to the outward physical appearance. If you are a spiritual being, as you ought to be, you had better go all the way ... With this indictment James clearly indicates that this outward behavior of the usher has its roots inside, in the heart, in the mind, and it tends to rob one of his blessedness and happiness in Christ. A man should not profess to be a Christian and have worldly standards of judgment at the same time. Let us remember to look at the inner man, first in ourselves and then in others ... If we act in such a way, James declares, we have become judges of wicked thoughts. What does this mean? In our mind when we ushered the rich and luxuriously dressed worshipper to the best seat in the assembly, we did so for the sake of expediency. Perhaps one day we might need this rich man for a personal favor. Our favoritism stems from selfishness when we come down to it. That is one of those sins which creeps into our hearts, often quite unconsciously. We are so saturated with self that even our preferential treatment of others has self in the background. (S. Zodhiates)

Their improper knowledge establishes their will to respond in certain ways (saying “Sit here” or “Stand there”). It is not that they are unable to prevent partiality and distinctions within their community, but rather that their “evil thoughts” lead them to respond in a certain way ... Given what we have learned regarding James’s system of convictions, it is perhaps better to speak of “violations of the implanted Word received by believers” rather than “injunctions in OT law.” The readers may claim to identify with the poor, but their actions betray their aspirations to be the rich. (T. Cargal) They are confessing a complete obedience to Jesus Christ, and yet in their conduct are defying and affronting Him. Their duty to Christ forbids such snobbery: their conduct in fact fosters it. These men have made themselves judges, sinful judges giving effect to sinful discriminations. The Greek verb indicates their “facing both ways,” in their rulings, nominally to Christ and actually to worldly snobbery ... *Such judges are said to cause the Shechinah to depart.* (J. Adamson)

James 2:4 Have you not (neg. adv.) discriminated (διακρίνω, API2P, Culminative, Interrogative; shown favoritism) within yourselves (Loc. Sph.; based on erroneous external human standards instead of divine standards) and (connective) have you not (ellipsis) become (γίνομαι, AMI2P, Culminative, Interrogative, Deponent) judges (Pred. Nom.; critics) with corrupt (Descr. Gen.; evil) decisions (Gen. Assoc.; thoughts, opinions; yes you have)?

^{BGT} **James 2:4** οὐ διεκρίθητε ἐν ἑαυτοῖς καὶ ἐγένεσθε κριταὶ διαλογισμῶν πονηρῶν;

^{VUL} **James 2:4** nonne iudicatis apud vosmet ipsos et facti estis iudices cogitationum iniquarum

LWB James 2:5 Listen, my beloved brethren: Has not God chosen by Himself [election in eternity past] the poor of this world [within the family of God] to become [a potential, not a guarantee] wealthy in doctrine [requires continued positive volition] and heirs of the kingdom [a reward, not a gift] which He has promised to those who keep on loving Him [meeting the condition of this heirship]?

^{KW} **James 2:5** Listen, my brethren, beloved ones. Did not God select out for Himself those who are poor in the world’s estimation to be wealthy in the sphere of faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?

^{KJV} **James 2:5** 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?

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

James commands his readers to pay close attention to what he is going to ask next (Imperative of Command). And as is his custom when he is about to scold his readers, he first calls them “beloved brethren” to soften the blow. He is not finished chewing them out because of their preferential treatment to the well-dressed, wealthy gentlemen - to the unfair treatment of the working class stiff who is dressed in blue jeans or coveralls. Okay, I admit they were probably wearing long purple robes or animal skin togas. In any case, James is going to make the case that God by His sovereign electing grace chose the poor believer within the family of God in this world to become wealthy in doctrine (Dramatic Aorist tense). Does this mean all “poor” Christians have maximum doctrine in their souls? Don’t be ridiculous. He is merely trying to show that God’s choice is not based on external appearance, in stark contrast to their faulty assessment of the two hypothetical visitors in their assembly. Nor does He refuse to give a wealth of doctrine to a rich man. The wealth of doctrine is *made available* to rich and poor alike.

The antithesis he is creating is between outer appearance (material wealth) and the inner man (spiritual wealth). The two do not always coincide. And in the comparison he draws here, he will point out that many wealthy men in their community (who obviously do not have a wealth of doctrine nor are they heirs of the kingdom) have been maligning and cheating their fellow believers in court. So in this antithesis, the poor man that they treated so badly by making him stand against the back wall or sit down at the base of their footstool was chosen by God to become wealthy in doctrine and to become heirs of the kingdom. The poor man who is positive towards doctrine becomes spiritually wealthy, while the rich man who ignores doctrine becomes spiritually impoverished. The dramatic aorist tense points to divine election as something that happened in the past; the middle voice means God alone made the selection. Man had nothing to do with it. What may not be immediately seen is that there is a qualification to be an heir of the kingdom in this verse. You don’t automatically become an heir of the kingdom by being poor, nor do you automatically become an heir of the kingdom by merely being a Christian.

The kingdom is not promised to all believers indiscriminately, but to those “who love Him.” One kind of heirship is positional, which means all believers will go to heaven and have eternal life. Another kind of heirship is experiential, which means there are qualifications related to success in the spiritual life on earth in order for it to be fulfilled. Being an heir of the kingdom in this verse has a requirement, therefore it is experiential and is related to abundant life in the kingdom, complete with rewards earned by works. All Christians are heirs of God, but not all Christians are heirs of the kingdom. All Christians do not “love Him” or they would love His Word and His protocol plan for the Church Age. It is my observation that very few believers meet this qualification. “Loving Him” is a stage of spiritual growth that requires years of doctrinal intake, metabolization and application. The elliptical verb provided in this context is not a guarantee but a potentiality. Only the believer with *continued positive volition* after salvation will possess a *wealth of doctrine* and become an *heir of the kingdom*. Only the believer with continued positive

volition who eventually possesses a wealth of doctrine “loves Him.” If you are a working stiff or are poverty stricken, you can still metabolize doctrine and become spiritually wealthy!

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Of one thing we can be certain, and that is this: had God not chosen us we would never have chosen God; so it is a good thing He took the initiative. Just for His own use God hides within His bosom the knowledge of who are the ones who will respond to this great, divine initiative ... He does not refer to all the poor within the family of God who have taken advantage of the divine initiative. He is referring to the elect poor. Let us not make the mistake of thinking that by virtue of our being poor, we necessarily have the favor of God. It is not so. James has been speaking in the previous verses of discrimination against the poor and shabbily clad in the house of God. Now he wants to tell us that these poorly clad people God has chosen to be among the elect; He has chosen them for Himself. (S. Zodhiates) Heirship in the kingdom requires us to love God, which we can express only through obedience to Him (John 14:21-24), while obedience itself is the product of living by faith (Gal. 2:20). Anyone who does not live this kind of life cannot rightly be called *rich in faith*, even though he or she has believed in Christ for eternal salvation. (Z. Hodges) The term “poor” suggests a religious or ethical significance undergirded by the concept of election. (R. Martin)

All Christians are heirs of God by faith alone. But like the OT there are two kinds of inheritance: an inheritance which is merited and an inheritance which belongs to all Christians because they are sons, and for no other reason. The fulfillment of the land promise, while ultimately certain for the nation, was conditioned for each generation on the basis of obedience ... One becomes an heir by faith alone. But one inherits the kingdom by works. Since differing conditions are present in differing contexts, differing meanings of the word are meant ... All Christians are heirs of God, but not all are heirs of the kingdom and joint-heirs with Christ ... Paul specifically says that we are heirs of God by virtue of the fact that we are sons and for no other reason in Gal. 4:7. Yet in Romans 8:17 he says that this heirship is conditioned upon works, perseverance in suffering. Contextual considerations suggest that two kinds of Christians are in view, and thus two kinds of inheritances are implied. (J. Dillow) James has shown us that the social snobbery of the world is short-sighted and superficial. And the favoritism James’s readers practiced was based on this same shallow kind of evaluation. (F. Gaebelein) God has chosen these poor “rich in the sphere of faith,” a reference to *eschatological wealth*. (P. Davids)

James 2:5 Listen (ἀκούω, AAImp.2P, Ingressive, Command; start concentrating on this, pay attention!), **my** (Gen. Rel.) **beloved brethren** (Voc. Address): **Has not** (neg. adv.) **God** (Subj. Nom.) **chosen by Himself** (ἐκλέγω, AMI3S, Dramatic, Interrogative Ind.; divine election) **the poor** (Acc. Dir. Obj.; within the family of God) **of this world** (Loc. Place) **to become** (ellipsis, potential) **wealthy** (Pred. Acc.) **in doctrine** (Loc. Sph.; requires continued positive volition) **and** (connective) **heirs** (Pred. Acc.) **of the kingdom** (Obj. Gen.; a reward, not a gift) **which** (Gen. Appos.) **He has promised** (ἐπαγγέλλομαι, AMI3S, Gnostic, Deponent) **to those** (Dat. Adv.) **who keep on loving** (ἀγαπάω, PAPtc.DMP, Durative,

Substantival; this is an experiential condition for heirship, not a guarantee) **Him** (Acc. Dir. Obj.)?

^{BGT} **James 2:5** Ἀκούσατε, ἀδελφοί μου ἀγαπητοί· οὐχ ὁ θεὸς ἐξελέξατο τοὺς πτωχοὺς τῷ κόσμῳ πλουσίους ἐν πίστει καὶ κληρονόμους τῆς βασιλείας ἧς ἐπηγγείλατο τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν αὐτόν;

^{VUL} **James 2:5** audite fratres mei dilectissimi nonne Deus elegit pauperes in hoc mundo divites in fide et heredes regni quod repromisit Deus diligentibus se

LWB **James 2:6** But you have dishonored [treated shamefully] the poor working man. Don't wealthy men repeatedly exploit [dominate] you and drag you helplessly into courts of law?

^{KW} **James 2:6** But as for you, you dishonored the poor man. Do not those who are wealthy exploit, oppress, and dominate you, and they themselves drag you into law-courts?

^{KJV} **James 2:6** But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats?

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

James left off talking about a potential wealth of doctrine and possible heirship to the kingdom for the poor working man. But his readers had treated the poor working man shamefully (Dramatic Aorist tense). Obviously they didn't have a wealth of doctrine at their disposal when dishonoring this visitor, or if they did, they totally failed to apply it. He then asks them a question that is inconsistent with the way they had been treated themselves. Don't some of the wealthy men whom they were treating so special repeatedly dominate and exploit them (Iterative Present tense), even to the point of dragging them into law courts to steal their material belongings (Pictorial Present tense)? To James, this made absolutely no sense. Why would his readers provide preferential treatment to certain wealthy men who made life so difficult for them? And as Zodhiates surmises, some of these wealthy men who dragged them to court were their own Jewish friends and family members.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Now, what were these courts? These were ecclesiastical courts, courts established within the synagogues. The Romans didn't want to bother with the internal differences of the Jews. It seems, therefore, that these rich Sadducees were ruthless in their treatment of the poor Christian Jews and they even dragged them with their own hands to the tribunals. They used physical force ... What those poor Christians suffered at the hands of the rich Sadducees! And yet when one of them came into their place of worship, they were eager to give him the first and most prominent seat. Don't fool yourselves, James suggests in these verses; when the rich man decides to bear down upon you, he will not remember the favoritism you showed him in the assembly. (S. Zodhiates) As a class, rich people were more likely to be the enemies of Christianity and to be oppressors rather than helpers of the Christian community. (Z. Hodges)

James pointedly addresses the issue of favoritism. His intent is to root it from the soil of the early Christian church ... These rich people were receiving honor and respect from the very Christians they were dragging into court. Were these Christians not tainted by the sin of favoritism, they would remain loyal to the poor, endure injustice, and thus demonstrate the mind of Christ. Instead, they honored the rich and insulted the poor. (S. Kistemaker) It means to tyrannize. James undoubtedly is speaking of the rich Jews of his day, who were for the most part Sadducees. The reference to these people makes us believe that this epistle was written at an early date, between A.D. 35 and 65. These rich Jews held down the poorer Jews and were especially hard on the Christian Jews. The Romans were ruling at that time, but they allowed the Jews of the Dispersion quite a bit of freedom and legal control over their own nationals, their fellow Jews. (S. Zodhiates)

James 2:6 But (adversative) you (Subj. Nom.) have dishonored (ἀτιμάζω, AAI2P, Dramatic; abused, treated shamefully, contempt) the poor working man (Acc. Dir. Obj.; beggar, shafted your friend). Don't (neg. adv.) wealthy men (Subj. Nom.) repeatedly exploit (καταδυναστεύω, PAI3P, Iterative; treat you like dirt, abuse of authority, oppress, dominate) you (Gen. Disadv.) and (continuative) drag you (Acc. Dir. Obj.) helplessly (έλλκω, PAI3P, Pictorial; with their own hands) into courts of law (Acc. Place; before Roman tribunals or more likely ecclesiastical courts)?

^{BGT} **James 2:6** ὑμεῖς δὲ ἠτιμάσατε τὸν πτωχόν. οὐχ οἱ πλούσιοι καταδυναστεύουσιν ὑμῶν καὶ αὐτοὶ ἔλκουσιν ὑμᾶς εἰς κριτήρια;

^{VUL} **James 2:6** vos autem exonorastis pauperem nonne divites per potentiam opprimunt vos et ipsi trahunt vos ad iudicia

^{LWB} **James 2:7** Don't they [wealthy Jews] keep on maligning that honorable name [Jesus Christ] by which you have been surnamed [Christians]?

^{KW} **James 2:7** Is it not they themselves who revile and defame the honorable name [Christian] which was given you?

^{KJV} **James 2:7** Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Didn't some of the wealthy, unbelieving Jews continue to blaspheme (Iterative Present tense) the honorable name of Jesus Christ? Isn't that the same name by which you are called Christians (Attributive Participle)? Why then would they give preferential treatment to wealthy Jews who entered their assembly when they actually maligned the name of the Son of God? If this were Jewish law, they could be stoned to death for doing so!

RELEVANT OPINIONS

It is not only that they fought against the poor Christians, but they blasphemed the name of Christ which the believers bore. The believers in those days were marked. (S. Zodiates) Many unbelieving, wealthy Jews were a source of oppression to Christians and might drag them into the courts on any pretext. (Z. Hodges) With a few noble exceptions, the upper classes persecuted the Christians in the days of the apostles. They harassed them with lawsuits. They slandered them before judges. They cursed the blessed Name of Christ which it is the mission of the Church to exalt. It was, therefore, contrary to “the spirit of a sound mind” to court the rich. To do so showed a deficiency of common sense. It indicated a lack of self-respect. And, above all, it was disloyal to the blessed Name. (C. Jerdan)

James 2:7 Don't (neg. adv.) they (Subj. Nom.; wealthy, unbelieving Jews) keep on maligning (βλασφημέω, PAI3P, Iterative, Interrogative Ind.) that (Acc. Spec.) honorable (Compl. Acc.) name (Acc. Dir. Obj.; Jesus Christ) by which (Acc. Gen. Ref.) you (Subj. Acc.) have been surnamed (ἐπικαλέω, APPTc.ANS, Constative, Attributive; as Christians)?

^{BGT} **James 2:7** οὐκ αὐτοὶ βλασφημοῦσιν τὸ καλὸν ὄνομα τὸ ἐπικληθὲν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς;

^{VUL} **James 2:7** nonne ipsi blasphemant bonum nomen quod invocatum est super vos

LWB James 2:8 If you truly continue to carry out a royal law [problem-solving device contained in the implanted Word] according to the Scripture: “You will continue to exercise impersonal love [relaxed mental attitude] towards the one in your periphery as yourself,” you keep on doing honorably [divine good].

^{KW} **James 2:8** If indeed you fulfill the royal law of the Scripture, namely, You shall love with a divine and self-sacrificial love your neighbor as you love yourself, you are doing splendidly.

^{KJV} **James 2:8** If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well:

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

James says if they continue to accomplish a royal law of Scripture (Durative Present tense), they are performing divine good (Gnomic Present tense). They are “doing good works,” works that pass the norms and standards of royalty (Deity). Which royal law is he talking about? He is not talking about the Mosaic Law. Christians are not under the law. He is referring to a problem-solving device contained in the implanted Word, part of the *law of freedom*. This problem-solving device is: “Keep on exercising impersonal love towards the person in your periphery as yourself.” This is agape love, impersonal love, maintaining a relaxed mental attitude towards others. This is a mandate for Church Age believers.

The more you execute this problem-solving device, the better you become at it (Progressive Future tense). It grooves your neural pathways, so to speak. Let me ask you a question. You're

relaxed when you are by yourself, aren't you? Well, that is the human way of expressing this divine standard. You should be as relaxed and grace oriented with others as you are with yourself. There's nothing easy about maintaining a relaxed mental attitude, at least not in my neighborhood (Latin: proximity)! But the standard is to exercise impersonal love towards them to the same degree that you are relaxed with yourself. This law, this precept or principle, is a divine problem-solving device for Church Age believers to execute as part of their spiritual life.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The command to love is royal because it was issued by the King, our Lord Himself, in fact, first as the divine Revealer (Lev. 19:1, 18) and then in His incarnation among men (Matt. 22:37-40). But it is also *royal* because it is conduct of a high order that is worthy of a king ... The aspiring future kings will possess (reign over) the kingdom if they *love God* (verse 5), but this requires also *love for men*. (Z. Hodges) Now, says James, can you really and truthfully tell me that, when you gave the first seat to the rich man, you did it because you loved him, or was it because you loved yourself? If it is the first, you have done well, James adds ironically. They why did you not love the poor and shabbily clothed man just as much? (S. Zodhiates) In no sense is the law applied to the believer by these Scriptures; they merely imply that the law is fulfilled by the exercise of that love which is most vitally the duty of every child of God. (L. Chafer) If God is impartial, then the believers also should show love to all people without discrimination ... No one is able to say he stepped across the line in ignorance, because the law specifically forbids showing partiality ... When the law convicts him, no one can claim to be a partial transgressor. He is guilty. (S. Kistemaker)

The law is royal or regal because it is decreed by the King of kings, is fit for a king, and is considered the king of laws. (J. Blue) When James wishes to speak of the OT law (or one of its commandments) he simply uses "nomos." However, when he is referring to the Christian understanding of "law," he qualifies "nomos" as in 1:25 and 2:12: "the law of freedom." In our present verse the term "law" is equally qualified. There is nothing in our passage to speak against taking the "law of freedom" to be the "supreme law." (R. Martin) It is unusual in the NT for a single commandment to be designated with "nomos" (law), and James's use of "kata" (according to) to introduce the quotation suggests that the commandment is not identical with the "royal law." In the light of these considerations, it is best to understand *the royal law* as another characterization of the entire will of God for Christians. This will is revealed particularly in the teaching of Jesus, who demanded of His disciples a radical obedience to God, befitting those who were privileged to be "heirs of the kingdom." (D. Moo)

James 2:8 If (protasis, 1st class condition, "and you do") you truly (emphatic; really) continue to carry out (τελέω, PAI2P, Durative; accomplish, keep) a royal (Compl. Acc.; sovereign, kingly) law (Acc. Dir. Obj.; precept, principle, problem-solving device contained in the implanted Word) according to the Scripture (Acc. Gen. Ref.): "You will continue to exercise impersonal love towards (ἀγαπάω, FAI2S, Progressive & Volitive; relaxed mental attitude) the one (Acc. Dir. Obj.) in your (Gen. Rel.) periphery (Adv. Place; nearby) as (comparative) yourself

(Acc. Appos.), " **you are doing** (ποιέω, PAI2P, Gnostic; performing) **honorably** (adv.; divine good).

^{BGT} **James 2:8** Εἰ μέντοι νόμον τελείτε βασιλικὸν κατὰ τὴν γραφήν· ἀγαπήσεις τὸν πλησίον σου ὡς σεαυτὸν, καλῶς ποιεῖτε·

^{VUL} **James 2:8** si tamen legem perficitis regalem secundum scripturas diliges proximum tuum sicut te ipsum bene facitis

LWB **James 2:9** But if you keep on showing favoritism [as a result of reverse process reversionism], you are committing a sin, being convicted by the authority of the law [implanted Word, law of freedom] as violators.

^{KW} **James 2:9** But if, as is the case, you are showing partiality [to certain individuals], you are committing a sin, being effectually convicted by the law as transgressors.

^{KJV} **James 2:9** But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

The usher or security guard in the assembly made it a practice to show favoritism towards wealthy visitors (Durative Present tense). He was in reverse process reversionism. He was committing a sin (Gnostic Present tense). He was *doing* “sinful works” as opposed to *doing* “good works.” The first sin was internal, a mental attitude sin. The second sin was external, by escorting the wealthy visitor down front to the best seat in the house. He was convicted by the authority of the law (Scripture) as a transgressor. Believers are not under the Mosaic Law, they are under grace. These Jewish Christians were likewise not under the Mosaic Law. The reference to “nomos” here is the implanted Word James has been talking about since the beginning of the epistle. Precepts of the law from the OT are *restated* as divine mandates in the NT. There is an entirely new spiritual dynamic (Holy Spirit) involved in the fulfillment of the *law of liberty* or *freedom* for Christians than there was with OT Jews. Moreover, *violator* is a plural, not a singular; this means the other members of the assembly were also guilty of playing favorites.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

He gives the readers of this epistle to understand that he is aware of the fact that this behavior is not accidental, but that it has become a habit with Christians in the house of God to put on appearances and judge others by their appearances. The tense of the verb here is such that it would indicate continued habitual behavior of this kind. (S. Zodhiates) Given what we have learned regarding James’s system of convictions, it is perhaps better to speak of ‘violations of the implanted Word received by believers’ rather than “injunctions in OT law.” The relationship between “doing the Word” and “remaining in the perfect law of freedom” in the introductory section to this sub-unit (James 1:22-25) would suggest that a better identification for the revelation of the will of God within the figurativization of the Epistle would be “the implanted Word” which changes the desire/will of

the believer. (T. Cargal) It is well to bear in mind that the conception of sin among the Jews was not so deep as it became in the light of Christian teaching. (W. Nicole)

James 2:9 But (contrast) if (protasis, 1st class condition, “and you do”) you keep on showing favoritism (προσωπολημπτέω, PAI2P, Durative; reverse process reversionism), you are committing (ἐργάζομαι, PMI2P, Gnostic, Deponent; sinful works as opposed to good works) a sin (Acc. Dir. Obj.), being convicted (ἐλέγχω, PPpTc.NMP, Descriptive, Attributive; reproved) by the authority of the law (Abl. Agency; implanted Word, law of freedom) as (comparative) violators (Pred. Nom.; transgressors).

^{BGT} **James 2:9** εἰ δὲ προσωπολημπτεῖτε, ἀμαρτίαν ἐργάζεσθε ἐλεγχόμενοι ὑπὸ τοῦ νόμου ὡς παραβάται.

^{BNM} **James 2:9** εἰ@cs δέ@cc προσωπολημπτέω@vipa2p ἀμαρτία@nafsc ἐργάζομαι@vipm2p ἐλέγχω@vpppnm ὑπό@pg ὁ@dgms νόμος@ngmsc ὡς@cs παραβάτης@nmpc

^{VUL} **James 2:9** si autem personas accipitis peccatum operamini redarguti a lege quasi transgressores

LWB James 2:10 For anyone who tries to keep the entire [Mosaic] law, but stumbles on one [command of the law], he has become guilty of all [the law].

^{KW} **James 2:10** For whoever observes the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all [the commandments].

^{KJV} **James 2:10** For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Some of his readers think they would rather keep the Mosaic Law than live by the *law of liberty*. They were completely in the dark dispensationally. So James reminds them that anyone who tries to keep the entire Mosaic Law (Purpose Subjunctive) but trips up on even one little command (Result Subjunctive), becomes guilty of the entire law. If you're going to live by the Mosaic Law, it's an all or nothing endeavor. The law is a “unified whole.” You either keep all the commands of the law perfectly, which nobody has done except Jesus Christ, or you fail. Obviously, all of their good intentions (Gnostic Aorist tense) will inevitably fail (Culminative Aorist tense), because it can't be done. So why not live by the *law of liberty* instead, which is what we are supposed to do in the first place?!

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Such an indictment strikes most modern readers as overly harsh, and indeed greatly at odds with our conceptions of law and justice ... Law cannot be broken up into individual prescriptions, because it is an ethic involving a general disposition, a disposition typified by the will of God. Indeed, the “law” cannot even be broken into broadly defined moral absolutes such as the “love commandment,” but is

rather the “implanting” of the divine will within the believer so as to transform the very nature, disposition, and desire of the believer. Inconsistency between any of one’s deeds and the Word implanted within believers suggests that one has not truly received the Word and been transformed by it. (T. Cargal) Such warnings were necessary because of the tendency to think that obedience to the *heavier* commandments outweighed any failure to adhere to the *lighter* requirements of the law. (D. Moo)

One of the sorriest tricks that Satan has taught the Christian is to minimize his own sin. Whenever we do something that is contrary to God’s will and law, the first thing which Satan tries to do is to pat us on the back and make us believe that, after all, it isn’t anything to be concerned about. And then before our eyes he presents all the good things that we have done ... Satan and all his followers specialize in tripping the Christian and sometimes they do succeed. But the true Christian finds no satisfaction in this fallen position. (S. Zodhiates) The Law “hangs together,” or is a unit, because it reflects the nature of character of God. (W. Baker) We cannot perform some of the duties enumerated in the commandments, thinking we are thereby relieved of performing others. (J. Boice)

James 2:10 For (explanatory) anyone (Subj. Nom.) who tries to keep (τηρέω, AASubj.3S, Gnostic, Purpose) the entire (Acc. Measure) law (Acc. Dir. Obj.; Mosaic), but (adversative) stumbles (πταίω, AASubj.3S, Culminative, Result; sins, trips up) on one (Dat. Ind. Obj., Measure; command of the law), he has become (γίνομαι, Perf.AI3S, Descriptive, Deponent) guilty (Pred. Nom.) of all (Obj. Gen., Measure; the law).

^{BGT} **James 2:10** ὅστις γὰρ ὅλον τὸν νόμον τηρήσῃ πταίσῃ δὲ ἐν ἐνί, γέγονεν πάντων ἔνοχος.

^{VUL} **James 2:10** quicumque autem totam legem servaverit offendat autem in uno factus est omnium reus

LWB James 2:11 For He who said: “Do not commit adultery” also said: “Do not commit murder.” Now if you do not commit adultery, but you commit murder, you have become a violator of the law.

^{KW} **James 2:11** For He who said, Do not commit adultery, also said, Do not commit murder. Now if, as is the case, you are not committing adultery, but are committing murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.

^{KJV} **James 2:11** 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.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

The Lord God said two things (Constative Aorist tense) through Moses to the Jews: Do not commit adultery and do not commit murder (Subjunctive of Prohibition). Actually, He said more than two things, but James quotes just two of them here as examples. Why? Was it to prove a point, or to speak about two sins that he knows have been committed recently by someone in their midst? Some commentators believe there was an actual murderer among them, referring to

James 4:2 and 5:6. Other commentators believe their failure to support widows and orphans was a type of murder. In any case, if you don't commit adultery (Gnomic Aorist tense), but you do commit murder (Dramatic Aorist tense), you have become a violator of the law (Descriptive Perfect tense). You only have to break one command to be guilty of breaking them all.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

When a criminal is brought before the judge because he has killed somebody, he cannot get out of the punishment demanded by the law by telling the judge that he has not stolen anything, that he has not been committing adultery. All his goodness will not avail in the face of a single transgression of the law. It is as if he has disobeyed the whole law and therefore must suffer the penalty imposed. (S. Zodhiates) Naturally James is addressing himself to Jewish Christian readers who still retained a high opinion of law-keeping, though possibly not as intensely as those in Jerusalem who were so *zealous for the law*. Their culture and heritage strongly inclined them to this, even after they had been justified by faith in Christ. James writes with considerable perception to such readers. (Z. Hodges)

God, as the Jews always knew, is merciful to sinners, but not by any provision of the law. Those who seek to condone what they consider their excusable breaches of God's Law are *ipso facto* closing their hearts to repentance, for which God normally gives us time. (J. Adamson) To violate the law at any one point is not to violate one commandment only; it is to violate the will of God and to contradict the character of God ... The entire law of God has been flouted. (F. Gaebelin) Those who pride themselves as free from fleshly sins (e.g., adultery) and are swift to condemn such sins in others have made their condemnation of fleshly sins an excuse for indulgence towards spiritual sins. (R. Martin) You need not touch an electric wire at 1,000 points; you get the full shock of the current by touching just one point. (R. Lenski)

James 2:11 For (explanatory) He (Subj. Nom.) who said (λέγω, AAPtc.NMS, Constative, Substantival; through Moses): "Do not (neg. particle) commit adultery (μοιχεύω, AASubj.2S, Dramatic, Prohibition)" also (adjunctive) said (λέγω, AAI3S, Constative): "Do not (neg. particle) commit murder (φονεύω, AASubj.2S, Dramatic, Prohibition)." Now (inferential) if (protasis, 2nd class condition, "and you didn't") you do not (neg. adv.) commit adultery (μοιχεύω, PAI2S, Gnomic), but (contrast) you commit murder (φονεύω, PAI2P, Dramatic), you have become (γίνομαι, Perf.AI2S, Descriptive, Deponent) a violator (Pred. Nom.) of the law (Obj. Gen.).

^{BGT} **James 2:11** ὁ γὰρ εἰπὼν· μὴ μοιχεύσης, εἶπεν καί· μὴ φονεύσης· εἰ δὲ οὐ μοιχεύεις φονεύεις δέ, γέγονας παραβάτης νόμου.

^{VUL} **James 2:11** qui enim dixit non moechaberis dixit et non occides quod si non moechaberis occides autem factus es transgressor legis

LWB **James 2:12** So keep on speaking [free from mental attitude and verbal sins] and in this manner keep on doing [divine good production] as *those* [Christians] who are destined to be evaluated [for rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ] by a law of freedom [not the Mosaic Law],

^{KW} **James 2:12** In this manner be speaking and in this manner be doing, namely, as those who are about to be judged by a law of liberty,

^{KJV} **James 2:12** So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Believers during the Church Age dispensation are under a *law of freedom*, not under the Mosaic Law of bondage. Because of their Jewish heritage, James has to remind his readers that once they became Christians, they entered a new way of spiritual life which no longer requires adherence to the Mosaic Law. The principles behind the Mosaic Law have been restated for Christians according to grace and freedom; but the principles are still valid when it comes to avoiding mental, verbal and overt sins. It still follows that they should keep on speaking (Iterative Present tense) without mental attitude and verbal sins. It also follows that they should keep on producing divine good production (good works) as opposed to sin.

James commands them to do this (Imperative mood). But rather than think that they must think, speak and behave like this in order to be justified, they are to change their thinking to embrace experiential sanctification. As believers their eternal destiny is sealed; as Christians their rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ are still to be determined. They are destined (Gnomic Present tense) to be evaluated (Futuristic Present tense) at the Judgment Seat of Christ for rewards; they are not destined to be judged as unbelievers at the Great White Throne. They are going to be evaluated by a *law of freedom* and liberty, not by the Mosaic Law. The protocol for their new spiritual life is different than what it used to be in the prior Jewish dispensation.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The word with which one's deeds must be consistent is "the implanted Word," the "law of freedom" which expresses the will of God. (T. Cargal) There should be a certain purpose every time we open our mouths to speak to our fellow men ... This is not a reference to the Ten Commandments or to the Mosaic Law. James is no doubt referring to the same law, to the same rule, to the same principle that he previously referred to when he called the precept, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," a royal law. Woe unto us if we are to be judged by the strict letter of the Mosaic Law. (S. Zodiates) It is not the OT law by which Christians will be judged, but rather by the *law of liberty* to which he has already referred ... Our Christian lives will be assessed in the light of the high and holy standards of the *law of liberty*. In speaking of judgment, of course, James can only mean what we refer to as the Judgment Seat of Christ. (Z. Hodges) Bible doctrine is called the "law of freedom" because doctrine defines the believer's freedom to glorify God - James 1:25, 2:12. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) The standard of judgment will be "the law that gives freedom," rather than the enslaving legalistic system developed by the scribes and Pharisees. (F. Gaebelain)

The strictness of law cannot be humanized by subterfuges which pretend not to impair its integrity as law, but only, as in the law of liberty, by recognizing a distinct but not identical sister principle, at the same time recognizing that it is not identical with law in the narrow sense. James says in effect, "I advise you to *choose* the law of liberty as God's law of life for you: but remember this – just as the old law (which a Christian Jew may still choose as God's law for his life) requires infallibility within its scope, so likewise there is an indispensable requirement in the law of liberty." They are really the same in principle, both resting on God's justice; but they necessarily differ in administration. (J. Adamson) Bible doctrine is called the "law of freedom" because doctrine defines the believer's freedom to glorify God ... Bona fide, properly motivated production is a natural consequence of a mental attitude renewed by doctrine, oriented to grace, and occupied with Christ. Our Lord as Judge goes straight to the heart of the matter, rewarding the cause, not the results. Obviously, all human good is rejected at the judgment seat of Christ. No production of the sin nature escapes judgment. They are burned like wood, hay, and stubble. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

The Ten Commandments were given by God for the promotion, the maintenance and the protection of freedom. They are a part of the Word of God, which lives and abides forever. In every generation the commandments have formed the basis for human freedom in spite of every conspiracy formed against them. These principles are the very foundation upon which America was built, and they constitute a marvelous heritage. Today these principles are being rejected by us as a people and undermined by those dedicated to our destruction as a free nation. As a result of their rejection of the principles of freedom, the Exodus generation wandered in the desert for forty years, never able to claim the Land designed for them by God. Jeremiah's generation broke the Covenant and ignored the existence of a conspiracy, and their nation was destroyed. Our freedom as individuals and our independence as a nation rests upon first the understanding and then the application of God's principles of human freedom. Only then can the effectiveness of any conspiracy formed against us be neutralized! (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) Both their speech and their deeds will be assessed by their consistency with the "implanted Word" (law of freedom) in the approaching eschatological judgment. Thus his emphasis on "keeping the whole law" is not a rigid legalism; the stress is not on the observation of a sum total of minutiae, but on the maintenance of a complete integrity of word and deed. (T. Cargal)

In the function of a nation, there are certain principles that must be followed and carefully guarded, for they are absolutely necessary for the establishment and survival of freedom. An example is the concept of privacy and private property. Both of these are mentioned specifically in the Decalogue and are protected by the divine laws declared in the Ten Commandments. Any attempt to invade the privacy or the property of an individual is destructive to freedom and to the proper function of a national entity. Today we have a tragic breakdown in law; therefore, the protection of privacy and property is being eroded and the law is being subverted to promote socialism. The very essence of socialism is an invasion of privacy and private property. Socialism, when carried to the extreme, results in the type of government which exists today in Communist countries. It is anti-God, anti-Christian, and anti-Biblical. You can immediately see that when a nation promotes anti-divine principles and makes those principles a part of its legislative laws, then socialism becomes the law of the land. Socialism not only destroys freedom in a nation, it eventually destroys the national entity itself, for it is international in its scope and denies the principle of nationalism as designed by God.

The Word of God sanctions the concept of national entities for the preservation of the human race.
(R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

James 2:12 So (inferential, adv.; in this manner, as follows) keep on speaking (λαλέω, PAImp.2P, Iterative, Command; free from mental attitude and verbal sins) and (connective) in this manner (Adv. Manner) keep on doing (ποιέω, PAImp.2P, Iterative, Command; divine good production) as (comparative) those (ellipsis; Christians) who are destined (μέλλω, PAPtc.NMP, Gnostic, Substantival) to be evaluated (κρίνω, PPInf., Futuristic, Result; for rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ) by a law (Abl. Means) of freedom (Adv. Gen. Ref.),

^{BGT} **James 2:12** οὕτως λαλεῖτε καὶ οὕτως ποιεῖτε ὡς διὰ νόμου ἐλευθερίας μέλλοντες κρίνεσθαι.

^{VUL} **James 2:12** sic loquimini et sic facite sicut per legem libertatis incipientes iudicari

LWB **James 2:13** For evaluation [at the Judgment Seat of Christ] will be without mercy [no reward for human good] for the one who did not produce mercy [grace orientation]; mercy will triumph during the time of evaluation [Judgment Seat of Christ].

^{KW} **James 2:13** For the judgment will be without mercy to the person who did not show mercy; mercy exults in triumph over judgment.

^{KJV} **James 2:13** For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

The only thoughts, speech or overt activity (works) that will be rewarded at the Judgment Seat of Christ will be that which measures up to divine norms and standards. Thoughts, words and activity done in the energy of the flesh will be evaluated without mercy; that means it will be rejected without question. Divine good will be accepted; human good will be rejected. Works done as an application of grace under the law of freedom will be accepted; works done as an application of legalism under the Mosaic Law (Pictorial Present tense) will be rejected. The evaluation of the believer who chose to follow the Mosaic Law will be without mercy; the evaluation of the believer who chose to follow the law of freedom will be shown mercy. Divine norms and standards do not bend to meet the failings of human good. Mercy, the acceptance of divine good under grace mechanics, will triumph (Latin: superexaltation) during the evaluation (Futuristic Present tense). Rewards will be distributed for divine good (gold, silver, precious stones); a bonfire will be built to burn all human good (wood, hay, stubble).

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The meaning here is not that Christ, the Judge, will be merciful to those who show mercy to their fellow men down here on earth. There is no salvation by works in the Book of James or on any page

of the entire Bible. Salvation, the new birth, is simply by faith in the finished work of Christ. James is concerned here about what happens after a man believes. As there will be degrees of punishment for the unbeliever, so also there will be degrees of reward for the believer. The aim of every born-again child of God should be to attain the highest rewards from Jesus Christ ... Mercy shown by unbelievers will not count toward their being rescued from eternal punishment in any way, shape, or form; because good works without faith are as filthy rags ... Our fresh supply of mercy will come to us only as we dispense it to others ... James speaks here of *deserved* mercy. It is quite different from the mercy which God manifests toward the sinner who believes. (S. Zodhiates)

Any reasonable person must know that a judgment of his Christian life “by the book” (with full strictness) is likely to leave him with much censure from his Savior and with much loss of potential reward. What is needed in that day is mercy – a willingness on the part of our Lord and Judge to assess our words and deeds with the fullest possible measure of compassion. (Z. Hodges) The standard the Lord will apply at the Judgment Seat of Christ is the filling of the Spirit. All of the thoughts, words and deeds done when we are filled with the Spirit will receive a reward. All of the thoughts, words and deeds done when we were not filled with the Spirit will be burned. It’s that simple, though Paul and not James presented this to us in later epistles with great clarity. So our goal on earth is to be filled with the Spirit as much as we possibly can, to log as many hours in the sphere of *agape* love and divine power as we are able. (LWB)

Mercy triumphs over legalistic judgment ... the intervention of mercy exalts over the law of ordinances ... Like the prophets, James resolves the tension between justice and mercy by giving precedence to mercy. But that does not mean that mercy violates justice, for justice must be done. In His perfect righteousness, justice and mercy are both combined. (J. Adamson) God has ordained unalterable laws. Complete and consistent obedience is required if spiritual maturity is to be attained. (J. Blue) The judgment which would condemn any and all of us, is, in the case of the merciful, overpowered by the blessed effect of mercy, and mercy prevails over it. (H. Alford) Instead of the mercy the man needed, he received cruel discrimination, and that at the hands of Christians. (F. Gaebelien)

James 2:13 For (explanatory) evaluation (Subj. Nom.; judgment) will be (ellipsis) without mercy (Pred. Nom.; human good will be rejected) for the one (Dat. Disadv.; believer) who did not (neg. particle) produce (ποιέω, PMI3S, Pictorial; show, execute) mercy (Acc. Dir. Obj.; grace function); mercy (Subj. Nom.) will triumph (κατακαυχάομαι, PMI3S, Futuristic, Deponent; at the Judgment Seat of Christ) during the time of evaluation (Adv. Gen. Time, Place; no rewards for human good).

^{BGT} **James 2:13** ἡ γὰρ κρίσις ἀνέλεος τῷ μὴ ποιήσαντι ἔλεος· κατακαυχᾶται ἔλεος κρίσεως.

^{VUL} **James 2:13** iudicium enim sine misericordia illi qui non fecit misericordiam superexultat autem misericordia iudicio

LWB **James 2:14** What profit is it, my brethren, if someone [reversionistic believer] alleges that he has faith [without doctrine], but he does not keep on having production [either in the soul or by external application]? Is faith [without doctrine] able to deliver him?

^{KW} **James 2:14** What profit is there, my brethren, if a person is saying, I am in possession of faith, and he is not in possession of works? The aforementioned faith [namely, that faith which does not result in good works] is not able to save him, is it?

^{KJV} **James 2:14** What *doth it* profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

“To read James 2:14-26 correctly requires more than fine-tuning our previous conceptions about the text. It means discarding those conceptions completely and starting all over again from an entirely new vantage point. It means replacing our old pair of spectacles with a brand new pair in which the lenses are “ground” to the optical prescription that correctly perceives this inspired passage of God’s Word ... This is a way of saying that popular views don’t just narrowly misconstrue James’s meaning. They miss it by a thousand miles! ... There is no such thing as a truly traditional interpretation of James 2:14-26. Instead, it is unmistakable that there is actually no consensus about the meaning of this passage, even among Protestants ... James 2:14-26 remains a storm center in Christian thought ... To understand this famous passage one must forget the issue of eternal salvation. It simply is not the point under discussion. James is writing about the temporal life and the preserving of it.” (Z. Hodges) This next section needed an introductory comment and this was the best I could find for the occasion. (LWB)

There is nothing inherent in the word “faith” that deserves a pat on the back. People exercise faith in something nearly every day of their life. But often that faith is completely misguided because the object of their faith is completely unworthy. The exercise of faith is only beneficial if it has a worthy object. In the spiritual realm, there is no profit in having faith in a rock or a tree to do something for you. That is an example of idolatry. There is also no benefit in a faith that does not produce something worthy in the soul and towards others by external application. Worshipping nature does not create anything of value in your soul, nor does it change the way nature operates. If millions of people started worshipping trees, nothing in nature would change as a result of that false worship. Also, there is nothing you can learn about trees that can in any way change your soul. There is no such thing in the spiritual life as tree *gnosis* being converted into tree *epignosis* being converted into tree *sophia* in the form of spiritual production.

The only spiritual profit in having faith is in having *faith in correct doctrine*. The direct object of your faith is crucial to its having any benefit in the spiritual life. You might learn a lot about trees, become an expert on forestry and horticulture, and perhaps even “save a tree.” But you will receive absolutely nothing in the spiritual realm for “becoming one with a tree.” Bible doctrine is the only raw material for spiritual growth; there is no substitute. But Bible doctrine is meant to be metabolized and applied to daily life. It is not enough to listen to sermons and memorize verses in Scripture. You must make those sermon lessons and those Bible verses your

very own. You must concentrate on them, categorize them, believe in them, and transfer that knowledge from the left lobe of your soul to the right lobe. In the left lobe they are merely raw material; in the right lobe of your soul they are principles ready to be applied in daily life. If what you learn is never metabolized, then it can never be properly applied.

So what profit is it to you or anyone else if you claim to have faith without doctrine in your soul? Unbelievers have faith without *gospel doctrine* in their soul, but they are going to hell. Such faith certainly profits them little! Many believers have faith in *gospel doctrine* – which means they are going to heaven – but they have virtually no *beyond gospel doctrine* in their soul for application to daily life. Therefore, they have nothing in their soul by which to perform good works, that is, works that meet divine norms and standards. They can busy themselves doing all kinds of things around the church or in the “mission field,” but the exercise of this faith produces nothing but human good – works that flunk the quality necessary for rewards at the Evaluation Seat of Christ. The hypothetical believer James refers to in this passage is a reversionistic believer. He thinks he has faith, even claims to himself and others that he does, but he has not metabolized anything he has learned and has not applied anything he knows according to divine norms and standards.

The potential subjunctive mood means maybe he has faith with doctrine and maybe he doesn't. We can't read his mind, so we can't know for sure. We hear what he claims (Static Present tense), but what we hear and see doesn't reflect his claims (Gnomic Present tense). His faith is obviously empty of content; it has no metabolized Bible doctrine behind it. So is this empty profession of faith without doctrine able to deliver him in daily life? At the end of the day, is his faith without doctrine in the soul able to propel him spiritually (Culminative Aorist tense)? The answer from heaven is, “No, your faith is disqualified because it does not have the building material of Bible doctrine behind it.” And faith without the working object of doctrine is useless and vain, unable to improve the man spiritually, i.e., save him or deliver him experientially. This reversionistic believer is self-deceived. His faith has no doctrine behind it, or has heretical beliefs behind it, one or the other. Neither scenario produces anything profitable in the spiritual life.

Have you ever met a believer in Jesus Christ who knows nothing about the Bible after years of being a Christian? He has no internal production (works) in his life. Have you ever met a believer in Jesus Christ who seems to contradict what he believes by his daily life? He has no external production (works) in his life. Many believers fit both these descriptions. Occasionally, you will hear Christians talking about a believer who knows a lot of doctrine but doesn't exhibit it in his life. Two things are possible here, forks in the road if you will. First, does this believer *really* know a lot of doctrine, or has he just memorized a lot of Bible verses that he can't apply to anything in life? It has been my continuing experience that these “strong believers” don't know enough doctrine to come in out of the rain. They are reversionistic believers; they are never in fellowship; they are constantly living in sin. Second, are the Christians who are talking about a specific “doctrinal believer,” actually spiritual morons themselves? It has been my continuing experience that the Christians who are making this assessment of another believer are reversionistic believers themselves; they are constantly living in sin, just a different sin from the person they are critiquing.

“Faith is something living; if it is really inside, it cannot but manifest itself on the outside.” (S. Zodhiates) That is a true statement only if the faith is truly living (filling of the Spirit), and only if it is really inside (has metabolized doctrine in the soul), and only if it is being applied either internally (thoughts) or externally (speech and conduct) to daily life. If you remember anything about this study of James, please remember that “works” or “doing” includes mental activity. Just because you can’t hear or see something going on in the thinking of a believer doesn’t mean it isn’t happening. For example, I am reviewing the platform of political candidates for President of the United States in preparation for voting in a couple of days. I am utilizing the metabolized Bible doctrine in my soul to come to a good decision. You cannot see the application of doctrine in my thoughts; nor will you be able to see my informed vote in the secret ballot box. But both of these activities are “works” or “doing” of the implanted Word, not “hearing” only. My point here is that “works” and “doing” are often invisible, so be extremely cautious when assuming the role of “fruit inspector.” Profitable external activity is not a guarantee that the inner man is not corrupt.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

One can say he has faith, but if he has no repentance for his past sins and doesn’t voluntarily quit those sins, he cannot have the peace of God in his heart. This verse is a pronouncement of the practicality of the Christian faith. Christianity is not getting a few notions in our heads, but it is a change of the seat of all our affections and dispositions, a change of the heart. (S. Zodhiates) The only appropriate answer, in the light of the whole epistle, is to say that James is picking up the theme of 1:21. This theme is the truth that obedience to God’s Word can “save” the life from the deadly outcome of sin. Faith alone cannot do this. Works of obedience are completely indispensable. (Z. Hodges) Salvation in this context is *sanctification* salvation, not *justification* salvation. It is about works *flowing from* the experiential spiritual life, not works that *bestow* the *positional* spiritual life. (LWB) This epistle leaves no place for a religion that is mere mental acceptance of truth. (F. Gaebelien) That is what we call “gnosis” or raw doctrinal material, as opposed to metabolized doctrine. It is called *receptive cognition* in some circles. (LWB)

This is the celebrated passage (2:14-26) which was a stumbling-block to Martin Luther. (T. Carson) Works are clearly a condition of salvation according to James. But what is the context of that salvation? Answer: sanctification. (J. Dillow) Works, according to James, are not the works of the law in the lower sense, the mere observance of carnal ordinances and usages, but an active life of practical morality, the rule of which is indeed found in the Mosaic Law, and especially in the command to love one another, but so found, as apprehended and appropriated by the spirit of liberty. (H. Alford) The verb *pisteuein* can refer to purely intellectual belief that a statement is true, that something is the case, though perhaps with a stronger implication of the trustworthiness of what is believed. It can also refer to trust in and commitment to someone or something, the content of what is believed, or faithfulness. (R. Bauckham)

James 2:14 What (interrogative) profit (Subj. Nom.; is there) is (ellipsis) it (Pred. Nom.), my (Gen. Rel.) brethren (Voc. Address), if (protatis, 3rd class condition, “maybe yes, maybe no”) someone (Subj. Nom.; reversionisitic believer) alleges (λέγω,

PASubj.3S, Static, Potential; claims) that he has (ἔχω, PAInf., Gnostic, Inf. As Dir. Obj. of Verb) faith (Acc. Dir. Obj.; without doctrine), but (adversative) he does not (neg. particle) keep on having (ἔχω, PASubj.3S, Gnostic, Potential) production (Acc. Dir. Obj.; in the soul and by external application)? Is faith (Subj. Nom.; without doctrine) able (δύναμαι, PMI3S, Gnostic, Interrogative Ind., Deponent; have the power) to deliver (σώζω, AAInf., Culminative, Result) him (Acc. Dir. Obj.; doctrine is the working object of faith)?

^{BGT} **James 2:14** Τί τὸ ὄφελος, ἀδελφοί μου, ἐὰν πίστιν λέγη τις ἔχειν ἔργα δὲ μὴ ἔχη; μὴ δύναται ἢ πίστις σῶσαι αὐτόν;

^{VUL} **James 2:14** quid proderit fratres mei si fidem quis dicat se habere opera autem non habeat numquid poterit fides salvare eum

LWB **James 2:15** **If a [Christian] brother or sister exists shabbily dressed and lacking daily food,**

^{KW} **James 2:15** If a brother [Christian] or a sister [in Christ] have been poorly dressed for a long time and are still lacking in daily food,

^{KJV} **James 2:15** If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

If a Christian brother or sister exists (Pictorial Present tense) in your periphery with shabby clothes and a deficiency in daily food (Potential Subjunctive mood), you and other fellow believers in your neighborhood are supposed to help them out. There's no excuse for callous conduct when you see a Christian in desperate need. There is hardly anyone in the United States today who meets this kind of desperate need, but it was not true in the days of the Roman Empire. James creates this hypothetical scenario with a 3rd class conditional clause, meaning "maybe someone like this does exist, and maybe they don't." In the days of the dispersion, this was a highly likely scenario for his readers. He doesn't mean complete nakedness in this verse, but rather insufficient clothing to protect them from rain, snow, or the cold of winter.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

He is concerned primarily about those within the household of faith, for they constitute the divine family here on earth. If our children, or fathers, or mothers were in need, we would not think of refusing them, would we? How dare we, then, refuse our spiritual brothers, our spiritual sons and daughters? (S. Zodiates) This is a typical Hebrew farewell ... more or less equivalent to our "goodbye." (S. Kistemaker) The unclothed and hungry brother cannot be fed and warmed with mere words but physical sustenance. (D. Carson) Evidently the readers, having been saved out of a life of legalism, had tended to go from one extreme of legalism to the other extreme of license and laxity toward the divine requirements. They felt that being orthodox in doctrine was

sufficient, but they were not allowing the Christian faith to affect their whole life-style. They needed to be challenged toward a productive faith. (V. Doerksen)

James 2:15 If (protasis, 3rd class condition, "maybe yes, maybe no") a brother (Subj. Nom.) or (disjunctive) sister (Subj. Nom.) exists (ὑπάρχω, PASubj.3P, Pictorial, Potential) shabbily dressed (Pred. Nom.) and (connective) lacking (λείπω, PMptc.NMP, Pictorial, Modal; being deficient, falling short) daily (Gen. Measure) food (Obj. Gen.; nourishment),

^{BGT} **James 2:15** ἐὰν ἀδελφὸς ἢ ἀδελφὴ γυμνοὶ ὑπάρχωσιν καὶ λειπόμεινοι τῆς ἐφημέρου τροφῆς

^{VUL} **James 2:15** si autem frater aut soror nudi sunt et indigent victu cotidiano

LWB James 2:16 And any one of you [in emotional revolt of the soul] says to them: "Go away in peace, warm yourselves and eat until you are satisfied," but you don't give them those necessities for the body, what profit is there [in your doctrinal misapplication]?

^{KW} **James 2:16** And one of you says to them, Be going away in peace, be warming yourselves to your utter satisfaction, and you do not give them the things needful for the body, what profit is there?

^{KJV} **James 2:16** 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?

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

If a Christian brother or sister in your periphery lacks sufficient clothing and basic nourishment for a day, and you give them (Potential Subjunctive mood) three commands (Imperative mood) instead of giving them (Culminative Aorist tense) the basic necessities their body is lacking, what good is your application of faith? There's not much application of doctrine in this scenario. What are the three commands? First, go away in peace. Second, warm yourselves. Third, eat as much food as you want until you are stuffed. None of these commands help them out in their time of need. What they need is additional clothing and a good meal, not best wishes. And by not providing what you can with grace orientation, you are failing to exercise *agape* love in the filling of the Spirit. Now don't misunderstand James. There is nothing wrong with kind words. The problem here is that kind words should be supplemented with food and clothing since they are so desperately needed. Otherwise, what we have is a case of doctrinal misapplication. Words are given when words, clothing and food is needed.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

To say that God will provide the needed clothes and the needed daily bread, when we can perfectly well provide them ourselves, is making mockery of the name of God. We should have it as a principle not to pray for the things that we can very well take care of ourselves. (S. Zodhiates) The speaker does nothing and goes off, leaving the beggar still cold and hungry, with

the law of love unfulfilled. (J. Adamson) The only explicit opposition of actions in this section of the Epistle opposes the positive action of believers who give “the things needed by the body” to a destitute “brother or sister” to the negative action of only providing them with a word of blessing. There is no “benefit” for the destitute members of the community if all they receive are pious words. Thus, the opposition focuses on the relative benefits of words and deeds ... It is only the offering of words in isolation from “giving” what is “needed by the body” that is of no “benefit” since such words alone cannot provide physical life for the destitute members of the community. (T. Cargal)

James 2:16 And (continuative) any one (Subj. Nom.) of you (Partitive Gen.; in emotional revolt of the soul) says (λέγω, AASubj.3S, Static, Potential) to them (Dat. Disadv.; in a wish-prayer, hollow sentiment): Go away (ὑπάγω, PAImp.2P, Static, Command) in peace (Loc. Sph.), warm yourselves (θερμαίνω, PMImp.2P, Static, Command) and (continuative) eat until you are satisfied (χορτάζω, PMImp.2P, Static, Command), but (adversative) you don't (neg. particle) give (δίδωμι, AASubj.2P, Culminative, Result) them (Dat. Adv.) those (Acc. Spec.) necessities (Acc. Dir. Obj.) for the body (Gen. Adv.), what (interrogative) profit (Subj. Nom.) is (ellipsis) there (Pred. Nom.)?

^{BGT} **James 2:16** εἶπη δέ τις αὐτοῖς ἐξ ὑμῶν· ὑπάγετε ἐν εἰρήνῃ, θερμαίνεσθε καὶ χορτάζεσθε, μὴ δώτε δὲ αὐτοῖς τὰ ἐπιτήδεια τοῦ σώματος, τί τὸ ὄφελος;

^{VUL} **James 2:16** dicat autem aliquis de vobis illis ite in pace calefacimini et saturamini non dederitis autem eis quae necessaria sunt corporis quid proderit

LWB James 2:17 Even so, faith [after salvation], if it does not have doctrinal application [works], keeps on being dead by itself.

^{KW} **James 2:17** Thus also, the aforementioned faith, if it does not keep on having works, is dead in its very constituent elements.

^{KJV} **James 2:17** Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Faith in this context is not *for* salvation, but *after* salvation. It is experiential, not positional. Faith does not operate properly on its own. It is not a one-man team. It requires a direct object: Bible doctrine. It requires application: works. I cringe when using the word “works” in this context, because of the distortions that have come from it. And I flat out refuse to use the word “deeds” because nothing but heresy can come from that concept. The best translation of “ergon” is either *spiritual production* or *doctrinal application*. These words are pregnant with meaning; the words “works” or “deeds” have been emptied of meaning. If the different connotations behind these words are not understood, the entire book of James becomes a legalistic, strawy epistle just like Martin Luther claimed. Don’t let his frustration become your frustration. Faith

before salvation has the working object of Christ; faith *after* salvation has the working object of Bible doctrine.

As we have discussed in previous passages, the metabolization of doctrine and its subsequent application are both part of “works.” Without metabolized doctrine in the soul and its subsequent application, faith is all alone and is in effect “dead.” Faith is either short-circuited, or what it produces is inadequate for the test. But faith which includes the working object of doctrine is highly beneficial to both the giver and the recipients. It can be correctly applied internally and externally and meet divine norms and standards. James has just analyzed the believer who has a malfunction in the middle of the grace apparatus for perception. He has listened to doctrine (*gnosis*), and has perhaps metabolized a little bit of it (*epignosis*), but there has yet to be any correct application (*sophia*) of what he knows to daily life. The attempt to apply doctrine misfired in this scenario.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Doctrine calls for practice. The person who does not practice the truth to which he has been exposed has not had his heart opened to hear. (W. Best) Faith is sterile and ineffective by *itself*, because it cannot accomplish the needed result ... When faith is described as *dead* in James 2, this can easily be understood in context as meaning that faith is *sterile, ineffectual, or unproductive* ... James’s intention is not dogmatically oriented, but practically oriented. (Z. Hodges) In James’s discussion all of these three dimensions of faith are present: assent to true statements, trust and commitment, faithfulness. In genuine faith, all three dimensions are present, and, as we shall see, James cannot envisage separation ... True faith involves beliefs about God, but also the wholehearted trust in God which is maintained in ongoing loyalty to God even when faith is severely tested. (R. Bauckham) The reason why I prefer the translation *doctrinal application* or *spiritual production* instead of “works” is because the majority of commentators leave the first part of this definition of *faith* out of the equation: True faith involves beliefs about God, i.e., metabolized Bible doctrine. (LWB)

Faith which is no longer expressed in practical and obedient ways is an ineffectual faith on the battleground of life. (Z. Hodges) The carnal Christian is characterized by: (1) Refusal to grow for a period of time, (2) a lack of skill in the use of the “Word of righteousness,” (3) able to absorb only milk and not solid food, and (4) spiritual dullness due to a lack of “meat.” These four things would aptly describe a person whose faith is “dead.” The Bible abounds with illustrations of genuine believers who have become dull of hearing, carnal Christians. (J. Dillow) Faith is not seen by James to be deficient as though it needed something extra (i.e., works), but he contends that true faith must find some expression other than verbalization or pious sentiment. (R. Martin) This verse is just a vivid way of stating that without *works* faith is no faith at all any more than a corpse is a man. Having form, this faith lacks force – outwardly inoperative, because inwardly dead. Note the vicious circle: Faith that produces no works is dead; and dead faith cannot produce works. (J. Adamson)

James 2:17 **Even** (ascensive) **so** (adv.), **faith** (Subj. Nom.; after salvation), **if** (protasis, 3rd class condition, “maybe it does,

maybe it doesn't") it does not (neg. particle) have (ἔχω, PASubj.3S, Gnostic, Potential) doctrinal application (Adv. Acc.; works), keeps on being (εἰμί, PAI3S, Iterative) dead (Pred. Nom.) by itself (Acc. Separation; faith before salvation has the working object of Christ, faith after salvation has the working object of Bible doctrine).

^{BGT} **James 2:17** οὕτως καὶ ἡ πίστις, ἐὰν μὴ ἔχη ἔργα, νεκρά ἐστὶν καθ' ἑαυτήν.

^{VUL} **James 2:17** sic et fides si non habeat opera mortua est in semet ipsam

LWB James 2:18 But now someone [a reversionist lipping-off] will say: You have faith [with doctrine] and I have works [without doctrine]. You begin to demonstrate to me your faith apart from works [doctrinal application] and I will demonstrate to you by means of my works [human good] my faith [without doctrine].

^{KW} **James 2:18** But a person will say, As for you, you have faith, and I have works. Prove to me [your actual possession of] the faith you [profess to] possess apart from any accompanying works, and I will prove to you my [actual possession of] faith by my works.

^{KJV} **James 2:18** 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.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

The challenge issued here is not from a growing, maturing Christian; it is a challenge issued by a carnal, Judaistic, reversionistic Christian. Therefore I use the word “works” instead of “doctrinal application” or “spiritual production,” because *the reversionist doesn't have a clue what metabolization and application of doctrine is* anyway. The adversative “but” begins a discussion on another kind of believer. James just finished his analysis of the believer who listens to doctrine but metabolizes very little of it and has not correctly applied it to daily life. That believer gives words when deeds are warranted; he gave verbal advice when overt assistance was needed. He misapplied what little he knew. The subject is closed on this type of aberrancy and a fresh analysis is now given on *another type of believer*. This type of believer never stops performing observable deeds, but he has completely eliminated the *grace apparatus for perception* - God's protocol plan for Church Age believers – from the spiritual life. He has nothing left but human good – wood, hay and stubble that will be burned at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

This reversionistic straw man attempts to eliminate the necessity of Bible doctrine as the working object of faith. This is not an intelligent believer speaking; this is a legalistic believer bragging about his deeds. James predicts that this scenario will develop (Future tense) among his readers, if it hasn't already happened. The reversionist has no interest in the Word of God; he is only interested in observable works. He has no clue about the filling of the Spirit, which also means he understands nothing about *divine good* and *human good*. By this challenge, he is shown to be totally antagonistic towards the believer who loves the Word of God. He is actually

taunting the believer who metabolizes doctrine because he thinks it is a waste of time. What is really important to this reversionist are deeds which can be observed by others. The last thing he wants is to have the mentality of his soul evaluated, because it is empty. So his *modus operandi* is actually “doing without waiting to know what you are doing” as opposed to “knowing what you are doing before you begin doing it.”

The reversionist begins with a premise: You have faith with doctrine and I have works without doctrine. Be careful with the contrast between faith and works here. If you contrast them without understanding the difference between divine good and human good, you will get an erroneous portrayal of the argument. A simplistic first look would look like this: one believer, with faith, no works; the other believer, with works, no faith. Would a reversionistic believer actually claim to have works without faith? No, and the last phrase of his argument points to what he really means by his premise: I will prove to you (Predictive Future tense) that I have faith by means of my works. The challenge he makes is for the believer who has faith to demonstrate it (Ingressive Aorist tense) without showing observable works. The contrast he is trying to make is that what he does can be seen, while what the other believer claims cannot be seen. And what he does (which everyone can see) is irrelevant to what he believes.

What was my opening statement again? “The reversionistic straw man attempts to eliminate the necessity of Bible doctrine as the working object of faith.” (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) The reversionistic believer is trying to rewrite the doctrine of the *grace apparatus for perception* so that he is measured by his external deeds (human good) rather than by the content of his soul (empty). And he is castigating the believer who has doctrine in his soul (metabolized) but is not exhibiting deeds to his reversionistic satisfaction. He is issuing a challenge that he believes cannot be answered, because faith is invisible and proof of its existence cannot be seen apart from external deeds. The reversionist is discarding everything in God’s protocol plan that can’t be seen by the naked eye, i.e., is invisible. As we have learned in previous verses, divine protocol (*grace apparatus for perception*) follows a distinct process:

- Hearer of the Word: doctrine heard by the believer (*gnosis*)
- Doer of the Word: doctrine metabolized by the believer (*epignosis*) and applied to life (*sophia* production)

What this reversionistic believer is trying to do with his challenge is this:

- Doer: works

The “hearing” of the Word in his scheme has been completely eliminated because he is not interested in Bible doctrine. The first half of “doing” the Word has been completely eliminated because there is no Bible doctrine in his soul to be metabolized. The works of the reversionistic believer are all that remain, and because there is no “Word” behind them, they are dead works. The reversionistic believer is claiming that what you believe, the doctrinal content of your faith, is irrelevant to the Christian way of life. The only thing that matters to him is works that can be seen by others. But what he has done is completely eliminate Christianity from his works! James

is going to answer this reversionistic challenge by pointing out that what you believe (Bible doctrine) is absolutely crucial to the divine process. Without Bible doctrine being heard, metabolized, and applied there is no acceptable “works” before God. The only thing that is left is energy of the flesh, and even unbelievers can perform energy of the flesh. Human good (the reversionist’s program) will be rejected at the Judgment Seat of Christ; divine good (using the *grace apparatus for perception* program) will be accepted at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Perhaps a personal reference will help explain this type of Christian. I used to work in the oilfields in the geophysical exploration division. We performed detailed field tests on what lay deep beneath the land surface and analyzed lots of data to determine exactly where to locate a future oil well. We used highly sophisticated sensor equipment (formerly used by astronauts on the moon) and computer modeling software to draw pictures of the sub-floor. [This is the equivalent to the believer who has an object for his faith, Bible doctrine. He has metabolized all the doctrine he could get his hands on before acting on an issue.] But there was another type of oilfield worker on the landscape. He was commonly known as the “wildcatter.” The wildcatter looked at the surface topographical landscape and located his drill rig in a place that he considered easy to get at and hopefully beneficial in the long run. A commonly held opinion by wildcatters was, “To heck with all that sub-surface data analysis, let’s just go out there and drill an oil well!” [This is the equivalent to the believer in this passage who ignores the doctrinal material and just “gets out there and performs good deeds.”] Wildcatters have all but disappeared from the oil business, i.e., bankruptcies.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The subject introduced here is, “How can something invisible be seen?” Faith is not something that you and I can touch; it is not something that we can see; it is real, but it is invisible and intangible. (S. Zodiates) The main point of the opponent in verse 18 is not the distribution of faith and works to “you” and “me,” but rather the total separation of faith and works in general. (M. Dibelius) The pronouns “you” and “me” within the objection are understood not to refer to James and the objector, but are equivalent to “one” and “another,” and are merely a more picturesque mode of indicating two imaginary persons. (J. Ropes) The speaker seems to appeal precisely to his works! (M. Dibelius)

The faith-only person is unable to demonstrate that he has any trust in God. (H. Kent) James refuses to accept a division between faith and works ... The speaker claims that faith is not necessary. He champions the cause of practical Christianity. He argues that doing good deeds is more important than believing a particular doctrine. He does not realize that his so-called works of charity have nothing in common with deeds of gratitude that originate in the thankful heart of a believer. (S. Kistemaker) James’s *works* look suspiciously like the fruit of the Spirit of which Paul writes. (L. Morris) Exactly! Thank you Dr. Morris for that observation! (LWB)

James 2:18 But now (adversative, transitional; instead of that, on the other hand, in contrast to the previous example) someone (Subj. Nom.; a reversionist lip-ping-off) will say (λέγω, FAI3S, Predictive): You have (έχω, PAI2S, Static) faith (Acc. Dir. Obj.; with doctrine) and (connective) I have (έχω, PAI1S, Static) works

(Acc. Dir. Obj.; without doctrine). You begin to demonstrate (δείκνυμι, AAImp.2S, Ingressive, Command) to me (Dat. Ind. Obj.) your (Poss. Gen.) faith (Acc. Dir. Obj.) apart from (Prep. Gen.) works (Abl. Separation; doctrinal application) and (connective) I (the reversionistic believer) will demonstrate (δείκνυμι, FAIS, Predictive) to you (Dat. Ind. Obj.) by my works (Abl. Means; human good) my (Poss. Gen.) faith (Acc. Dir. Obj.; without doctrine: the reversionistic straw man attempts to eliminate the necessity of doctrine as the working object of faith).

^{BGT} **James 2:18** Ἄλλ' ἐρεῖ τις· σὺ πίστιν ἔχεις, κἀγὼ ἔργα ἔχω· δείξόν μοι τὴν πίστιν σου χωρὶς τῶν ἔργων, κἀγὼ σοι δείξω ἐκ τῶν ἔργων μου τὴν πίστιν.

^{VUL} **James 2:18** sed dicet quis tu fidem habes et ego opera habeo ostende mihi fidem tuam sine operibus et ego ostendam tibi ex operibus fidem meam

^{LWB} **James 2:19** You [Judaizer] have faith that God is one [monotheism]; you do well [by believing in one God]. The demons also have faith [in one God], yet they tremble with fear [His existence guarantees their judgment in eternity].

^{KW} **James 2:19** As for you, you give credence to [the doctrine] that God is one. You are doing well. The demons also give credence [to that fact] and shudder.

^{KJV} **James 2:19** Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Remember when I said that the object of your faith is important? James uses a Judaizer in his next hypothetical situation. He acknowledges that the Judaizer has faith (Gnomic Present tense) in one God. He does well (Static Present tense) by having faith in one God. However, what does the Judaizer really believe in? He believes in Jewish monotheism: no Trinity, no Jesus Christ, no Holy Spirit. Even though he does well to believe in one God, his belief is not the correct “working object” for Christian faith. The demons also have faith (Gnomic Present tense) in one God, but they tremble with fear (Dramatic Present tense) because they know His existence guarantees their judgment in eternity. Both the Judaizer and the demons have faith in one God, but the content of their faith in one God is corrupt. Both of them do something as a result of what they believe: one does works of the flesh, the other trembles with fear. The point is, what they end up *doing* is a result of what they end up *believing*. What they believe in (working object of faith) is crucial to their actions.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

If you insist that faith does not necessarily lead to a response in how one lives, then you have even less understanding of the true nature of faith than the demons who tremble ... If one believes certain things about God, one must live in accordance with those beliefs, just as the demons tremble because of their certainty of the coming wrath of God. (T. Cargal) The verbal construction “to believe that

God exists” instead of “to trust God” emphasizes intellectual acceptance, indicating that faith here is the faith credentials of orthodox Judaism. (J. Adamson) Men and demons both believe the same truth (that there is one God), but their faith does not produce the same response. (Z. Hodges) Genuine faith must go beyond the intellect to the will; it must affect our attitudes and actions as well as our beliefs. (D. Moo) It must go beyond *gnosis* to *epignosis*; then that *epignosis* must be applied to become *sophia*. That is what we call the *grace apparatus for perception*. (LWB) What faith is it that the senseless person and the demons are said to share? The irony and sarcasm underneath James’s own use of tradition is sharp. “You do well” to have faith in God and to recite your faith in a traditional confession. But you do not do enough. In fact you do no more than the demons unless you practice the faith you confess. (W. Brosend)

Whoever acknowledges that *the content of his faith* is “that God is one” must also admit that he shares his faith with the demons. (M. Dibelius) We should note that our verse does not say that this man actually believed in God, but believed that there is one God, or that God is one ... Such knowledge of God does not necessarily mean a godly life. (S. Zodiates) The example of the demons is best seen as supporting James’s contention that indeed faith and works are inseparable. (T. Cargal) The Judaizers have an object for their faith, but it is incorrect. The demons have an object for their faith, but it is likewise incorrect. The Judaizers act on what they know, the demons act on what they know, and the actions (works) of both are wrong! So having the correct object for your faith is a crucial element in the *correct* application of faith. (LWB) The “belief” in one God may not be “trust” in that God. (J. Blue) There are no atheists among the demons, because they believe there is one God and shudder at the thought. (W. Best) The irony is unmistakable. But just as clear is the fact that precisely the unique content of Christian faith if not represented here. (M. Dibelius)

James 2:19 You (Subj. Nom.; Judaizer) have faith (πιστεύω, PAI2S, Gnostic) that (introductory) God (Subj. Nom.) is (εἰμί, PAI3S, Descriptive) one (Pred. Nom.; Monotheism: no Trinity, no Jesus, no Holy Spirit, no working object for faith); you do (ποιέω, PAI2S, Static) well (adv.; by believing in one God). The demons (Subj. Nom.) also (adjunctive) have faith (πιστεύω, PAI3P, Gnostic; in one God), yet (adversative) they tremble with fear (φρίσσω, PAI3P, Dramatic; because their judgment is certain in eternity).

^{BGT} **James 2:19** σὺ πιστεύεις ὅτι εἷς ἐστὶν ὁ θεός, καλῶς ποιεῖς· καὶ τὰ δαιμόνια πιστεύουσιν καὶ φρίσσουσιν.

^{VUL} **James 2:19** tu credis quoniam unus est Deus bene facis et daemones credunt et contremescunt

LWB **James 2:20** But are you willing to start learning by studying [grace apparatus for perception], oh empty man [ignorant carnal believer], because faith apart from doctrinal application keeps on being unemployed [operational death]?

^{KW} **James 2:20** But, do you desire to come to know, O senseless man! That the aforementioned faith [that exists] apart from works is unproductive?

^{KJV} **James 2:20** But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

In order not to be like the Judaizer or the demons, having faith in an incorrect object, are you willing to start learning by studying Bible doctrine (Ingressive Aorist tense)? Are you willing (Interrogative Indicative mood) to use the *grace apparatus for perception* given to us by God for growth in the spiritual life? James is asking this question to an empty man, an ignorant carnal believer who thinks all he needs to do is *hustle for God*. He is empty because there is no doctrine in his soul and therefore no divine good in his life. Everything he has done is energy of the flesh, building material that is rejected in the spiritual life. The question he asks assumes that this believer is not interested in the Word of God and has no intention on studying.

He doesn't care, because in his own mind, he has "faith" and that's all he needs. "All that Bible study just makes a person an arrogant know-it-all." Sound familiar? James reminds him that faith apart from doctrinal application keeps on being (Durative Present tense) unemployed. That means all his works of the flesh are as useless as a corpse if there is no doctrine behind them. Good works require the application of doctrine heard and metabolized by the *grace apparatus for perception*. Any attempt to short-circuit the process by eliminating Bible doctrine creates operational death. That means works without doctrine are nothing but wood, hay, and stubble.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The empty man is one in whom the higher wisdom has found no entrance, but who is puffed up with a vain conceit of his own spiritual insight. (Trench) Most scholars point to its usage in referring to a complete lack of understanding and insight in an intellectual sense, and relate it to the Aramaic "fool." (T. Cargal) We believe that the water that comes out of our faucets is pure and good for drinking. What good is that belief if we do not actually drink it? (S. Zodiates) I'm going to use this phrase differently than he intended, because water represents the Word of God. It is good for drinking, but if you leave it in the faucet and never drink it, what good is it? (LWB) This emptyhead's faith is sham. (J. Adamson) The aorist infinitive calls for a definite act of acknowledgement by the objector. His refusal to do so would imply inner perversity of will. (D. Hiebert)

An empty man cannot be a sin-fearing man, nor can an ignorant person be pious. (Hillel) He addresses his opponent directly and urges him to learn from the teachings of God's Word ... If the man talks of faith, he certainly needs to go to the Scriptures to learn what God has to say about this subject. James is impatient with the man who is arguing with him. (S. Kistemaker) James addresses his opponent as one who has no comprehension of spiritual truth. (F. Gaebelein) It sounds severe to call this church member an "empty man," one who is hollow ... But his head and his heart should have been filled with "the Word of truth," with "the implanted Word," so that he might know what true faith is. (R. Lenski) Whenever this adjective is used of persons, it implies not merely an absence and emptiness of good, but, since the moral nature of man endures no vacuum, the presence of evil. (Trench)

James 2:20 But (adversative) are you willing (θέλω, PAI2S, Descriptive, Interrogative Ind.) to start learning by studying (γινώσκω, AAInf., Ingressive, Means; grace apparatus for perception), oh (interjection) empty man (Voc. Address; ignorant carnal believer), because (causal) faith (Subj. Nom.) apart from (Prep. Gen.; without) doctrinal application (Abl. Separation) keeps on being (εἰμί, PAI3S, Durative) unemployed (as useless as a corpse because it doesn't produce anything: operational death)?

^{BGT} **James 2:20** Θέλεις δὲ γινῶναι, ὦ ἄνθρωπε κενέ, ὅτι ἡ πίστις χωρὶς τῶν ἔργων ἀργή ἐστίν;

^{VUL} **James 2:20** vis autem scire o homo inanis quoniam fides sine operibus otiosa est

LWB James 2:21 Abraham, our father, was he not vindicated by doctrinal application when he offered up Isaac his son upon the burnt offering altar?

^{KW} **James 2:21** Was not our father Abraham vindicated by works [justified as to his claim to a living faith] in that he offered his son Isaac on the altar of sacrifice?

^{KJV} **James 2:21** Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

James now asks, Was not Abraham, our ancestor, vindicated (validated, confirmed) by doctrinal application (Culminative Aorist tense)? Once again, the word “works” means doctrinal application, not energy of the flesh deeds without any substance behind them. He was vindicated when he offered up his only son (Dramatic Aorist tense) on the altar of burnt offering. The translation of “dikaoō” is experiential *vindication*, not positional *justification* in this passage. James is not dealing with forensic righteousness; he is dealing with experiential sanctification. His acquittal which happened in the past is now being shown in a positive light because he is living up to it experientially by being obedient to God. Abraham was a thinker. He didn’t tie his only son to the top of an altar for burning without seriously thinking things through. He had to think quickly, but he was able to draw on the doctrine in his soul and apply it to the situation. He didn’t argue with God; he knew the Lord would raise him from the dead if he were sacrificed (Hebrews 11:17-19). According to Genesis 22:16-18, he was blessed because he was obedient to God’s command.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

James means by “works” the outer manifestation of the work that has been accomplished inwardly by the Holy Spirit ... When God sees His children in the path of obedience, He intervenes, not only to comfort them, but also to pronounce them “righteous.” He pronounced Abraham righteous when he first believed and then subsequently every time he obeyed God. It seems that the greatest approval and commendation came when he was willing to offer even his son. (S. Zodhiates) There are two kinds of justification. (Z. Hodges) His readiness to sacrifice Isaac was proof of his faith and

revealed the basic relationship of obedience ... “Works” are not restricted to acts of mercy, but include all acts of obedience to the implanted Word which is received by asking in faith. (J. Adamson) The incident of Abraham sustaining the test of faith, when God told him to sacrifice his son, is one of the highlights in the life of the patriarch. (S. Kistemaker) In Paul “justify” means “to acquit the sinner in the sight of a holy God;” in James it means “to vindicate,” to show to be righteous before God and men. (T. Carson) Abraham was already saved, but the vitality and maturity of his faith could only be accomplished by works (J. Dillow) What is at issue is *post-justification* faith. (Z. Hodges)

James 2:21 Abraham (Subj. Nom.), our (Gen. Rel.) father (Nom. Appos.), was he not (neg. adv.) vindicated (δικαιόω, API3S, Culminative; validated, confirmed) by doctrinal application (Abl. Means; works) when he offered up (ἀναφέρω, AAPtc.NMS, Dramatic, Temporal) Isaac (Acc. Dir. Obj.) his (Poss. Gen.) son (Acc. Appos.) upon the burnt offering altar (Acc. Place)?

^{BGT} **James 2:21** Ἀβραάμ ὁ πατὴρ ἡμῶν οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων ἐδικαιώθη ἀνευέγκας Ἰσαὰκ τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸ θυσιαστήριον;

^{VUL} **James 2:21** Abraham pater noster nonne ex operibus iustificatus est offerens Isaac filium suum super altare

LWB James 2:22 Do you see that doctrine [in the mentality of the soul] kept on working together with his production [application] to make faith complete [producing divine good]?

^{KW} **James 2:22** You see that the aforementioned faith was cooperating and working with his works [and thereby was responsible for their production], and by his works was this faith brought to completion in a well-rounded whole.

^{KJV} **James 2:22** Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

James is almost begging for his reader to understand the import of this passage. Don't you see that doctrine kept on working together (Latin: cooperating) with his production to make faith complete (Culminative Aorist tense)? The singular “you” means each and every individual must see this truth for himself in order to be convinced. The iterative imperfect means his works were not enough by themselves to make faith complete. Doctrine has to be there as a key ingredient. Likewise, doctrine as raw material is not enough to make faith complete. It must be metabolized and applied in order to be brought to maturity, otherwise it remains incomplete, defective and most likely forgotten. In other words, works without doctrine is equivalent to human good; works together with doctrine is equivalent to divine good. “Production” is, of course, equivalent to “works.” Working together, they are complete (Latin: consummate); working separately, they are incomplete.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Isn't it obvious how his faith was cooperating with his works and, in fact, by works his faith was made mature? (Z. Hodges) This summary is so close; if only he would have translated the first instance of "pistis" as doctrine. Then we would have all the components of the *grace apparatus for perception* except the filling of the Holy Spirit, which is understood. (LWB) The writer of Hebrew sums it up in 11:19, "Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death." (S. Kistemaker) Abraham was held up in Jewish piety as one of the supreme examples of "faithfulness" under trial, in his willingness to offer up Isaac. (R. Hays) True faith thus combines belief (of doctrine), trust (in Christ) and moral action (works of love). (R. Ward) The most important evidence of faith is unqualified commitment to doing the will of God. Obedience may not evidence full or mature faith, but it certainly gives evidence of some faith. (S. Gundry) Here James makes it clear that he is not talking about works as the sole source of Abraham's justification, as verse 21 taken out of its context might lead one to believe. Instead, Abraham's faith and his actions were working together. (F. Gaebelin)

James 2:22 Do you see (βλέπω, PAI2S, Pictorial, Interrogative Ind.) that (introductory) doctrine (Subj. Nom.; in the right lobe of the mentality of the soul) kept on working together with (συνεργέω, Imperf.AI3S, Iterative) his (Poss. Gen.) production (Gen. Accompaniment; application, deeds, works) to make faith (Pred. Nom.) complete (τελειόω, API3S, Culminative; divine good)?

^{BGT} **James 2:22** βλέπεις ὅτι ἡ πίστις συνήργει τοῖς ἔργοις αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐκ τῶν ἔργων ἡ πίστις ἐτελειώθη,

^{VUL} **James 2:22** videt quoniam fides cooperabatur operibus illius et ex operibus fides consummata est

LWB **James 2:23** And the scripture [Gen. 15:6] was brought to completion [experientially] which said: "And Abraham believed God [that his posterity would populate the earth] and it [his obedience in offering Isaac as a sacrifice] was reckoned to his account as righteousness [divine good] and he was called a friend of God [experiential fellowship with Deity].

^{KW} **James 2:23** And the scripture was actually and fully realized [brought into operation] which said, And Abraham believed God, and it [his act of faith] was put to his account for righteousness. And a friend of God he was called.

^{KJV} **James 2:23** 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.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

The scripture which was *initially fulfilled positionally* when Abraham first believed in God was *brought to completion experientially* (Culminative Aorist tense) when Abraham was obedient in offering his son as a sacrifice on Mt. Moriah. As in the prior verse, this is not a reference to *forensic* justification by faith. It says, "Abraham believed God," not "Abraham believed *in* God."

He believed that God would raise his son Isaac from the dead; he believed in the promises of God, especially the one where his offspring would fill the earth like the stars in heaven. He had already believed *in* God. In this case, his *obedience* to God's command is what was reckoned to his account (Culminative Aorist tense). Abraham was tested and he passed the test, resulting in righteousness.

The combination of “pleroo” and “logizomai,” bringing to completion and reckoning, points to Abraham's attainment of spiritual maturity. This is an *experiential* reckoning, not a *positional* reckoning. He was being vindicated by his obedience and the resulting righteousness is what we would call “divine good” production. What he believed 30-years prior is now being validated or confirmed by testing. God was *testing* Abraham to see if he would be obedient under an extreme pressure situation; he was not trying to find out if Abraham believed in His existence. Abraham's obedience to God's command enabled him to be called (Culminative Aorist tense) a “friend of God.” We can receive the same honorable distinction if we are obedient to the mandates of Jesus Christ for Church Age believers.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The mature believer's investiture into the royal order of the Friend of God is the ultimate honor in this life. Few believers ever attained this order of knighthood. In the entire span of history recorded in the OT, only two men were called the friend of God: Abraham, the father of the Jewish race, and Moses, the father of the Jewish nation. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) He believed in the omnipotence and omniscience of God. He believed that God was able to do that which to him seemed an impossibility ... He knew that God was going to spare his son, because He could not cancel His promise and His prophecy. (S. Zodhiates) Here in the Epistle of James, Abraham is declared to be righteous, i.e., in a right relationship, because his faith led him to cooperate with God: this cooperation meant that he was even willing to sacrifice Isaac. (J. Adamson) “Righteousness” refers not to a forensic act in which a sinner is declared acquitted ... but to a declaration by God that a person is righteous. (T. Cargal) What a beautiful thing, at the end of life, to be known as a man who really “knew” God and who was truly “God's friend.” (J. Dillow)

Ultra-supergrace is the advanced stage of spiritual maturity, attained by the believer who continues and even intensifies his intake of doctrine after reaching supergrace. God does more than derive glory from blessing the ultra-supergrace believer; God is pleased by him and accepts him into friendship. Abraham and Moses, for example, were called the friends of God. Maximum doctrine in the soul gives the OT ultra-mature believer (Jeshurun), and the Church Age ultra-mature believer (pleroma), the capacity for blessings even under concentrated satanic opposition. Thus God demonstrates His perfect integrity in a special, concentrated way, proving again that “greater is He (Christ) that is in you, than he (Satan) that is in the world.” The ultra-supergrace believer's capacity frees the integrity of God to pour out intensified blessings without compromising any divine attributes. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) God justifies man when he fully trusts God, demonstrates his love for God, obediently listens to the Word of God, and acts accordingly. (S. Kistemaker) The quotation refers to Abraham's belief in Jehovah's promise to the effect that the seed of Abraham was to be as numerous as the stars of heaven. (W. Nicole)

Had Abraham not obeyed God in the greatest test of his life, he would still have been justified by the faith he exercised in Gen. 15:6. But by allowing that faith to be *alive* in his *works*, he attained an enviable title among countless millions of people. In this way he was also justified by his works before men. When a person is justified by faith, he or she finds an unqualified acceptance before God. As Paul puts it, such an individual is one *to whom God imputes righteousness without works* (Rom. 4:6). But only God can see this spiritual transaction. When, however, one is justified by works he or she achieves an intimacy with God that is *manifest to others*. He or she can then be called a “friend of God,” even as Jesus said in John 15:14, “You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.” (Z. Hodges) Maturity, the goal of the Christian’s life, is achieved through steadfastness in the divine dynasphere, where the believer acquires capacity for life, for love, for happiness, for “greater grace” or supergrace (James 4:6) beyond God’s faithful sustenance of all believers. The believer in gate 8 has become a spiritual aristocrat invested with the title “Friend of God.” Through his tenacity to reside and function in the love complex, he has attained an honorable status in his soul that glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

James 2:23 And (continuative) the scripture (Subj. Nom.; Gen. 15:6) was brought to completion (πληρώω, API3S, Culminative) which (Nom. Appos.) said (λέγω, PAPtc.NFS, Static, Attributive): “And (continuative) Abraham (Subj. Nom.) believed (πιστεύω, AAI3S, Gnostic) God (Dat. Adv.) and (connective) it (his obedience) was reckoned to his (Poss. Gen.) account (λογίζομαι, API3S, Culminative, Deponent) as righteousness (Compl. Acc.; divine good) and (continuative) he was called (καλέω, API3S, Culminative) a friend (Pred. Nom.) of God (Poss. Gen.).

^{BGT} **James 2:23** καὶ ἐπληρώθη ἡ γραφή ἣ λέγουσα· ἐπίστευσεν δὲ Ἀβραὰμ τῷ θεῷ, καὶ ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην καὶ φίλος θεοῦ ἐκλήθη.

^{VUL} **James 2:23** et suppleta est scriptura dicens credit Abraham Deo et reputatum est illi ad iustitiam et amicus Dei appellatus est

LWB James 2:24 You can see that by means of doctrinal application [works] a man receives vindication [sanctification salvation] and not by means of faith alone [faith by itself is useless, it must have a working object].

^{KW} **James 2:24** You see that by works a man is justified and not by faith alone.

^{KJV} **James 2:24** Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

You can readily see from James’s illustrations that a man receives vindication in his experiential spiritual life (Iterative Present tense) by means of doctrinal application and not faith alone. Faith alone is insufficient, useless, even dead. Faith must have a working object of doctrine or it is non-efficacious. Just as Jesus Christ was the *working object* of initial faith for *justification*

salvation, Bible doctrine is the *working object* of subsequent faith for *sanctification* salvation. Faith, without the appropriate direct object, accomplishes absolutely nothing.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Justified, as we have learned, is *vindication*. (W. Baker) It must be emphasized that James pointedly does *not* say that “works alone” can justify a person ... It is clear that the presence of “works” implies the prior reception of both “wisdom” which establishes the will to act and “faith” which is the prerequisite to receiving “wisdom” as a “gift” from God. The point being stressed by this contrast is not that “works alone” do justify a person (which would be a kind of legalism), but that “faith alone” (i.e., in the absence of a response in one’s life) cannot “justify.” (T. Cargal) These statements are not exactly what James is saying here, but they are steps in the right direction. (LWB)

Justification by faith secures our eternal standing, but justification by works secures our temporal fellowship. Justification by faith secures our vindication before God; justification by works secures our vindication before man. (J. Dillow) James was combating a superficial faith that had no wholesome effect in the life of the believer. (F. Gaebelein) James is saying that a by-faith justification is not the *only* kind of justification there is. There is also a by-works justification. The former type is *before God*; the latter type is *before men*. (Z. Hodges) The contrast is between faith minus works, and works minus faith – not between faith and works. (J. Adamson)

James 2:24 You can see (ὁράω, PAI2P, Gnostic) that (introductory) by means of doctrinal application (Abl. Means, Source; works) a man (Subj. Nom.) receives vindication (δικαίωω, PPI3S, Iterative & Progressive) and (connective) not (neg. adv.) by means of faith (Abl. Means, Source) alone (adv.; faith alone is no good, it must have a working object of doctrine).

^{BGT} **James 2:24** ὁρᾶτε ὅτι ἐξ ἔργων δικαιοῦται ἄνθρωπος καὶ οὐκ ἐκ πίστεως μόνον.

^{VUL} **James 2:24** videtis quoniam ex operibus iustificatur homo et non ex fide tantum

LWB **James 2:25** Likewise, also, was not Rahab the prostitute vindicated by doctrinal application [works], when she welcomed the envoys [spies] and led them out [helped them escape] in another direction [away from pursuing soldiers]?

^{KW} **James 2:25** Now, similarly, was not Rahab the prostitute also vindicated [justified as to her possession of a living faith] in that she entertained as guests the messengers and thrust them forth by means of a different way [from that by which they entered the city]?

^{KJV} **James 2:25** Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent *them* out another way?

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

In the same manner as Abraham, the prostitute Rahab was also vindicated (Culminative Aorist tense) by doctrinal application. When she welcomed the Jewish spies into her house in Jericho (Temporal Participle) and led them out into the hillsides of Canaan in a different direction in order to escape the pursuing soldiers (Culminative Aorist tense), she was applying the doctrine in her soul. If there was any confusion on whether James's example of Abraham was about positional justification as opposed to *experiential vindication*, this settles the question. Her obvious post-salvation works are connected to Abraham's post-salvation works by the comparative adverb "likewise" or "in the same manner." It is also noteworthy that James picked two examples from completely opposite societal strata. And of course, Abraham became the father of the Israelites while Rahab was a pagan Gentile. This is an obvious picture of the Jews and Gentiles being united during the Church Age in Christ Jesus.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Rahab is superbly suited to tie James's thoughts together. (Z. Hodges) Although James does not mention Rahab's faith, it is presupposed, for her works were the result of her faith. Right from the beginning of our study, we must clearly bear in mind that Rahab's actual salvation was not caused by her works, but by her faith in the God of the Israelites, faith which resulted in *consequent acts of faith* to which James makes reference ... Her giving shelter to the children of God was a demonstration to all that she had given shelter to the God of the Israelites in her own heart first. (S. Zodhiates) Rahab's faith was consummated and vindicated by her deeds: so she was shown to be righteous. (J. Adamson) Rahab, like Abraham, is putting her faith to work in daily life and under precarious conditions. (S. Kistemaker)

Her case seems to have been selected because it was so unlike the preceding. Abraham was a Jew, and the father of the chosen nation; Rahab was a heathen woman. Abraham had for many years received a special training in the school of faith; Rahab had enjoyed no training at all. Abraham was a good and pure man; Rahab had lived a loose and sensual life. Yet this degraded Canaanite obtained "like precious faith" with the illustrious patriarch. (C. Jerdan) James does not mention her faith explicitly, but readers would remember that Rahab made a confession of the Lord as the one God in Joshua 2:16. James focuses on her reception of the Israelite scouts as an *expression* of that faith. (L. Johnson) Rahab is listed among the ancestors of Jesus in Matt. 1:5. (R. Lenski)

James 2:25 Likewise (comparative adv; Abraham and Rahab in the same category), also (adjunctive), was not (neg. particle) Rahab (Subj. Nom.) the prostitute (Nom. Appos.; whore) vindicated (δικαιόω, API3S, Culminative, Interrogative Ind.) by doctrinal application (Abl. Means, Source; works), when she welcomed (ὑποδέχομαι, AMPtc.NFS, Constatative, Deponent, Temporal; received) the envoys (Acc. Dir. Obj.; messengers, spies) and (continuative) led them out (ἐκβάλλω, AAPtc.NFS, Culminative, Temporal; sent them forth, evacuated them) in another (Dat. Spec.; of a different kind) direction (Loc. Place; away from the pursuing soldiers)?

^{BGT} **James 2:25** ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ Ῥαὰβ ἡ πόρνη οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων ἐδικαιώθη ὑποδεξαμένη τοὺς ἀγγέλους καὶ ἑτέρα ὁδοῦ ἐκβαλοῦσα;

^{VUL} **James 2:25** similiter autem et Raab meretrix nonne ex operibus iustificata est suscipiens nuntios et alia via eiciens

LWB James 2:26 So as the body without breath is dead [a corpse], so also faith without doctrinal application is dead [a corpse].

^{KW} **James 2:26** For even as the body apart from breath is dead, so also the aforementioned faith apart from works is dead.

^{KJV} **James 2:26** For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

James makes a final comparison in this sub-unit between the body without breath and faith without doctrinal application. Both are dead (Gnomic Present tense). The separation between them is fatal, one to physical life, the other to spiritual life. Two dead things are being compared to each other. The result is either a physical corpse or a spiritual corpse. The breath is the animating principle of life in the body; the application of Bible doctrine is the animating principle of life in faith. James does not take on “works without faith” directly, although it is crucial to the understanding of the *grace apparatus for perception* which Paul covers in great detail. For that reason, I usually defer the study of this epistle until the majority of the Pauline epistles have been covered first. I believe James’s doctrine (faith, hearing, doing, works, wisdom) is elusively simple to the average reader, but deceptively so. James uses Paul’s vocabulary, but he doesn’t give detailed definitions of each important word. That leaves the casual reader thinking there is no “deep theological content” behind his choice of words. They both, however, were knowledgeable about the use of technical, philosophical, religious terms in Judaistic religion and Hellenistic philosophical thought.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The body cannot exist as a living entity without the spirit or the soul, that immaterial substance which gives value to the body. Such an indispensable simultaneous relationship exists between faith and works. (S. Zodhiates) The principle involved is ... works as an evidence of salvation, not of works as a ground of salvation. (L. Chafer) Just as the body dies when our spirit departs, even so our faith dies when our works depart. (J. Dillow) A body without bones simply is not a body. Neither is Christianity without doctrine Christianity. And let no one think that the bones of a living body are dead. They share in the life of the entire body. So Christian doctrine, too, is vital ... truth is the very heart of Christianity. (R. Kuiper)

Faith is the body, the sum and substance, of the Christian life; works is obedience, the moving and quickening principle of the natural body. (H. Alford) Works are not an “added extra” any more than breath is an “added extra” to a living body ... James does not argue for faith instead of works or works instead of faith or even works above faith, but for faith and works. Both are important and

must equally be present or else the other is “worthless,” just as body and spirit are each “worthless” when separated from one another. (P. Davids) The form of faith without *the working reality* answers to the body without the animating spirit. It does not follow that *living faith* derives its life from works, as the body derives its life from the animating spirit. (D. Hiebert)

James 2:26 so (inferential) as (subordinating) the body (Subj. Nom.) without (adv.) breath (Abl. Separation; spirit) is (εἰμί, PAI3S, Gnostic) dead (Pred. Nom.; a corpse), so (comparative) also (adjunctive) faith (Subj. Nom.) without (adv.) doctrinal application (Abl. Separation; works) is (εἰμί, PAI3S, Gnostic) dead (Pred. Nom.; a corpse).

^{BGT} **James 2:26** ὥσπερ γὰρ τὸ σῶμα χωρὶς πνεύματος νεκρὸν ἐστίν, οὕτως καὶ ἡ πίστις χωρὶς ἔργων νεκρά ἐστίν.

^{VUL} **James 2:26** sicut enim corpus sine spiritu emortuum est ita et fides sine operibus mortua est

Chapter 3

LWB James 3:1 Stop becoming many teachers [rebuke to the plurality of elders in a single assembly who were trying to usurp the authority of the pastor-teacher], my brethren, knowing that we [teachers] shall receive upon ourselves greater judgment [double discipline].

^{KW} **James 3:1** Stop becoming many teachers, my brethren, knowing that we shall receive a more severe sentence of condemnation,

^{KJV} **James 3:1** My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

James changes the topic from the previous chapter, beginning a new sub-unit in his epistle. Because the content of the first two chapters was so difficult in some places, he issues a prohibition. Stop becoming many teachers (Imperative mood). This is a two-pronged warning. First, it is a warning to aspiring teachers to do their homework. Second, it is a rebuke to the plurality of elders who were causing trouble in their local assembly. They were trying to usurp the authority of the pastor-teacher in their assembly instead of going out and starting their own congregation. There is no support for a plurality of elders in Scripture. There is always one pastor-teacher in charge. The alleged prooftexts for this ecclesiastical practice are all (plural use of “presbuteros”) pastor conferences, not a plurality in one assembly. It was a common practice

then (and still is today) for many pastors to get together and share their studies and experiences. As usual, James calms his audience before issuing this prohibition by calling them “brethren.”

Then he gives a good reason for his prohibition. Teachers of the Word of God (including James) will receive (Gnomic Present tense) greater judgment from God because the nature of their responsibility in teaching Bible doctrine is so profound. He just elaborated on how important doctrine is to the thoughts, words and actions of believers. An aspiring or active teacher (Latin: magistrate) had better know he has the spiritual gift of pastor or teacher and he’d better take this prohibition seriously. One dose of divine discipline is painful enough when you have strayed from God’s path; a double dose of discipline would obviously be unbearable. The gnomic present points to the sobering nature of this understanding. It is God’s will for all teachers to prepare themselves before sharing their study of the Word. It is not God’s will to overload a single assembly with multiple teachers sharing some kind of *collective* authority. Even the organization of priestly ministers in Israel had a *high priest*.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Sometimes it seems that there are more teachers of religion today than real disciples. As soon as a person hears a few sermons, he becomes a theologian ready to criticize the preacher and to instruct others in theology. In the olden days the deepest and most difficult of all sciences was theology, and the first universities were established for the purpose of teaching this subject. Now a smattering of a few hackneyed Biblical phrases may puff up the professing Christian and make him believe that he is an accomplished teacher in the house of God. This is a form of self-deception and hypocrisy which James wants to expose here. (S. Zodhiates) The man who used his tongue to teach will be held to a higher standard, a stricter judgment, at the Judgment Seat of Christ, than someone who has not so used his tongue. (Z. Hodges) All men commit many sins (including, but not only, teachers): that is precisely why men should be wary about incurring the risk of greater punishment, as we shall if we become teachers, entrusted, as teachers are, with increased knowledge ... The desire to teach may be a sign of youth or immaturity: because of inexperience such teachers may be ignorant of the peculiar temptations of the office, and self-assertion, acrimony, and impatience often accompany their efforts. (J. Adamson)

In becoming teachers we should not lose the sense of needing to be taught ourselves ... Since we assumed the position of leadership in the house of God, there will be a specific and greater responsibility toward God in the day of judgment. What a sobering consideration this is for the children of God who go to Bible schools, perhaps having made the decision lightly, for those who teach in Sunday schools, for the preachers. The more we know the Scriptures, the saintlier life we are expected to live. The more we teach the written Word of God, the more like the Living Word we should become. James declares in effect that leadership entails responsibility, and the greater leader one is, the greater his responsibility. God will separate us teachers and demand a special accounting of all that we have said and done. (S. Zodhiates) We must distinguish the two sets of unfit candidates, here as always, in James’s circle: first, the sincere who nevertheless are not likely to be able to approach the high standards required of the teacher; and second, the insincere who are pretenders not fit to be counted as Christians, much less teachers. (J. Adamson) James unmasks the

desire of many of the readers to become teachers (3:14, 16) as nothing more than rivalry and ambition. (T. Cargal)

If their preaching is little more than a lightly baptized form of psychobabble, then they have simply taken into the pulpit the language of the world. (L. Johnson) Teacher refers to persons imparting knowledge in the congregation ... In such office there is great danger of failing, and if we teachers fail, our condemnation is greater. (H. Alford) Jame's first concern in this passage has to do with those who desired to be "teachers" in the scattered Jewish Christian congregations ... No doubt many who were not qualified by natural ability or spiritual gift were coveting the prestige of teaching. (F. Gaebelin) It may be a command for some to step down as teachers. (R. Martin) Not only are teachers people who use speech more frequently, as public persons who have control over others, but also they are subject to temptations with regard to speech that others are not: arrogance and domination over students, anger at contradiction or opposition, slander and abuse directed toward rivals, flattery of students for the sake of popularity. Such failures were especially grievous in a culture that took teaching seriously as the modeling of virtue. (L. Johnson) Chapter 3 is connected with that *overvaluation of theory as compared with practice* which formed the subject of the last chapter. (J. Mayor)

A pastor should always go to the pulpit with a carefully prepared sermon. He has been given the task of feeding the people of God spiritual food; he is the teacher of the Word of God. If he fails in this task because of inadequate training or indolence, God will hold him accountable on the day of judgment. The pastor and teacher of the Word cannot afford to take his task lightly; he handles holy things! (S. Kistemaker) While the office of the spiritual teacher is highly honorable, it is difficult to sustain it with honor. To do so demands superior intellectual power, keen spiritual insight, intimate acquaintance with Scripture, accurate knowledge of human nature, and a variety of other aptitudes which few possess. This dissuasive is needed by the modern Church little less than by the congregations of the Dispersion. (C. Jerdan) The teacher should not expound his own opinions, but interpret the revelation of God in Christ. (C. Mitton) That does not mean the teacher does not teach the application of Bible doctrine in daily life by examples or current events. (LWB) Nothing could be more distressing to a community or more divisive than bickering and mutual verbal abuse, especially if the teachers of the community are those doing the sniping. (P. Davids)

If the local assembly had no teacher, the situation would be bad indeed, but perhaps it is far worse when everyone wants to teach and no one desires to be taught. I see the great need among brethren to cultivate a teachable spirit. Some Christians seldom receive a blessing in the public worship and teaching service because they did not come to be taught, but rather to judge the content and composition of the speaker's message ... The recognized instructor of others who attempts to influence men for good, needs to spend much time in prayer and with the Word of God. Far greater judgment awaits him who is not a faithful teacher than that to which his listeners are exposed ... When we teach the Word of God we handle sublime and eternal truth. Let every lesson, every message, spoken or written, be given much time in thought and prayer. (L. Strauss) Well-meaning but unqualified men, or even self-righteous men, might seize opportunities for teaching, with disastrous results. (R. Ward) He is seeking to restrain the rush to teach on the part of those not qualified. (D. Hiebert)

James thinks of the teacher's tongue as being a most fertile area for offense. For James to say, "Let not many of you become teachers," means that only certain individuals are called by God to that position and are gifted to expound the Word of God ... Pastors and teachers today must regularly preach or teach new material, to cover a "curriculum," whether in the specific teaching role or the pulpit. But they may be so burdened by pastoral duties that they fail to spend adequate time preparing to teach. This in turn may result in careless interpretation and superficial content. Part of the answer to the pressures of modern ministry is to get rid of unbiblical duties, and focus on biblical duties, or, as the apostle Peter put it, to "devote ourselves to prayer, and to the ministry of the Word." (W. Baker) There is thus a clear complaint that too many of the Jewish Christians were attempting to teach what they did not clearly comprehend. There was a call for wise teachers, not for foolish ones. (A. Robertson) Don't think that the minute you become a child of God you can start a Bible class and teach the Book of Revelation. (J. McGee)

James 3:1 Stop (neg. particle) becoming (γίνομαι, PMImp.2P, Gnostic, Prohibition, Deponent; establishing) many (Nom. Measure) teachers (Pred. Nom.; rebuke to the plurality of elders who were trying to usurp the authority of the pastor/teacher), my (Gen. Rel.) brethren (Voc. Address), knowing (οἶδα, Perf.APtc.NMP, Intensive, Attributive) that (introductory) we (teachers) shall receive upon ourselves (λαμβάνω, FMI1P, Gnostic) greater (Acc. Measure; more severe) judgment (Adv. Acc.; double discipline).

^{BGT} **James 3:1** Μὴ πολλοὶ διδάσκαλοι γίνεσθε, ἀδελφοί μου, εἰδότες ὅτι μείζον κρίμα λημψόμεθα.

^{VUL} **James 3:1** nolite plures magistri fieri fratres mei scientes quoniam maius iudicium sumitis

LWB James 3:2 **To be sure, we [teachers] all stumble from time-to-time. If any man does not occasionally stumble when teaching, this man is a spiritually mature man, able in fact [because of doctrine], to guide with a bit and bridle the whole body [control of the tongue while teaching is extended to control in other activities of life].**

^{KW} **James 3:2** For with reference to many things everybody stumbles [makde a mistake, goes astray, sins]. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, this one is a spiritually mature man, able to hold in check also his entire body.

^{KJV} **James 3:2** 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.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Beyond any shadow of a doubt, all teachers are guilty of stumbling (Gnostic Present tense) from time-to-time. Teachers are not perfect; they have sin natures just like everybody else. It is a great temptation when you have attentive listeners to say too much, teach something that isn't correct, or repeat something obvious too often. Less disciplined teachers have a difficult time staying with their lesson plan; they chase linking and non-linking topics all over the place. Some

preachers capture their audience with excessive humor and entertaining antics. Television is full of talent on loan from Hollywood. The more a man teaches, the more likely he will stumble; the goal is not to *fall* after stumbling. Any man who does not occasionally stumble when teaching (Iterative Present tense) is a spiritually mature man. It takes a lot of Bible doctrine to be able to hold the tongue in check with a bit and bridle (Dramatic Aorist tense). James is both comforting the good teachers among his readers and warning the bad ones.

He is also reminding the general population of believers to “cut them some slack.” It’s not easy to teach a wonderful lesson every time you are called upon to do so. So Christians, adjust your expectations to the level of a human being on planet earth, please! The phrase “whole body” extends the occasional verbal stumbling of a teacher to his actions. It may have a remote reference to the body of the church to which he ministers. Believe it or not, teachers not only *say* things they shouldn’t, they also *do* things they shouldn’t now and again. Now James is not talking about a teacher who is out there “sinning his brains out.” He is describing a good teacher who trips-up now and then. Teachers are human; they get out-of-sorts and fail in things like everybody else. The picture of the “bit and bridle in a horse’s mouth” points to an accidental or *uncontrollable over-extension* in some area of life. The devil made him do it! But a good teacher has the power (*dunamis*) to get himself back under God’s control in short order.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

James was very much afraid that those who taught in the house of God might get the idea that they were perfect and far better Christians than those who did not teach. This he wants to correct with this sweeping statement he makes, and which he definitely connects with the first verse, in which he said the punishment or reward of teachers would be commensurate with their motives and fidelity in life ... Since the general treatise of James here is concerning teaching and the sins of the tongue, it is only natural in this context to narrow the meaning a bit and say that primarily it means “in many words.” The more we say, the more we are likely to stumble ... Teacher, don’t be surprised if there are some stumblings in your many words. It is natural, but try to overcome them. And it may be that fewer, but better and well-thought-out and God-inspired words will enable you to stumble less ... Our stumbling is repeated, unfortunately quite often. It presupposes the picture of a rough road full of obstacles and stones over which it is easy to trip, to stumble. We can therefore arrive at the conclusion that this is not a voluntary stumbling but an involuntary one. (S. Zodiates) By the bridle in the mouth we turn the horse as we will, so by controlling our words we can regulate our whole activity. (J. Mayor) A believer can actually lengthen his life and find greater blessings (Psalm 34:12-13) by avoiding the sins of the tongue. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

James at once begins to justify the serious warning he gave in the previous verse ... indicating the continuity of thought in the temptations (of the tongue, as presently appears) to which the teacher is exposed, and inevitably succumbs. For only an ideally perfect man would *always* be able to resist temptation. (J. Adamson) It is significant that James speaks of the body of man as an unrestrained horse. A horse seeks to satisfy its passions and its body. It is an illogical being. If it is to accomplish anything that is useful in general, and not merely for the satisfaction of its own desires, it has to be directed by a logical being, by a thinking person. So with the body of man ... Man has to allow God to fit him with a bridle and lead him in the pathway that will take him to eternal glory ... Since our

own nature is sinful and the Adamic tendencies are there even after our regeneration, we cannot of our own selves control our tongues. There has to be that perfect, divine nature within us enabling us, empowering us to bridle our tongues. All honest Christians will confess to the existence of this constant inner struggle. (S. Zodiates) This is not just a matter of offending a few “touchy” people. Some are so sensitive that it is impossible not to offend them sooner or later, not matter what one may do. (G. Luck) The ability to control one’s tongue always accompanies spiritual growth ... often a manifestation of the spiritual maturity of supergrace. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

Every believer should develop a conscious habit of keeping his mouth shut when tempted to run someone down or make innuendos against someone he cannot stand. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) The teacher’s responsibility is weighty because the tongue is the most difficult member of the body to control ... If anyone could be found who never sins with his tongue, he would never sin in any other way, either. Since sins of the tongue are hardest to avoid, anyone who could control his tongue would surely be able to keep his whole body in check, i.e., keep it from being used as an instrument of sin. (F. Gaebelin) I would qualify this statement with mental attitude sins which nobody can see, but which are nevertheless present indeed. (LWB) Though James never explicitly mentions teachers in the present verse it is a fair inference that he has them in mind both here and throughout the chapter ... Teachers in those days, offered their instruction and wisdom primarily by the spoken word, so it is not unnatural that the writer would want to conjoin the teaching office and the way in which the tongue can be used for wholesome purposes or for detrimental ends. (R. Martin) Sin robs us of our maturity, and the sin we most often commit is that of speaking carelessly ... A perfect man is not a sinless man but one who has reached spiritual maturity, speaks the truth in love, is filled with wisdom and understanding, and is able to keep his body in check. (S. Kistemaker)

Control of one’s speech does not in itself constitute perfection, or spiritual maturity, but it is certainly one test as to whether a Christian is or is not growing. (L. Strauss) Communication with speech has its darker side. (H. Kent) To stumble does not necessarily suggest a fatal fall; it denotes a failure that arrests our progress in our daily walk, but after recovery there is continued progress along the road. (R. Lenski) The present tense here denotes iterative action, indicating that such experiences of stumbling occur repeatedly in life. This sober reality is made prominent by the opening word *polla*, here rendered “in many things.” (D. Hiebert) The maligner is liable for the discipline that would have gone to the one he maligns. If the victim is actually guilty of sins, God has already been dealing with him ... But as soon as his sins are made a subject of gossip, the maligner joins him in the discipline. If the victim of gossip is not guilty of sin, he is blessed while his antagonist receives discipline appropriate to the sins he mentioned in gossip. This adds up to triple liability and triple compound discipline. The maligner is punished for mental attitude sins, for verbal sins, and for the sins he mentions in judging his victim. Triple compound discipline is extremely harsh. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) In James 3:2 “teleios” means spiritual maturity. (K. Wuest)

James 3:2 To be sure (continuative; certainly, self-evident truth), we all (Nom. Measure; teachers) stumble (πταίω, PAIIP, Gnostic, Iterative; trip up) from time-to-time (Acc. Measure; much, often, frequently). If (protasis, 1st class condition, hypothetical assumption) any man (Subj. Nom.) does not (neg. adv.) occasionally stumble (πταίω, PAIIP, Iterative; trip up) when teaching (Loc.

Time; during instruction, proclamation), this man (Subj. Nom.) is (ellipsis) a spiritually mature (Descr. Nom.) man (Pred. Nom.; has an ECS), able (Descr. Nom.; because of doctrine) in fact (ascensive), to guide with a bit and bridle (χαλιναγωγέω, AAInf., Dramatic, Inf. As Dir. Obj.of Verb; control, hold in check) the whole (Acc. Measure) body (Acc. Dir. Obj.; control of the tongue is the criterion for control of the whole body).

^{BGT} **James 3:2** πολλὰ γὰρ παίομεν ἅπαντες. εἴ τις ἐν λόγῳ οὐ παίει, οὗτος τέλειος ἀνὴρ δυνατὸς χαλιναγωγῆσαι καὶ ὅλον τὸ σῶμα.

^{VUL} **James 3:2** in multis enim offendimus omnes si quis in verbo non offendit hic perfectus est vir potens etiam freno circumducere totum corpus

LWB **James 3:3** Now if we thrust the bits of horses into their mouths so that they will obey us [prevent verbal sins], we also control the direction of their entire body [prevent overt sins].

^{KW} **James 3:3** Now if, as is the case, we put bridles in the mouths of the horses in order that they may be obeying us, we also guide their entire body.

^{KJV} **James 3:3** Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

The tongue seems like a small thing, but it is often hard to control. James compares our mouth to a horse, and in order to control a horse by the mouth we thrust a bit into it (Pictorial Present tense). Only after we control their mouth will they obey us (Purpose Infinitive). And by pulling on the bit and bridle we are able to control the direction their entire body moves in (Pictorial Present tense). We start by controlling a little thing and end up controlling the entire body. The tongue of the teacher is the bit in the horse's mouth. The horse's mouth is the soul of the believer. The bit (tongue) in the horse's mouth (soul of the believer) determines which direction he goes (executing God's plan). When the teacher's tongue is under control, he exercises his communication gift as God intended; when the teacher's tongue is out of control, he abuses his communication gift and quite possibly his actions stray from divine protocol as well.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

It is necessary for Christians everywhere to recognize this fundamental truth, that God has created each one of us different and His leading as well as His loading of us is different in each case, in each individual. If we recognized this fundamental truth, there would be less desire on the part of some to fit everybody into a particular niche and apply a uniform formula in the lives of all Christians. Both the word "horse" and the word "bridle" are in the plural. Let no man complain if the kind of bridle God puts into his mouth is different from the one He puts into another's and if his hurts a little more than another's. God knows how much an individual can carry and how far he can carry it. (S.

Zodhiates) Sins of the tongue form so large a portion of our multitudinous stumblings – they so frequently seduce us into other sins – and they afford such a searching test of character, that any one who has learned to avoid falling into them may without exaggeration be described as “a perfect man.” (C. Jerdan)

Who determines the direction of these ships? Man controls their direction by utilizing the force of the wind to his advantage and by turning the rudder of the ship. That rudder is a very small part of the ship’s structure and yet it is instrumental in setting the course the pilot has in mind ... If, then, man is able to direct the course of ocean vessels with a rudder, he certainly should be able to control his own tongue. (S. Kistemaker) When the believer exercises careful control of the tongue, it can be presumed that he also is able to direct his whole life in its proper, divinely chartered course: he is a “mature man.” (T. Cargal) We have heard a great deal in recent years about freedom of speech and freedom of the press, and it has become sort of a sacred cow. However, freedom of the press in our day means that they can brainwash you according to the liberal viewpoint, and freedom of speech means that you can use vile language. I would like for someone to grant us freedom of hearing. (J. McGee)

James 3:3 Now (transition) if (protasis, 1st class condition, “and it’s true”) we thrust (βάλλω, PAI1P, Pictorial, Interrogative Ind.) the bits (Cognate Acc., from verb in verse 2) of horses (Poss. Gen., Comparison; tongues) into their (Acc. Poss.) mouths (Prep. Acc.; soul of the believer) so that (purpose) they will obey (πείθω, PPInf., Pictorial, Purpose; prevail upon) us (Acc. Dir. Obj.), we also (adjunctive) control the direction of (μετάγω, PAI1P, Pictorial; guide) their (Poss. Gen.) entire (Acc. Measure) body (Acc. Dir. Obj.).

^{BGT} **James 3:3** εἰ δὲ τῶν ἵππων τοὺς χαλινοὺς εἰς τὰ στόματα βάλλομεν εἰς τὸ πείθεσθαι αὐτοὺς ἡμῖν, καὶ ὅλον τὸ σῶμα αὐτῶν μετάγομεν.

^{VUL} **James 3:3** si autem equorum frenos in ora mittimus ad consentiendum nobis et omne corpus illorum circumferimus

LWB **James 3:4** Consider ships [body of the teacher], also being large, and propelled by harsh winds: they are directed by a very small rudder [tongue] toward whatever direction the helmsman determines [appropriate spiritual destination].

^{KW} **James 3:4** Behold also the ships, though they are so large and are driven by strong winds, are guided by a very small rudder wherever the impulse of the steersman leads him.

^{KJV} **James 3:4** 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.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

James offers a second example of how a small thing like the tongue can be controlled. Like horses, ships are large and are steered (Pictorial Present tense) by a very small device, i.e., a rudder. The rudder is comparable to the bit and bridle which is comparable to the tongue. The ship is comparable to the horse which is comparable to the body of the believer. Ships are propelled by strong winds (Pictorial Present tense). If the rudder is under the control of the helmsman, the strong winds are harnessed and the ship is steered in the direction the pilot desires (Gnomic Present tense). If the rudder is broken or otherwise out of the control of the helmsman, it goes aimlessly in any direction, like the horse which is running wild without a rider controlling the bit and bridle.

This is a picture of a teacher who does not control his tongue, who inevitably gets into even more trouble and discipline from the Lord for going in the wrong direction. Although James is speaking directly of teachers, of course all believers can apply the principle of controlling the tongue. The helmsman represents the soul of the teacher or mature believer. Your soul should be in control of your tongue and not vice versa. The superlative “very small” describes the rudder as well as the tongue of the teacher. It may be small, but it must be controlled for the ship (teacher) to reach the proper destination. The goal of the teacher is to use his communication gift to provide information that leads his congregation to spiritual growth. His personal goal is to exercise his gift in a manner that glorifies God to the maximum.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

He is not necessarily attacking the tongue as an evil, but he is stressing it as a small but important part of the body, important for good or for evil ... We human beings are like a ship with many loads and burdens to carry, but if we have a good rudder, we can do it ... If the boat is left entirely at the mercy of the wind, it will never reach its destination ... Happy and progressive is the Christian who interprets the adversities of life. The non-Christian succumbs to them, while for the Christian they provide moving power, with God at the helm. (S. Zodiates) I would add that adversities provide moving power for the Christian who is in fellowship; the reversionistic believer is tossed all over the place without the filling of the Spirit to guide him. (LWB) Human beings can control their own actions provided they can first control the rudder – namely, the human tongue. To a large extent our actions are determined by the things we say. (Z. Hodge) James does not mean to say that we can control our body *by* controlling our tongue; he means that if we can do the latter we shall be able to do the former, which is easier. (J. Adamson)

Did you know that the tongue is condemned more in Scripture than alcoholism is condemned? (J. McGee) Just as with a ship and a horse, it is not the person who does not use them who is in control - but rather the person who guides them wherever he wishes. (T. Cargal) If teachers who use their tongue to influence others are kept in firm check, the health and condition of the congregation will be assured thereby ... No doubt the author feared that the congregations to which he wrote might suffer a similar fate unless the tongues of those who teach in the authentic Jacobean tradition were used as a rudder to offer true guidance through difficult times. (R. Martin) James interprets “slow speaking” as the wise teacher’s capacity to control the material and manner of what is taught, so that no one under his care stumbles and the entire congregation is guided into the blessings of the age to

come, i.e., eschatologically fit. (R. Wall) It takes a baby two years to learn to talk and fifty years to learn to keep his mouth shut. (J. McGee)

James 3:4 Consider (interjection; behold) ships (Subj. Nom.; body of teacher), also (adjunctive) being (εἰμί, PAPtc.NNP, Descriptive, Attributive) large (Pred. Nom.), and (connective) propelled (ἐλαύνω, PPPTc.NNP, Pictorial, Circumstantial; pushed) by harsh (Descr. Gen.; strong, fierce) winds (Abl. Means): they are directed (μετάγω, PPI3S, Pictorial; guided, steered) by a very small (Gen. Measure, superlative; insignificant) rudder (Abl. Means; tongue) toward whatever (subordinating) direction (Pred. Nom.; inclination, desire) the helmsman (εὐθύνω, PAPtc.GMS, Descriptive, Predicative, Gen. Absolute, Articular; pilot, the believers'soul) determines (βούλομαι, PMI3S, Gnostic, Deponent).

^{BGT} **James 3:4** ἰδοὺ καὶ τὰ πλοῖα τηλικαῦτα ὄντα καὶ ὑπὸ ἀνέμων σκληρῶν ἐλαυνόμενα, μετάζεται ὑπὸ ἐλαχίστου πηδαλίου ὅπου ἡ ὁρμὴ τοῦ εὐθύνοντος βούλεται,

^{VUL} **James 3:4** ecce et naves cum magnae sint et a ventis validis minentur circumferuntur a modico gubernaculo ubi impetus dirigentis voluerit

LWB **James 3:5** **In this manner also, the tongue is a small part [of the body], but it boasts great things [causes trouble]. Consider how such a small fire [verbal sins of a teacher] burns up such a large forest [destroys members of a congregation in its path].**

^{KW} **James 3:5** Even so the tongue also is a small member [of the human body] and boasts great things. Behold, how great a forest a little fire sets ablaze.

^{KJV} **James 3:5** Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

For those who might not be following the drift of James's teaching, he spells it out for them here. The tongue is a small member of the body, but it boasts great things (Dramatic Present tense). The rudder of a ship and the bit and bridle of a horse are comparable to the tongue; they are small objects, but they control large things. Without a rudder or a bit, the ship and the horse will be in as much trouble as the body which is controlled by a wild tongue. Using a third example, James tells them to consider how a small fire (Latin: incendiary), perhaps a candle or a campfire, burns up such a large forest (Dramatic Present tense). We have examples of that every summer in the mountains of the southwestern United States. One untended campfire, one cigarette butt, and miles of forest go up in smoke. The point in the prior examples is that the tongue of a teacher is often wild and uncontrollable, able to scorch and consume. In this comparison, the tongue of a teacher is also dangerous. Sins of the tongue can spread like wildfire; verbal sins invade the privacy of others and often destroy people in its path. The emphasis in this chapter is on the teacher, but the principles are applicable to all believers.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The tongue cannot absolve itself of the responsibility that it has and the effect it causes. What our tongues say may affect not only the lives of others, but every other member of our bodies ... It can create a world of unrighteousness. (S. Zodiates) Such a description of the tongue enforces the idea that great destruction is but a short distance away when teachers are allowed to sway the congregation and introduce dissension. (R. Martin) This is an example of a metonymy by which an independent personality seems to be attributed to the tongue, so that it stands for the temptations or sins which are concerned with the use of the tongue. (J. Mayor) Our privacy is guaranteed by the royal priesthood. We each represent ourselves before God ... The privacy of the priesthood is a basic provision of the code. That is why we must respect the privacy of other believers and why such intrusions as gossip, judging, and maligning are among the worst sins in Psalm 6:16-19. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

A tiny spark can kindle a forest fire which may blaze for weeks and go on smouldering for months. Speech is equally dangerous and hence its effects run riot. (R. Ward) We need to realize that what lies behind these physical comparisons is the spiritual or ethical reality behind them. Behind the organ we call the tongue is indwelling sin. Behind the comparatively greater size of the body to the tongue is the extensiveness of sin. Control of indwelling sin through the avenue of speech is what James has in mind. (W. Baker) The great fire of 1666 in London, which began in a little wooden shop near London Bridge, burned down every building between the Tower and the Temple. (C. Jerdan) Mrs. O'Leary's cow kicked over a lantern in Chicago in 1871 and started that great and historic fire. And still today we see great devastations caused by fire. (J. McGee) See how small a flame ignites so large a brushwood. (T. Cargal)

James 3:5 In this manner (comparative adv.) also (adjunctive), the tongue (Subj. Nom.) is (εἰμί, PAI3S, Descriptive) a small (Nom. Measure) part (Pred. Nom.; limb of the body), but (adversative) it boasts (αὐχέω, PAI3S, Dramatic) great things (Acc. Dir. Obj.; causes trouble). Consider how (interjection) such a small (Nom. Measure) fire (Subj. Nom.) burns up (ἀνάπτω, PAI3S, Dramatic; blazing inferno) such a large (Acc. Measure) forest (Acc. Dir. Obj.; the tongue is also dangerous).

^{BGT} **James 3:5** οὕτως καὶ ἡ γλῶσσα μικρὸν μέλος ἐστὶν καὶ μεγάλα αὐχεῖ. ἰδοὺ ἠλίκον πῦρ ἠλίκτην ὕλην ἀνάπτει·

^{VUL} **James 3:5** ita et lingua modicum quidem membrum est et magna exultat ecce quantus ignis quam magnam silvam incendit

LWB **James 3:6** **Indeed, the tongue can be a fire, a world of wickedness. The tongue was placed in our anatomy although it may contaminate the entire body and may set on fire the course of existence [thinking-saying-doing] and may be set on fire by the agency of Gehenna [Satan himself].**

^{KW} **James 3:6** And the tongue is a fire, the sum total of iniquity. The tongue is so constituted in our members that it defiles the entire body and sets on fire the round of existence and is constantly being set on fire by Gehenna [hell].

^{KJV} **James 3:6** 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.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Indeed, the tongue has the potential downside of being a fire, a world (Latin: universe) of wickedness (Latin: iniquity) to its possessor. But God placed it in our anatomy (Historical Present tense) even though it has the potential (Concessive Participle) of contaminating the entire body and setting on fire (Latin: inflaming) the course of existence (Tendential Present tense). The cycle or progressive course of existence is thinking, saying, and doing. The tongue takes our mental attitude sins and converts them into verbal sins if we allow it to. And verbal sins can lead to overt sins if we allow them to. This is the vicious cycle, starting with thoughts that should remain thoughts, but the flesh “let’s the cat out of the bag.” It is the nature of the flesh to say things that should not be said. A beneficial part of our body was turned evil by the sin nature.

The third concessive participle effectively says that the tongue was placed in our anatomy even though it may be set on fire by the agency of Gehenna. Gehenna is often called “hell,” a place of torment for the wicked, but the agent of this place is none other than Satan himself. Why would God create the tongue if He knew we would abuse others with it? Until the Fall of Adam, it didn’t exhibit itself in such a negative manner. All it did was praise Him. The tendential present, therefore, points to three potential negative things that believers must be on guard against when it comes to their tongue. He must prevent sins of the tongue from contaminating the rest of his body and soul. He must prevent it from continuing the negative cycle in life into wicked deeds. He must prevent satanic forces from “stoking” the fire that his flesh starts.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

“The gehenna of fire” is the symbol of the ever-burning fire that shows forth the fate that awaits the ungodly. And as someone has said, “Hell is the rubbish heap of the universe.” (S. Zodiates) There is a veritable cosmos of evil lies present in the tiny confines of this dangerous member of our body. There is no kind of evil at all which cannot be ignited in human life by this tiny firetrap! Our words can lead not only to overall defilement, but they can also inflame the entire course of our lives by the ongoing consequences which they produce. (Z. Hodges) Words often inflame to sin; they rouse the quiescent innate passions latent in every man – the world of sin, all of the potential evil present in us and the rest of the human race – and inflame them into ardor and activity, and the man into sin. (J. Adamson) The problem (with the tongue) is one of control, and this is no minor problem. (T. Cargal) By the irresponsible speech of errant teachers the whole church is stained. (R. Martin)

Gehenna or hell is an obvious metonymy for Satan himself. Satan can and does inspire evil words. Thus James warns us of the ongoing consequences of our wrong words which, in turn, are often put

on our lips by Satan himself. (Z. Hodges) He is not referring to the tongue of flesh but to the intelligent, communicating mind that uses the tongue as its instrument. So the mind corrupts the whole person. But the corrupting influence of the tongue reaches out in widening circles, for it sets the whole course of [his] life on fire ... The term *gehenna* comes from the Greek form of the Hebrew name of the valley of Hinnom, a spot just south of Jerusalem where the rubbish of the city was deposited and burned. This continual burning of rubbish became a figure for eternal punishment. (F. Gaebelin) *Kosmos* speaks of the fallen, rebellious state of a sinful world-system. (R. Martin) *Kosmos* means the world in an evil sense, human society in a corrupt and perverted state. (J. Adamson)

To curse a fellow human being is to break out of the frame of God's creation and God's wisdom. It is to place oneself in the frame of competition and envy and violence and murder, which for James means to betray the purpose of creation. (L. Johnson) The tongue, then, is identified with – and in a sense is the vehicle of – a complete world of evil that resides among the members of the man's body. It tells lies, slanders someone's name, kindles hate, creates discord, incites lust, and, in brief, gives rise to numerous sins. There are few sins people commit in which the tongue is not involved. Because of this inclination to evil, the tongue corrupts man's total being. (S. Kistemaker) James speaking here of the tongue's power of mischief in its widest extent can only refer to the world of human life, the sphere of the worldly spirit, of which the tongue is the organ and representative of our body, and which is always at enmity with God. (J. Mayor) Some Christians find a pseudo-compatibility in verbal sinning with other believers. They band together to criticize, slander, or malign a mutual, often innocent victim. They unite in a relentless attack to destroy the person's reputation. Such activity eventually produces a psychopathic social life and these tragic believers slide from one stage of reversionism to another. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

The tongue is the adornment of evil. It is its characteristic function, by fine phrases and rhetorical devices, to dress up evil to make it appear as good, and to make what is really wicked sound pleasant, harmless and even attractive. (C. Mitton) What a perfect illustration of the political process, where every candidate is actively engaged in dressing-up his gutter nonsense in a socialistic package. (LWB) We have combined in this passage the three hostile principles, the world embodied in the tongue, the flesh in the members, and Satan using both for his own purposes. (J. Mayor) The term Gehenna is used for the devil. James sees a satanic origin for evil speech. (R. Ward) Gehenna stands for Satan, like White House stands for the president of the U.S. However Satan incites sin, whether by himself or by one of his demons, he gets the tongue to wagging out its sinful poison. (W. Baker) Commonly overlooked and generally excused, verbal sins in the local church can wreak havoc on an entire congregation. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) The tongue is only the fuse; the source of the deadly fire is hell itself. (J. Blue)

James 3:6 Indeed (emphatic), the tongue (Subj. Nom.) can be (ellipsis) a fire (Pred. Nom.), a world (Pred. Nom.) of wickedness (Gen. Disadv.). The tongue (Subj. Nom.) was placed (καθίστημι, PPI3S, Historical) in our (Poss. Gen.) anatomy (Loc. Place; member) although it may contaminate (σπιλώω, PAPtc.NFS, Tendentia, Concessive, Articular) the entire (Acc. Measure) body (Acc. Dir. Obj.) and (connective) may set on fire (φλογίζω, PAPtc.NFS,

Tendential, Concessive) **the course** (Acc. Dir. Obj.; cycle, wheel) **of existence** (Adv. Gen. Ref.; thinking-saying-doing, the cycle of nature, the ups and downs of daily life) **and** (connective) **may be set on fire** (φλογίζω, PPpTc.NFS, Tendential, Concessive) **by the agency of Gehenna** (Abl. Agency; hell, Satan himself).

^{BGT} **James 3:6** καὶ ἡ γλῶσσα πῦρ· ὁ κόσμος τῆς ἀδικίας ἡ γλῶσσα καθίσταται ἐν τοῖς μέλεσιν ἡμῶν, ἡ σπιλοῦσα ὅλον τὸ σῶμα καὶ φλογίζουσα τὸν τροχὸν τῆς γενέσεως καὶ φλογιζομένη ὑπὸ τῆς γέεννης.

^{VUL} **James 3:6** et lingua ignis est universitas iniquitatis lingua constituitur in membris nostris quae maculat totum corpus et inflamat rotam nativitatis nostrae inflammata a gehenna

LWB **James 3:7** **For every species of mammal and also birds, reptiles and also marine life, has been controlled [tamed & subdued] in the past and is still being controlled by the natural order of mankind [instituted by God in Gen. 9:2],**

^{KW} **James 3:7** For every creature, quadrupeds and birds and reptiles and marine life, is controlled and has been controlled by mankind.

^{KJV} **James 3:7** 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:

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Man is able to control every kind of animal known, but he is unable to control his own tongue. He can tame beasts, but not himself. It is a given that every species of mammal (Latin: beast), birds, reptiles (Latin: serpents, Gk: herpetology) and marine life has been controlled by man in the past (Historial Present tense) and continues to be controlled in the present (Progressive Perfect tense). This is not a bad thing, contrary to the unbiblical views espoused by environmental wackos and animal rights activists. This subjugation, taming, and ruling is a natural order or endowment of mankind. God created man higher than the beasts and gave him authority (Latin: domination) over all creation in Genesis 9:2.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The Greek word “phusis” means nature, the sum of innate properties and powers by which one person differs from others. It is a natural thing for man to bring to subjection even the wildest of the animal creation, but it takes a supernatural act to subjugate his own nature ... The old animal nature of man can only be completely transformed through the supernatural activity of the Holy Spirit bringing into him the new nature of God ... Man can train his tongue to say certain things and to behave in certain ways, but he cannot change its nature, which is evil. As our entire nature is depraved and evil and cannot be controlled and tamed by our own selves, so is part of our total constitution, i.e., the tongue. Man can train the external manifestations of his nature, but he cannot change the nature itself from which these manifestations spring. (S. Zodiates) “Tame” here is not domestication as in the case of horses, dogs, or cats, but subduing as in God’s mandate to humans to

subdue all creatures, for reptiles and every species of animals have not been so domesticated. (W. Baker)

In fact, Moses, one of the greatest of all (Psalm 106:33), was excluded from the Promised Land because *he spoke rashly with his lips*. (Z. Hodges) Every year men see in the circuses lions that are more gently disposed toward their keepers than some men are toward their benefactors, and bears rolling and wrestling and imitating our “skills,” but men are absolutely unable to discipline their own tongues. (J. Adamson) The tongue of man is fiercer than the most ferocious beast. The rebellion of our race against good is far more inveterate than any insubordination of the brutes. Indeed, the revolt of the lower creatures against the authority of man is only the shadow and symbol of man’s revolt against the authority of God. (C. Jerdan) Taming the tongue is a work of the Holy Spirit as we in faith allow it to happen ... The tongue is one of the flesh’s primary avenues of expression. (W. Baker) Since then the tongue cannot be restrained, there must be some secret fire of hell hidden in it. (J. Calvin)

James 3:7 For (explanatory) every (Nom. Measure) species (Subj. Nom.) of mammal (Gen. Spec.; quadruped) and (enclitic) also (adjunctive) birds (Gen. Spec.), reptiles (Gen. Spec.) and (enclitic) also (adjunctive) marine life (Gen. Spec.; aquatic) has been controlled in the past (δαμάζω, PPI3S, Historical; subdued, tamed) and (connective) is still being controlled (δαμάζω, Perf.PI3S, Progressive) by the natural order (Abl. Means; regular condition, endowment) of mankind (Dat. Ref.; human),

^{BGT} **James 3:7** πᾶσα γὰρ φύσις θηρίων τε καὶ πετεινῶν, ἔρπετων τε καὶ ἐναλίων δαμάζεται καὶ δεδάμασται τῇ φύσει τῇ ἀνθρωπίνῃ,

^{VUL} **James 3:7** omnis enim natura bestiarum et volucrum et serpentium etiam ceterorum domantur et domita sunt a natura humana

LWB James 3:8 But no one of mankind is able to tame the tongue, an unstable evil full of deadly poison [death bringing venom].

^{KW} **James 3:8** But the tongue no one in the human race is able to control. It is a restless, unstable evil, full of lethal poison.

^{KJV} **James 3:8** But the tongue can no man tame; *it is* an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Every creature on earth, in the sea and in the air can be tamed, but not the tongue of man. Nobody is able (Gnomic Present tense) to tame the tongue (Culminative Aorist tense). The result infinitive means they may try for years, but in the end it just isn’t possible. The Greek word “dunamai” means *has the power*; left to himself with no divine help, man does not have the power to control his own tongue perfectly. Animals can be tamed to give us comfort, but not the tongue. Creatures can be controlled to keep them from harming us, but not the tongue. The

tongue is a restless, unstable evil full of deadly poison. We need help to curtail its evil tendencies. It refuses to be governed. It has the potential of bringing death by venom if left to the control of the sin nature. The picture of a poisonous snake obviously comes to mind.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Man can train his tongue to say certain things and to behave in certain ways, but he cannot change its nature, which is evil. As our entire nature is depraved and evil and cannot be controlled and tamed by our own selves, so is part of our total constitution, i.e., the tongue. Man can train the external manifestations of his nature, but he cannot change the nature itself from which these manifestations spring ... This is not merely theoretical; it is a matter of everyday experience. (S. Zodiates) Even the greatest of God's servants – our Lord excepted – have failed to completely control their tongues. (Z. Hodges) The thought that the tongue is one “animal” that cannot be controlled was quite common in the literature of Hellenistic and Jewish ethics. (R. Martin) I suspect that James is responding to the kind of congregational crisis that pits one rival teacher over another in a struggle for power among the membership. (R. Wall)

Poison makes an apt name for the evil effect of hurtful gossip. It spreads an evil atmosphere through the whole of the community, lowering morale, and destroying the character of innocent people who have no means of stopping or answering the whispered slanders. In war time it was found how despondent words could spread defeatism in a hard-pressed community. So in peace-time, depressed words of cynical detraction can spread a poison of unbelief and lack of confidence, for which it is very difficult to find an adequate antidote, so subtly does the poison spread, and so widespread can become its effect. (C. Mitton) In a weak moment it suddenly emerges and we wish we could recapture that moment of thoughtless outburst and say something worthwhile in its place. Being full of deadly poison, it does its damage like snake's venom, eventually penetrating to every part of the body and destroying us. (W. Baker)

James 3:8 But (adversative) no one (Subj. Nom.) of mankind (Adv. Gen. Ref.) is able (δύναμαι, PMI3S, Gnostic, Deponent) to tame (δαμάζω, AAInf., Culminative, Result; control, govern) the tongue (Acc. Dir. Obj.), an unstable (Descr. Gen.; restless) evil (Pred. Nom.) full (Nom. Measure) of deadly (Gen. Disadv.) poison (Gen. Content; death bringing venom).

^{BGT} **James 3:8** τὴν δὲ γλῶσσαν οὐδεὶς δαμάσαι δύναται ἀνθρώπων, ἀκατάστατον κακόν, μεστὴ ἰοῦ θανατηφόρου.

^{VUL} **James 3:8** linguam autem nullus hominum domare potest inquietum malum plena veneno mortifero

LWB James 3:9 By means of it [the tongue] we praise the Lord, even the Father, and by means of it [the tongue] we curse mankind, who came into being according to the likeness of God;

^{KW} **James 3:9** By means of it we eulogize the Lord, even the Father, and by means of it we curse men who have been made in the image of God.

^{KJV} **James 3:9** Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

We praise the Lord and curse mankind (Aoristic Present tense) with the same tongue. Blessing the Lord, even the Father, is not difficult to understand. But why do we curse our fellow man, when he came into existence (Ingressive Perfect tense) according to the likeness of God? Since we were all created in His image, we should speak well of others rather than curse them. But what an inconsistent lot we are; we are often duplicitous in word when the sin nature controls our thinking. The Latin contrasts this inconsistency with the words *benediction* and *malediction*. It doesn't necessary mean we invoke a formal curse on someone, although that is possible, but rather all sorts of verbal sins that mar the character of another, i.e., gossip, maligning, slandering, defamation.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

It does not mean that the divine image in man is so obliterated that every man is as evil as it is possible to be, but rather that there is no part of our being which is not in some degree infected by sin. (J. Calvin) It is cursing that grows out of bitterness and hatred that he speaks of. (F. Gaebelein) The pronoun "we" may imply that teachers are in the author's sights, though they are not the only ones subject to this malady; all church members must guard against this sin, even if the primary audience seems to be the church's teachers. (R. Martin) *Bless* and *curse* are in the present tense and indicate the tongue's ability to play the part of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde is not an isolated occurrence. (D. Hiebert) The Father is called the Son's title, "Lord," showing the unity of the Godhead. Father implies His paternal love, Lord His dominion. (R. Jamieson) We are aware how the slippery half-truths of advertising have become the common language of politics, where messages to the public are crafted precisely according to their ability to "sell" a candidate, where lying about and slandering opponents have become recognized as the most effective of all campaigning devices, and where political agendas are advanced by appeals to the electorate's most primitive fears and most unworthy cravings. (L. Johnson) What makes the tongue more mischievous is that it serves the purpose of the *diglossos* (split or forked tongue) hiding evil under the mask of good. (J. Mayor) Man is still viewed as being made in the image of God. But this image has been marred and defaced by man's sin. While man is still man, his is now a sinful man. (R. Morey)

We need to be realistic about the matter of priority in fellowship. Fellowship means sharing in common, and all areas of fellowship are not equal simply because they do not involve the same sharing. Fellowship on the horizontal plane (that is, with other human beings) is like a series of concentric circles. The largest circle includes all men with whom we have a certain kind of fellowship. We are to do good to all men and to show respect in our speech to all men simply because all were created in the image of God. The next largest circle includes all Christians. We have a certain kind of fellowship with them regardless of their affiliations or beliefs. God has done something very wonderful and basic for every person in that circle of fellowship, and we share that in common. Some of the smaller circles may be our particular church fellowship or a doctrinal

fellowship such as the writer personally shares in the seminary in which he teaches. Cutting across all these circles is the physical factor. We obviously do not share in the same measure in all circles the fellowship which we have within a given circle. Our Lord shared certain things with Peter, James, and John that He did not share with the others who were in that circle of the Twelve. (C. Ryrie) Similar to the forked tongue of a snake, man's uncontrolled tongue both emits praise and spews out curses. (J. Blue)

James 3:9 By means of it (Instr. Means; the tongue) we praise (εὐλογέω, PAI1P, Aoristic; bless, speak well of) the Lord (Acc. Dir. Obj.), even (ascensive) the Father (Acc. Appos.), and (continuative) by means of it (Instr. Means; the tongue) we curse (καταράομαι, PMI1P, Aoristic, Deponent) mankind (Acc. Dir. Obj.), who came into being (γίνομαι, Perf.APtc.AMP, Ingressive, Substantival, Deponent) according to the likeness (Adv. Acc.) of God (Adv. Gen. Ref.);

^{BGT} **James 3:9** ἐν αὐτῇ εὐλογοῦμεν τὸν κύριον καὶ πατέρα καὶ ἐν αὐτῇ καταρώμεθα τοὺς ἀνθρώπους τοὺς καθ' ὁμοίωσιν θεοῦ γεγονότας,

^{VUL} **James 3:9** in ipsa benedicimus Dominum et Patrem et in ipsa maledicimus homines qui ad similitudinem Dei facti sunt

LWB James 3:10 **Out of the same mouth proceeds blessing and cursing. My brethren, there is no need for these things [alternating *benediction* and *malediction*] to continue coming to pass in this manner [inconsistency].**

^{KW} **James 3:10** Out of the same mouth there proceeds eulogies and cursings. My brethren, these things ought not thus inappropriately to keep on taking place.

^{KJV} **James 3:10** Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Unfortunately, blessing and cursing proceed (Aoristic Present tense) from the same mouth. James acknowledges, however, that it doesn't have to be that way on a continual basis. The iterative present means it doesn't have to become a habit to curse others with the tongue. A mature believer learns how to control the negative use of the tongue so that the inconsistent, alternating manner of blessing and cursing can be broken. The *benediction* and *malediction* doesn't have to be the pattern of life. Our job as believers is to allow the Holy Spirit and Bible doctrine to assist us in controlling our tongue.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

We human beings, though children of God, should not take it upon ourselves to curse others, because that prerogative belongs to God and Him alone. (S. Zodhiates) In the strongest possible

Greek, only here in the NT, James condemns the tongue's ambivalent defiance of any uniformity of law in its character and behavior. (J. Adamson) In Christianity according to James any form of duplicity, including double-speak, is the mark of spiritual failure. Moreover, a believer's duplicity exposes theological deception which makes following the way of wisdom impossible during spiritual testing. (R. Wall) It threatens the work of God in the church and in evangelism. It destroys friendships and reputations. The only antidote is apology, and that often is ineffective due to bitterness and resentment. (W. Baker) The sin nature is no longer your ruler. When you ignore rebound and the intake of Bible doctrine and instead follow the thinking of good and evil, *you* are the culprit. *You* have placed a beggar on the throne of your life! These things ought not be. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

James 3:10 Out of the same (Gen. Spec.) mouth (Abl. Source) proceeds (ἐξέρχομαι, PMI3S, Aoristic, Deponent; comes out) blessing (Subj. Nom.) and (connective) cursing (Subj. Nom.). My (Gen. Rel.) brethren (Voc. Address), there is no (neg. adv.) need (χρή, PAI3S, Descriptive; necessity) for these things (Subj. Nom.) to continue coming to pass (γίνομαι, PMInf., Iterative, Inf. As Dir. Obj. of Verb, Deponent) in this manner (Adv. Manner; inconsistency).

^{BGT} **James 3:10** ἐκ τοῦ αὐτοῦ στόματος ἐξέρχεται εὐλογία καὶ κατάρα. οὐ χρή, ἀδελφοί μου, ταῦτα οὕτως γίνεσθαι.

^{VUL} **James 3:10** ex ipso ore procedit benedictio et maledictio non oportet fratres mei haec ita fieri

LWB **James 3:11** Does the well emit out of the same opening sweet water [blessings from supergrace] and bitter water [cursing from reversionism]?

^{KW} **James 3:11** The spring does not pour forth out of the same opening the sweet and the bitter [water], does it?

^{KJV} **James 3:11** Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet *water* and bitter?

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

James asks a rhetorical question related to blessing and cursing. Does a well or spring pour forth (Pictorial Present tense) both sweet water and bitter water? Sweet water represents blessings from supergrace; bitter water represents cursing from reversionism. Sweet water is *glucose* in the Latin. The interrogative “*meti*” expects a negative answer but is left untranslated. If you want to translate it, you could add “It doesn't, does it?” In other words, it isn't appropriate (although seemingly natural) for the tongue to bless God and curse man from the same mouth.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Such behavior by the tongue is unsuitable (it ought not to be) because it flies in the face of the consistency and predictability of so much in nature around us ... The analogy seems to imply delicately the way our mouths pour out words, often so disharmonious and inconsistent with one

another that it is almost like yielding bitter and sweet waters at the same time. (Z. Hodges) The point ultimately is not merely that speaking both blessing and cursing is incongruous, but that such should be impossible for one whose nature has been changed “by the implanted Word.” (T. Cargal) Small and influential, the tongue must be controlled; satanic and infectious, the tongue must be corralled; salty and inconsistent, the tongue must be cleansed. (J. Blue) A man can be a two-faced, double-minded, and forked-tongued individual – he can say both good and bad. But no fountain down here on this earth is going to give forth both sweet and bitter water, nor will a tree bear forth figs and olives. (J. McGee)

James 3:11 Does the well (Subj. Nom.; fountain, spring) emit (βρύω, PAI3S, Pictorial, Interrogative Ind.; pour forth) out of the same (Gen. Spec.) opening (Ab. Source) sweet water (Acc. Dir. Obj.; glucose, blessing: supergrace) and (connective) bitter water (Acc. Dir. Obj.; sulphurous, cursing: reverse process reversionism)?

^{BGT} **James 3:11** μήτι ἡ πηγὴ ἐκ τῆς αὐτῆς ὀπῆς βρῦει τὸ γλυκὸν καὶ τὸ πικρὸν;

^{VUL} **James 3:11** numquid fons de eodem foramine emanat dulcem et amaram aquam

^{LWB} **James 3:12** My brethren, is a fig tree able to produce olives or a vine figs [there is an expected fruit according to its nature]? Neither is salty water [cursing from reversionism] able to produce sweet water [blessings from supergrace].

^{KW} **James 3:12** A fig tree, my brethren, is not able to produce olives, is it, or a vine, figs? Neither is salt water able to produce sweet water.

^{KJV} **James 3:12** Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so *can* no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

James carries his analogies a bit further, pointing to a fig tree being unable to produce (Dramatic Aorist tense) olives or a vine to produce figs. He asks this as a rhetorical question, knowing the answer is negatory. The interrogative particle, again untranslated, informs the reader that James is expecting a negative answer to both examples. The nature of the fig tree is to produce figs. The nature of a vine is to produce grapes. And olives come from an olive tree. Each produces according to its own nature. By comparison, a reversionistic believer will habitually produce what comes natural: cursing. A supergrace believer will habitually produce what comes natural: blessings. Then in a highly elliptical phrase, borrowing the verb from the question, he states by comparison that salt water is also unable to produce (Result Infinitive) sweet water (Latin: glucose). A cursing tongue from a reversionistic believer is not able to produce sweet, supergrace blessings. James wants the tongue that blesses God to also bless our fellow believers.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

God is interested not so much in our talk, if that talk does not agree with our walk, as in the fruit of our inner experience ... The outside which can be seen must agree with the inside ... The tongue either has to be full of blessing or full of curses; it cannot be half one and half the other. If it is, shame is brought to Christ. (S. Zodiates) If his readers used their tongues too much, they could readily expect both negative and positive results of a far-reaching character. (Z. Hodges) The human tongue is unique because of our duality, our capability for both good and evil. (W. Baker) The fig, the olive, and the vine, are all symbols of Israel. The fig speaks of national righteousness ... The olive being the source of the illuminating oil in the holy places, is a symbol of the light of God's revelation, which comes through Israel ... Israel was an empty vine. They did not cheer the heart of God or man. Christ came as the real vine. (A. Knoch) Warm springs impregnated with sulphur abound in the volcanic valley of the Jordan. (M. Vincent)

James 3:12 My (Gen. Rel.) brethren (Voc. Address), is a fig tree (Subj. Nom.) able (δύναμαι, PMI3S, Static, Interrogative Ind., Deponent) to produce (ποιέω, AAInf., Dramatic, Result) olives (Acc. Dir. Obj.) or (disjunctive) a vine (Subj. Nom.) figs (Acc. Dir. Obj.)? Neither (coordinating) is (ellipsis) salty (Descr. Nom.) water (Subj. Nom.; cursing from reversionism) able (ellipsis) to produce (ποιέω, AAInf., Dramatic, Result) sweet water (Acc. Dir. Obj.; glucose, blessings).

^{BGT} **James 3:12** μή δύναται, ἀδελφοί μου, συκῆ ἐλαίας ποιῆσαι ἢ ἄμπελος σῦκα; οὔτε ἄλυκτὸν γλυκὸν ποιῆσαι ὕδωρ.

^{VUL} **James 3:12** numquid potest fratres mei ficus olivas facere aut vitis ficus sic neque salsa dulcem potest facere aquam

LWB James 3:13 Who is wise and understanding [a doctrinal expert] among you? Demonstrate this production [application of doctrine] from an honorable manner of life in the sphere of grace orientation [genuine humility] of wisdom [spiritual insight].

^{KW} **James 3:13** Who is wise and well informed among you? Let him demonstrate from the source of a good and beautiful manner of life his works in meekness, which [meekness] is characterized by wisdom.

^{KJV} **James 3:13** 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.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Who is wise and understanding among you? James is referring to a doctrinal expert, a teacher, one who has the Word of God embedded in his soul and consistently applies it to daily life. This requires discipline and years of doctrinal metabolization. He then commands (Imperative mood) the mature believer with an edification complex of the soul to demonstrate his application of doctrine with an honorable manner of life. The supergrace believer is commanded to live in genuine humility (*strength under control*), in the sphere of grace orientation (deliberate acceptance). He is to produce divine good works instead of human good from the energy of the

flesh. His correct application of doctrine should come from his insight into spiritual things, which comes from the Word of God in his soul. If there is no doctrine in the teacher's soul, he doesn't have anything important to say. So the first requirement is for the teacher to have a complete understanding of biblical truth, a thorough-going systematic theology. The second requirement is that he is able to apply what he knows to daily life. The third requirement is that he can communicate that wisdom to other believers.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Without a command from the mind and permission from the will, the tongue cannot speak either good or evil ... Wisdom is a synonym of *Logos*, of the Word ... It is apparent that the pursuit of wisdom is reserved for the full-grown in Christ, or the perfect ones, who alone have minds to comprehend the hidden mysteries of God. Since wisdom has inherent in it the perfection, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption of God, it is only ours as we possess Christ, the personification of wisdom. (S. Zodiates) The final section of this sub-unit emphasizes James's foundational concern that one's actions (particularly one's speech) manifest the person's internal attitudes ... Wisdom must be demonstrated in action. It is not just an intellectual concept, but something that involves the very life of the believer. (T. Cargal) This paragraph (13-18) is closely connected with the subject of the chapter as enounced in verse 1. Where that ambition, and rivalry to be teachers, existed, there was sure to be contentiousness and every evil thing. (H. Alford) To function properly in their respective places, the Christian and the church need wisdom and understanding ... James qualifies the term *wise* with the word *understanding*. This means that a wise person also has experience, knowledge, and ability. Wisdom consists of having insight and expertise to draw conclusions that are correct. (S. Kistemaker)

The word *sophos* was the technical term among the Jews for the teacher, the scribe, the rabbi. It appears that the author is still speaking to those who would be teachers; here it is not what they say that he is concerned with, but rather how they live. The term *epistemon* describes one who is expert, who has special knowledge or training. Thus anyone who would be a teacher, who claims to be an expert with special understanding, is under obligation to show it by his good life. He should possess "knowhow" and be skilled in applying God's truth to practical, everyday living. (F. Gaebelein) James may be referring to the teachers and reverting to the qualifications and credentials belonging to those whom he regards as instructors. They must be able to avoid the snares of false wisdom and cultivate the virtues of the wisdom from above, which is true and wholesome, in the face of tendencies to lead the congregation astray ... The *tis* (who) may point specifically to the teachers, although the church members at large are not totally out of the picture. (R. Martin) In antiquity the philosophers gave special instruction in "dialectics," or the act of argumentation. The intellectual self-confidence which the readers apparently possess through their philosophical training is categorically rejected by the author. Boasting of such dialectic wisdom and shrewdness is contradictory to the truth, inasmuch as the pretended wisdom is not real. (B. Reicke)

In the Bible the word "wise" described someone who has moral insight and skill in advising on practical issues of conduct rather than an academic knowledge of theoretical problems and their solution. (C. Mitton) Someone who has knowledge without wisdom has not finished the course. First you must acquire the knowledge; then you must apply it successfully, again and again, so it becomes

wisdom. If you have not acquired the requisite knowledge of the Word of God, however, you have nothing to apply to daily life in order to gain wisdom. Wisdom does not pour down out of heaven into your brain without the intake, metabolization and application of Bible doctrine. Wisdom does not bypass the spiritual gift of pastor and teacher to impart knowledge to you which will hopefully, eventually, become wisdom. (LWB) If we feel very deeply about the importance of a cause we believe in, it is very easy for the power of evil to pervert that deep feeling into channels of personal feeling against its opponents. On the other hand, jealousy and rivalry are not the monopoly either of religious enthusiasts or teachers. What James has to say here is applicable to all Christians. (C. Mitton) Wisdom is simply manifesting the Truth of God in every dimension of life. When a believer combines the Word and the Spirit of wisdom – though he may not be wise in the eyes of the world – he is wise beyond the world’s wisdom. (J. MacArthur)

A vast difference exists between the wisdom of man and the wisdom of God. Worldly-wise men are often proud of their self-gained knowledge, eager for discussion and disputation, and sometimes more eager to defeat others by their arguments. Wisdom, according to the world’s standards, is a certain cleverness which enables one to defeat one’s opponent by words, thereby gaining one’s own way and winning a point. Such wisdom is not from above and has not God’s approval ... None of us wants to be put on record as being undiscerning and lacking in understanding. Yet, those of us who have thought ourselves to be men and women of wisdom must confess that too many times we failed to judge soundly and to deal sagaciously with facts ... The believer’s walk, or manner of life, if it is to be in wisdom, must be according to God’s Word. Paul tells us (2 Tim. 3:15) that the Holy Scriptures are able to make us wise. To be endowed with the knowledge of God’s Word is commendable, but such knowledge must be practical in our daily lives, else we are not wise. Knowledge is the possession of facts; wisdom is the proper use and application of knowledge. (L. Strauss) Knowledge enables us to take things apart, but wisdom enables us to put things together and relate God’s truth to daily life. (W. Wiersbe) *Understanding* refers to intellectual perception and scientific acumen. (J. Blue)

James 3:13 Who (Subj. Nom.) is (ellipsis) wise (Pred. Nom.; a practical teacher) and (connective) understanding (Pred. Nom.; a doctrinal expert) among you (Dat. Assoc.; an ECS in supergrace)? Demonstrate (δείκνυμι, AAImp.3S, Gnostic, Command) this (Gen. Spec.) production (Acc. Dir. Obj.) from an honorable (Gen. Adv.) manner of life (Abl. Means; behavior, conduct) in the sphere of grace orientation (Loc. Sph.; genuine humility, courtesy) of wisdom (Adv. Gen. Ref.; application of doctrine, insight into spiritual things).

^{BGT} **James 3:13** Τίς σοφὸς καὶ ἐπιστήμων ἐν ὑμῖν; δεῖξάτω ἐκ τῆς καλῆς ἀναστροφῆς τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ ἐν πραύτητι σοφίας.

^{VUL} **James 3:13** quis sapiens et disciplinatus inter vos ostendat ex bona conversatione operationem suam in mansuetudine sapientiae

LWB **James 3:14** But if you possess bitter jealousy and contentiousness in the mentality of your soul [reversionistic thoughts], stop boasting and lying against the truth [contradicting their profession of spiritual maturity by verbal sins].

^{KW} **James 3:14** But if, as is the case, you are having bitter jealousy and contentiousness in your heart, stop boasting and lying against the truth.

^{KJV} **James 3:14** But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

The adversative “but” refers to competing teachers who think they are spiritually mature and are consistently applying Bible doctrine, but are in reality reversionists who have replaced doctrinal application with mental and verbal sins. The protasis of a 1st class condition means these believers indeed possess bitter jealousy and contentiousness in the mentality of their soul. The idea behind the choice of words here is that of a struggle between two or more teachers with different backgrounds, ideas, and probably theology. One, both, or all of these presumed teachers is not suited for the office. James commands them (Imperative of Prohibition) to stop boasting and lying (Iterative Present tense) against the truth. They are pretending to love doctrine, but their mental and verbal sins contradict their profession. Their thoughts and speech dishonor Bible doctrine. This does not mean we are to avoid all controversies about Bible doctrine. We are commanded by Paul in Jude 3 to “earnestly contend for the faith.” But we are to contend for the faith in the filling of the Spirit, not in bitter jealousy and contentiousness.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

His concern is that the attempts by the implied readers to “show wisdom” are characterized by “bitter rivalry and ambition” rather than humility ... The presence of “bitter rivalry and ambition” proves one has not “by meekness received the implanted Word.” (T. Cargal) How dare they rise in the Christian assembly, ostensibly to impart God’s wisdom to their Christian brothers, while at the same time they were actually motivated by envy of other Christians and by a spirit of rivalry. (Z. Hodges) When two intelligent leaders fight, their quarreling is a far sadder sight than if they were ignorant and could not produce an array of arguments. (S. Zodhiates) One can imagine that rival teachers have formed theological factions within the same congregation and have withdrawn from the rest of the church. If so, the zeal of sectarian religion has formed a bitter split within the congregation that now threatens the witness if not also the viability of Christian faith. (R. Wall)

The sins of the tongue, which flow from the inner life of one’s disposition, leave a bitter taste that results in accusations and falsehoods hurled at other Christians. (R. Martin) They perceive themselves as “mature persons” who do not commit errors in what they say, and so they desire to “become teachers.” Although they recognize that they are only a tiny part of the community, they seek to control and direct its conduct. What motivates them, however, is nothing more than bitter rivalry and ambition and the result can only be rebellion and every bad deed. (T. Cargal) As an experienced pastor, James knows that among the members of the church are some persons whose

spirit is characterized by bitter envy and selfishness. (S. Kistemaker) The failure of the teacher, who replaces wisdom and understanding with jealousy and falsehood, is not his antisocial behavior but his spiritual immaturity. (R. Wall)

No sin in the Word of God is as vicious as bitterness. Bitterness is the undistilled arrogance of the soul. It turns love into hatred, happiness into malice, malice into revenge, respect into vilification, blessing into cursing. Once any sin or failure has been cited and, therefore forgiven, the believer must not revisit the sin. He must isolate the sin, forget the sin, and keep moving in the spiritual life. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) James's readers may have been priding themselves in their partisan defense of the truth – a defense that was to their own advantage and advancement. Through such bitter and partisan defense, they were in reality denying the very truth they were attempting to defend. (F. Gaebelien) The false teacher lies in defiance of the truth – a vivid phrase suggesting an arrogant use of truth-claims to promote a selfish end ... The teacher who lies about the truth subverts the created course (3:6) and makes it impossible for God's good intentions to be realized within the life of the community. (R. Wall)

James 3:14 But (adversative) if (protasis, 1st class condition, "and you do") you possess (ἔχω, PAI2P, Descriptive) bitter (Noncompl. Acc.) jealousy (Acc. Dir. Obj.) and (connective) contentiousness (Acc. Dir. Obj.; selfish ambition) in the mentality of your (Poss. Gen.) soul (Loc. Sph.; reversionism), stop (neg. particle) boasting (κατακαυχάομαι, PMImp.2P, Iterative, Prohibition, Deponent) and (continuative) lying (ψεύδομαι, PMImp.2P, Iterative, Prohibition, Deponent) against the truth (Prep. Gen.).

^{BGT} **James 3:14** εἰ δὲ ζῆλον πικρὸν ἔχετε καὶ ἐριθείαν ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ ὑμῶν, μὴ κατακαυχᾶσθε καὶ ψεύδεσθε κατὰ τῆς ἀληθείας.

^{VUL} **James 3:14** quod si zelum amarum habetis et contentiones in cordibus vestris nolite gloriari et mendaces esse adversus veritatem

LWB James 3:15 This wisdom [demon doctrine] is not descending from above [heaven], but is of the earth, soulish [unspiritual], demonic;

^{KW} **James 3:15** This wisdom is not the wisdom which comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual [having to do with the natural, physical existence as over against the spiritual world of the supernatural], demonic;

^{KJV} **James 3:15** This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

The so-called wisdom that is paraded by many is actually demon doctrine. It did not descend from heaven (Pictorial Present tense), so it is not divine viewpoint. It is earthly, soulish and demonic. In other words, its source is from the world, the flesh or the devil. It is human viewpoint at best (Latin: animalistic), and satanic viewpoint at worst (Latin: diabolical). It is,

therefore, false or pseudo wisdom. It is doctrine of demons, teaching from evil spirits. It came from some psychological or philosophical panacea. The Greek word “psuche” in this text (soulish) is where *psychology* got its derivation. It came from some form of esoteric, New Age mysticism; it often came from someone who was involved in drug addiction, like Freud or Jung who were both notorious drug abusers. It did not come from the Bible; it was not bestowed by God. It is hellish and damnable.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Such wisdom, instead of being from above, is earthly in source as well as kind. It views life from the limited viewpoint of this world rather than from heaven’s vantage point. (F. Gaebelien) There is a larger battle here than that of an individual’s struggle for self-control; it is a battle involving spiritual allegiances ... Human speech must be placed in the context of God’s Word. (L. Johnson) It was inspired and encouraged by the spirits which serve Satan, it was demonic, with all the spiritual damage implied by that tragic fact. (Z. Hodges) The false wisdom is not merely neutral, spurious, or inadequate – but positively demonic. (J. Adamson) Such attitudes are for James a virtual anti-wisdom. (T. Cargal) Earthly means just that. Its extent is limited to the sphere of time and space. Earthly wisdom cannot crawl out of its locked prison. Man is trapped in a box of time and space. God and eternal truth are outside that box. All of man’s wisdom is marked by the curse of his own fallenness, which is characterized by his pride and self-centeredness. Unregenerate man’s finite system demands an earthly wisdom and nothing more. The corruption of his system pervades every dimension of his life, including his philosophical and educational systems. (J. MacArthur)

This is the tendency of the modern psychologist-preacher, who tells us that we are inherently good, that there are goodness, righteousness, salvation within us, and that all we need to do is to develop these qualities and everything will be all right. He speaks of salvation, but it is an earthly salvation. He speaks of wisdom, but it is an earthly wisdom; it begins and ends with man. The true wisdom, the true salvation, however, as taught by the Bible, which is the revelation of God to us, is something that is found outside ourselves; it is something that comes from above and is beyond the physical world which can be perceived by our physical senses ... Not only is this [false wisdom] earthly, but it only enables men to know the natural world about them. It does not bring them in touch with God, the Giver of true wisdom ... Satan has a great many spirits, which enable his followers to deceive many with the superhuman knowledge and action on the spirits of men. Oh, the thousands of demons that are loose in the world today! They are down here, and there isn’t a single lazy one among them. They are clever and they are powerful. They will make a person look wise, many times religiously wise. (S. Zodiates)

At the very moment wisdom is needed, one of two possibilities will take place depending on the motivation that lies behind it. We will express ourselves either in God’s wisdom from above or earthly wisdom from below. The very ease with which we can express the wisdom from below is alarming, because to answer that kind of “wisdom” is to “lie against the truth.” This world is more influenced by the demonic, and this kind of “wisdom” can easily seep into everything we do, even ministry. Thus, we find the church being run, evangelism being done, counsel being offered by wisdom from the world. The church gets run by worldly management techniques, evangelism gets watered down by a half gospel that avoids the harsh reality of human depravity in order to avoid

offending someone, and counseling gets corrupted by secular psychology. (W. Baker) The enslaved will is controlled by its affections, which are evil, earthly, and sensual. As Adam's will acted according to his nature after the fall, so every sinner's will is free only to act according to his nature. The action of the will is determined by the nature of the person making the choice. (W. Best)

James 3:15 This (Nom. Spec.) wisdom (Subj. Nom.; demon doctrine) is (εἰμί, ΠΑΙ3S, Descriptive) not (neg. adv.) descending (κατέρχομαι, PMPTc.NFS, Pictorial, Attributive, Deponent) from above (adv.; heaven), but (contrast) is (ellipsis) of the earth (Pred. Nom.), soulish (Pred. Nom.; unspiritual, worldly minded), demonic (Pred. Nom.; devilish);

^{BGT} **James 3:15** οὐκ ἔστιν αὕτη ἡ σοφία ἄνωθεν κατερχομένη ἀλλὰ ἐπίγειος, ψυχική, δαιμονιώδης.

^{VUL} **James 3:15** non est ista sapientia desursum descendens sed terrena animalis diabolica

LWB James 3:16 For wherever jealousy and contentiousness exist [in the reversionist], there is instability [wide emotional swings] and every category of vile practice [monsterhood has been achieved].

^{KW} **James 3:16** For where jealousy and contentiousness are, there, in that place, are restlessness and instability and every base deed.

^{KJV} **James 3:16** For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

There is no verb in this verse; it is understood in a near poetic manner. Wherever you find jealousy and party strife in an assembly, you will also find emotional instability and every imaginable category of vile practice. James is referring to the soul of a reversionist, which is corrupt on the inside and spreads anarchy, disorder and strife on the outside. Everything the reversionist produces is worthless, bitter, and factious. His life is continually full of commotion, self-induced misery, alienation and strife. If this continues over a long period of time, a Christian can actually achieve “monsterhood.” He not only self-destructs himself (implode), he also creates chaos in the lives of those around him (explode).

I have seen two church splits and one seminary split in my lifetime. In all cases there was at least one person totally immersed in selfish ambition. There were opposing political groups, with at least one being a personality cult. The result in my three cases was negative: the established authority was ejected by a rebellious and ignorant people. A new “program” replaced the consistent, detailed teaching of the Word of God. What remained was a watered-down version of the former glory, with rebels in control. In the case of one church split, a “plurality of ignorant elders” removed the competent pastor; I prefer to call them what they really were: church terrorists, religious assassins.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Akatastasia is a common word for anarchy and political turmoil. Luke uses it to refer to political uprisings. James is no doubt speaking of disturbance and turmoil in the church. (F. Gaebelin) Confusion is a sign of the absence of peace. Where there is such confusion, evidently God is not there, in spite of the fact that His presence is fanatically claimed. (S. Zodhiates) James is burdened with a desire for communal unity, but unfortunately the inevitable result of unruly tongues, unholy zeal, and unchecked party spirit is chaos and division. (R. Martin) The aim of the propagator of a party view, religious or political, is not only to accumulate adherents but also to infect them with the greatest possible sectarianism of partisan zeal, though such zeal naturally cannot be quite the same in the mere adherent as in the leader. (J. Adamson)

Sometimes we Christians are astonished and surprised when we observe the zeal of some adherents of false cults. Their zeal to propagate what they have been deceived to believe far exceeds the zeal of true Christians. Here we must recognize the fact that the followers of Satan are also the recipients of supernatural impetus and zeal from the demons ... It is the satanic presence and power in them which makes them grip and hold the hearts of men, and which makes them almost invincible. Let us not make the mistake of thinking that Satan and his demons have taken their leave from the job of inspiring and filling their followers with zeal ... And let us not think for one moment that Satan does not like to keep company with Christians. (S. Zodhiates)

James's description of false wisdom continues in accordance with the moral calculus that bad ideas are embodied in antisocial actions: garbage in, garbage out. If the words of an unwise teacher, who lacks understanding of the Word of God, are fueled and formed by jealousy and rivalry, then chaos and every vile practice will surely result among those who follow his lead ... James seems more concerned about the sociological effects of false teaching: the crisis at hand is the chaos within the congregation caused by rival teachers ... The malicious speech of an insider has the same deleterious effect upon the community's life as that provoked by the rich outsider who hauls the poor believer before the law-court in order to shame those who follow Christ. (R. Wall)

James 3:16 For (explanatory) wherever (subordinating) jealousy (Subj. Nom.) and (connective) contentiousness (Subj. Nom.; party strife, selfish ambition) exist (in the reversionist), there (adv.) is (ellipsis) instability (Subj. Nom.; disorder, tumult, anarchy, wide emotional swings) and (connective) every category of (Nom. Measure) vile (Descr. Nom.; worthless, base) practice (Subj. Nom.; monsterhood has been achieved).

^{BGT} **James 3:16** ὅπου γὰρ ζήλος καὶ ἐριθεία, ἐκεῖ ἀκαταστασία καὶ πᾶν φαῦλον πρᾶγμα.

^{VUL} **James 3:16** ubi enim zelus et contentio ibi inconstantia et omne opus pravum

LWB James 3:17 But the wisdom [Bible doctrine in the soul] from above keeps on being essentially pure, and then, as well: peaceable [relaxed mental attitude], oriented to authority [teachable], reasonable [not implacable or vindictive], full of mercy [grace orientation] and good fruit [divine production], unwavering, without hypocrisy;

^{KW} **James 3:17** But the wisdom, which is from above is essentially pure, then peaceable, sweetly reasonable, satisfied with less than its due, compliant, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial, free from insincerity.

^{KJV} **James 3:17** 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.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

In contrast to the false wisdom of the reversionist, who builds his own system with Satan's help outside of God's system, true wisdom is Bible doctrine in the soul, consistently applied to daily life. This wisdom from heaven keeps on being (Durative Present tense) first and foremost pure and holy. But there are other inner benefits from this wisdom, as opposed to the negative characteristics in the previous verse that described those with false wisdom. The spiritually mature believer with wisdom has a relaxed mental attitude, is oriented to authority and is teachable. He does not take offense at every negative comment he hears about himself. He does not fly off the handle quickly when insulted. He is also reasonable and not implacable or vindictive toward others. He understands that some people cannot control their tongue and is ready to forgive them under most circumstances. He is grace oriented and produces good fruit, i.e., divine production as opposed to works of the flesh. He is unwavering in his Christian beliefs and is genuine, without hypocrisy in his life. Peaceable, however, does not mean docile; peaceable does not mean a wimp who allows others to run over him. The pastor and teacher is still the ultimate authority in the local church.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Though James never mentions the Holy Spirit explicitly in his work, this datum lends credence to the thought that James sees wisdom associated with Spirit, a linkage found in Jewish literature. (R. Martin) If a man is wise in the NT sense, he will find that it is an integral part of wisdom to be pure, both in the innermost parts of his heart and in the expressions and manifestations of life. (S. Zodhiates) Three qualities (peaceable, kind, compliant) all begin with the Greek letter epsilon and they are alliterative when put together as James arranges them here. (Z. Hodges) By this string of adjectives, James tells us what effects divine wisdom should produce – for almost all of these adjectives describe what wisdom does rather than what it is. It is again clear that James does not view wisdom as a series of correct propositional statements, but as a quality that motivates certain kinds of behavior. (D. Moo) Hypocrisy would exist in a society where intelligence and cleverness are virtues, things often mistaken as wisdom. Those who have looked to God for their wisdom have no reason to pretend or impress anyone with a show of worldly wisdom. (W. Baker)

Within James's system of convictions, "wisdom" is knowledge about God and God's purposes which establishes the believer's will to act as God acts. (T. Cargal) Although we wholeheartedly affirm our desire for peace in the context of family, church, society, and nation, we have reservations when we are told to seek peace at any price. We do not wish to compromise truth, for such a compromise is equivalent to promoting falsehood. We cannot set aside the rules of conduct we

derive from Scripture. Thus we stand firm in our defense of our Christian heritage. (S. Kistemaker) When speaking of the spiritual stance of teachability before God, James uses *praytes*. The problem James is addressing is not that there are teachers spreading false doctrine. James is addressing the problem of arrogance, which can be present even when correct doctrine is being taught. His warning should bring all teachers to an abrupt halt for self-examination. (G. Stulac)

James 3:17 But (contrast) the wisdom (Subj. Nom.; Bible doctrine in the soul) from above (adv.; heaven) keeps on being (είμι, PAI3S, Durative) essentially (adv.; first, foremost) pure (Pred. Nom.), and then (temporal) as well (adjunctive; including other inner benefits): peaceable (Pred. Nom.; relaxed mental attitude), oriented to authority (Pred. Nom.; teachability), reasonable (Pred. Nom.; obedient, not implacable and vindictive), full (Pred. Nom.) of mercy (Adv. Gen. Ref.; grace orientation) and (connective) good (Descr. Gen.) fruit (Adv. Gen. Ref.; divine good production), unwavering (Pred. Nom.; impartial), without hypocrisy (Pred. Nom.; genuine);

^{BGT} **James 3:17** ἡ δὲ ἄνωθεν σοφία πρῶτον μὲν ἀγνή ἐστίν, ἔπειτα εἰρηνικὴ, ἐπιεικὴς, εὐπειθής, μεστή ἐλέους καὶ καρπῶν ἀγαθῶν, ἀδιάκριτος, ἀνυπόκριτος.

^{VUL} **James 3:17** quae autem desursum est sapientia primum quidem pudica est deinde pacifica modesta suadibilis plena misericordia et fructibus bonis non iudicans sine simulatione

LWB **James 3:18** Moreover, the harvest of righteousness [the supergrace life] is sown in peace [tranquility] to the one who continues to produce peace [benefits from the consistent use of the *grace apparatus for perception*].

^{KW} **James 3:18** And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace.

^{KJV} **James 3:18** And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

The fruit or harvest of righteousness is the supergrace life, a completed edification complex of the soul. It is sown in peace and tranquility (Gnomic Present tense), not rebellion and anarchy. The believer, especially a pastor or teacher, who continues to produce the inner benefits in the prior passage by utilizing the *grace apparatus for perception* (Iterative Present tense) continues to produce peace and tranquility in his congregation. There should be order, decorum, and continued spiritual momentum in an assembly headed by a teacher who possesses and exhibits these characteristics.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

It will be maintained that the author in 4:1-4 is confronting head-on the politically motivated enthusiasm of his constituents who were resorting to violence, strife, and bloodshed in a holy crusade for what they thought to be God's freedom ... Here in a complementary statement the same

righteousness in human conduct is achieved by peaceful means, and no other. (R. Martin)
 Unfortunately, there are some who mistakenly believe that the moment they accept Jesus Christ they immediately become full-grown Christians. It is not necessarily so. There is a process of growth. There are many stages to go through from the moment our hearts prove to be the good and fertile ground on which falls the seed of the Gospel. (S. Zodiates) Peace is the congenial soil in which this wisdom takes root and grows; the seed sown is the precious Word of God; they that make peace are the spiritual farmers who scatter it in hope; and righteousness is the blessed harvest which shall reward their toil. (C. Jerdan)

Righteousness is no sudden growth, but the product of seed sown in peacefulness. The expression suggests the sphere, the mental state, rather than the instrument, implying that the condition of peace is the prerequisite for the conception of righteousness. (J. Adamson) If their actions emerge from faith and wisdom, there will be the positive benefit of peace; but if their actions continue to be driven by ambition, the only possible consequence can be rebellion and every bad deed. (T. Cargal) The Christian cannot claim a neutral ground to which to retire and wash his hands insofar as the conflicts that exist in our world are concerned. He ought to exercise the wisdom of God in evaluating situations and then take the side of the right cause. (S. Zodiates) To achieve righteousness, spiritual maturity, practical holiness – the theme of this book – a believer must learn to speak with care. A controlled tongue is possible only with cultured thought. A mouth filled with praise results from a mind filled with purity. (J. Blue)

James 3:18 Moreover (continuative), the harvest (Subj. Nom.) of righteousness (Descr. Gen., Appos.; the supergrace life, a completed edification complex) is sown (σπείρω, PPI3S, Gnostic) in peace (Loc. Sph.) to the one (Dat. Adv.) who continues to produce (ποιέω, PAPtc.DMP, Iterative, Substantival, Articular; by utilizing the *grace apparatus for perception*) peace (Acc. Dir. Obj.; these inner benefits).

^{BGT} **James 3:18** καρπὸς δὲ δικαιοσύνης ἐν εἰρήνῃ σπείρεται τοῖς ποιούσιν εἰρήνην.

^{VUL} **James 3:18** fructus autem iustitiae in pace seminatur facientibus pacem

Chapter 4

LWB **James 4:1** From what source *are* the quarrels [fights between two people] and from what source *are* the conflicts [church brawls] among you [in your local assemblies]? *Are they* not, namely, out from the source of your frantic search for happiness through lusts [functions of the old sin nature] which wage a continuous battle [military campaign] in your members [mind, body & soul]?

^{KW} **James 4:1** From what source do quarrels and conflicts among you come? Do they not come from this source, namely, from your inordinate passions which are struggling with one another in your members?

^{KJV} **James 4:1** From whence *come* wars and fightings among you? *come they* not hence, *even* of your lusts that war in your members?

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Where do the conflicts and disputes come from in the local church? What is the source of church brawls and fights between two people? James asks: Are they not out from the source of the reversionist's frantic search for happiness? Are they not out from the lusts and pleasures (Gk: hedonism) that wage a continuous battle in your soul (Durative Present tense)? Negative volition towards Bible doctrine leads to reversionism; reversionism is characterized by a continuous spiritual campaign against your mind, body and soul. The reversionistic believer is constantly searching for happiness, not realizing he can only find it in Bible doctrine. The reversionists James is referring to are locked-into monetary and power lust. The Greek word "strateuo" (strategy) refers to service in the army, fighting in a war. This assault on the believer is not a "walk in the park;" it is an all-out war, a nonending battle which can only be won in the filling of the Spirit. The battles are first fought in the individual believer. If they are not won there, the conflict may spread to other believers in the reversionist's periphery.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

No preacher should include himself in such a group, but unfortunately some even take pride in such things ... *War* generally indicates the whole course of hostilities against an outside power, while *battles* would refer rather to the actual armed encounter of hostile armies. We are sure that the Christians to whom James is writing were not actually engaged in a war of arms, but as a group of Christians they were hostile to other groups ... *Fightings* here refers to the skirmishes and clashes among Christians. Unfortunately, these exist today, as in the days of James. And what a sorry sight they present to the world around us. (S. Zodhiates) James's statement virtually personifies the word *pleasures* so that these *pleasures* become like hostile soldiers who wage war within his readers. (Z. Hodges) James traces the source of wars and dissensions to yielding to these temptations of the Satanic system. The same spirit of pride and rebellion against God takes possession of one who forms ties of amity with the Satanic system in following its ways and yielding to its temptations. (M. Unger) It is evident that the minds of the readers harbored rancor and malice, along with tendencies toward violence, which erupted in open bickering and fights. We have no right to explain away or tone down the author's statements about these troubles, as though he exaggerated or did not mean to be taken seriously. (B. Reicke)

The passions of the flesh are described as constantly fighting to have their way, to be victorious over the spirit, over the new nature which Jesus Christ has given us. The flesh knows nothing of the grace of forgiveness and of esteeming others superior to ourselves. Pride and arrogance are instruments of the flesh for fighting its battles. The flesh loves war, war against others and war against what is lofty

and ideal in life. The flesh is quick to declare others enemies ... Beware of allowing your passions and animal instincts to control your moral and spiritual nature. To disregard this warning is to rush upon disaster and final ruin ... The sad thing about our being governed by our passions and pleasures is that they have the ability to deceive us. With passionate fighting we may win the battle of words but lose the war of ideas. Self-deception is the product of passions and pleasures. (S. Zodhiates) The term *desires* (note the plural) is the key word. It signifies that in his life, man chooses worldly pleasures that are contrary to the expressed will of God. (S. Kistemaker) The word “war” is used hyperbolically when applied to the quarrels of social life. (E. Bullinger) Historical honesty demands that we acknowledge the situation as it was, rather than recreate it as we or others should like it to have been. (B. Reicke)

The faithfulness of a nation to the laws of divine establishment and the dedication of believers to Bible doctrine are the divine solutions that guarantee freedom in an ominous and belligerent world. Through history nations sign and ratify treaties to maintain peace and freedom; but alliances never guarantee an end to hostility. Treaties are only as good as the integrity of the nations that sign the pact. Neither can any international organization underwrite freedom nor peace anywhere in the world. Why? The fundamental depravity of the human race since the fall of Adam prevents the abolition of war. The antagonist is the sin nature; the culprit is man’s volition. Since man never loses the sin nature during his lifetime and continues to make unwise or wicked decisions, conflict will continue until the Lord returns. The solution begins with the spiritual life of the believer and adherence to establishment principles by the unbeliever. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) What often is sheltered and shrouded under a specious pretence of zeal for God and religion often comes from men’s pride, malice, covetousness, ambition, and revenge. (M. Henry) One church member who saw a church breaking into factions even commented cheerfully, “Oh, I love a church fight!” In reality it is a tragedy which can cripple a church’s internal ministries and external witness for years before a measure of healing and purification becomes evident. (G. Stulac)

If bitter envy and selfish ambition have filled man’s heart, if his guiding principle is earthly wisdom that is unspiritual and devilish, if he has alienated himself from God, then he promotes disorder and every evil practice. When that happens, fights and quarrels are the order of the day. (S. Kistemaker) He now comes to their contentions, by which they created confusion among themselves; and he shows that these arose from their invidious desires and lusts, rather than from a zeal for what was just and right; for if every one observed moderation, they would not have disturbed and annoyed one another. They had their hot conflicts, because their lusts were allowed to prevail unchecked. (J. Calvin) Worldliness in the church has produced all the cults, denominations, factions, divisions, and cliques which have arisen and abound in the church today. There is a spirit of rivalry and jealousy in the church. (J. McGee) They often unnecessarily embroiled themselves, and then fell into parties and factions about the different methods of managing their wars with their common enemies; and hence it came to pass that, when their cause might be supposed good, yet their engaging in it and their management of it came from a bad principle. (M. Henry) The meaning of “slow to anger” in 1:19 is to end the acquisitive impulse that desires “worldly” things that are lacked but coveted ... To know the spiritual source of one’s anger is the most crucial step in slowing it down. (R. Wall)

These verses (chapter 4) reveal an appalling state of the moral depravity in these Diaspora congregations; strife, self-indulgence, lust, murder, covetousness, adultery, envy, pride and slander

are rife; the conception of the nature of prayer seems to have been altogether wrong among these people, and they appear to be given over wholly to a life of pleasure ... Even granting that a particular word is figuratively used, there is still a terrible list of other sins, the meaning of which cannot be explained away; these are more than sufficient to bear witness to the truly awful moral condition of those to whom the Epistle is addressed ... In the second or third generation the community living among heathen surroundings might conceivably become so contaminated as to have lost its genuinely Christian character; with the lapse of years there is an inevitable tendency to deteriorate, until a new spirit of discipline is infused. It seems more in accordance with known facts, and with common sense, to regard the people to whom this Epistle (or part of it) was addressed as those who had deteriorated from the high ideal set by their fathers and grandfathers, and to see in the writer one who sought to inspire a new sense of discipline and morals into the hearts of his Jewish-Christian brethren. (W. Nicole) The author does not ask, "Do you have conflicts and disputes among you?" but "Where do they come from?" That they are present is a given, and the reader is left only to answer to their origin. (W. Brosend II)

James 4:1 From what source (adv.) are (ellipsis) the quarrels (Subj. Nom.; factions, disputes, fights between two people) and (connective) from what source (adv.) are (ellipsis) the conflicts (Subj. Nom.; wars, church brawls) among you (Dat. Assoc.; believers in the local assemblies)? Are they (ellipsis) not (neg. adv.), namely (adv.; hence), out from the source of your (Poss. Gen.) frantic search for happiness through lusts (Abl. Source; pleasures, hedonism, function of the old sin nature) which wage a continuous battle (στρατεύω, PMPTc.GFP, Durative, Attributive, Articular; contend, serve in the army, military service) in your (Poss. Gen.) members (Loc. Sph.; mind, body and soul: reversionism from negative volition towards doctrine)?

^{BGT} **James 4:1** Πόθεν πόλεμοι καὶ πόθεν μάχαι ἐν ὑμῖν; οὐκ ἐντεῦθεν, ἐκ τῶν ἡδονῶν ὑμῶν τῶν στρατευομένων ἐν τοῖς μέλεσιν ὑμῶν;

^{VUL} **James 4:1** unde bella et lites in vobis nonne hinc ex concupiscentiis vestris quae militant in membris vestris

LWB **James 4:2** You keep on lusting [frantic search for happiness], but you will not have [frustration from not getting the object of your lust]; you commit murder since you are full of jealousy [mental violence often leads to physical violence], but you are not able to acquire [the ultimate happiness you desire]; you quarrel [litigation in court] and fight [hire thugs to steal the object of your lust]; you will not obtain [the inner happiness you desire] because you do not ask [for the only true source of inner happiness: Bible doctrine circulating in the mentality of the soul].

^{KW} **James 4:2** You have a passionate desire and are not realizing its fulfillment; you murder. And you covet and are filled with jealousy; and you are not able to obtain. You engage in conflicts and quarrel. You do not have because you are not praying for something to be given to you.

^{KJV} **James 4:2** 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.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Just because you want something doesn't mean you can have it. That sounds like a simple maxim, but the crime rate then and now means it isn't as simple as it seems. Unhappy people, even Christians, will often go to extreme lengths to fulfill their lusts in a *frantic search for happiness*. The *demand syndrome* is ruthless when it focuses its attention on a promise of temporary happiness. Some of James's readers are so unhappy and overcome with lust (Gnomic Present tense) that its sinful presence in their soul is bursting forth not only with verbal sins (covered in the previous chapter), but in overt sins. They want something that somebody else has (Latin: concupiscence), but they will not get the object of their intense desire (Futuristic Present tense). This made them extremely frustrated, so much so that they were willing to commit terrible crimes to fulfill their lust. Some of them were so full of jealousy for another man's property and power that they have even committed murder (Dramatic Present tense) to get it.

They were prepared to engage in any type of violence, if in the end they might obtain the object of their lust. But in spite of their desire to steal another man's property, they were not successful (Futuristic Present tense) in obtaining that which they were jealous for and had committed murder to acquire (Culminative Aorist tense). The lies, the deceit, and the conspiracies hatched to get the object of their lust fail (Result Infinitive). James is pointing his finger at the soul of wicked, reversionistic Christians in his audience. He is not addressing this, and the rebukes that follow, to unbelievers. Some of them had bribed officials and had taken a fellow believer to court (Latin: litigation) to steal his property (Iterative Present tense). As a matter of fact, this had become a habit for some unscrupulous Christians. Some didn't bother to go to court. They hired thugs or mercenaries to fight and steal (Latin: belligerent) what they craved to have, but did not earn (Iterative Present tense) by their own hard work. This is the *modus operandi* of *socialism*.

The Greek "zealou" means they were inflamed with envy and hatred toward the person who had the object of their lust. They were not interested in obtaining the object of their wishes by legitimate means. The *frantic search for happiness* united with the worst sins their flesh could muster; nothing was going to stand in the way of their sought-after happiness. James states unequivocally that they will not obtain the object they are lusting for (Futuristic Present tense). How can he guarantee such a thing? Weren't some of them successful in stealing another person's property in court? Yes. Weren't some of them successful in murdering someone to get what they wanted? Yes. But what they really wanted was *inner happiness* and these things would not give them the inner happiness they searched for. It can only be possessed by repeated asking (Iterative Present tense) for spiritual sustenance, which refers to the daily intake and metabolization of doctrine. "Failure and frustration harass the self-centered life."

RELEVANT OPINIONS

He sets his heart on a beautiful home, a luxurious car, etc. The acquisition of these things he hopes will give him pleasure, will make him happy. If he is unable to have them through hard work, the temptation will be great to acquire them through unethical and crooked means ... How nonsensical it must be to desire something which we know as Christians we cannot have, then on top of that to cover up, to state that we do not even have the desire, since we have never been caught in the very act of the fulfillment of the desire ... You may survive, but you still will not have that which you had originally desired. That can come only by asking. It is, of course, understood that the object of desire is that real happiness and serenity of soul which are not dependent upon our position on the social, economic and educational ladder, but upon our disposition of heart. And the source of that is not our fellow men, but God. (S. Zodiates) Depravity within the believer is fully capable of everything James says here, and in extreme cases, even murder. (W. Baker) The vocabulary of anger used by James is militaristic: a spiritual war is being fought for the very soul of the community of faith. Sides are taken, battles are waged, lives are lost. The results within the congregation are no doubt devastating. (R. Wall)

Out of your deep frustration, James is saying, you turn your church into a battlefield. No doubt some readers will feel shocked that James could speak this way to his Christian brothers, whom he regards as born again (1:18). But this shock betrays an unrealistic attitude toward the faults and failures of Christian people. It reflects also a superficial or legalistic reading of the NT. One needs only to study 1 Corinthians, for example, to learn how numerous and serious are the faults one can encounter in Christian assemblies! (Z. Hodges) A lot of ignorant Christians, even seminary professors who should know better, have engaged in exegetical gymnastics because they cannot believe that Christians can commit murder. To use a phrase from modern vernacular, these individuals are living in "la-la land." (LWB) There is no saying how far the Christian portion of the Jewish communities may have suffered themselves to become entangled in such quarrels and their murderous consequences. (T. Carson) Human desire is not neutral but naturally participates in an evil realm that influences *the spiritual apparatus within people* in producing external evil results ... For those whose life is "hand to mouth," the desire for creature comforts is a powerful seduction. (R. Wall) One way we justify our role in fights is by rationalizing the moral impurity of our actions. (G. Stulac)

Even if he employed crooks and gangsters, he had to reward them. (Cicero, letter to Atticus about Caesar) Inordinate desires are either totally disappointed, or they are not to be appeased and satisfied by obtaining the things desired. The words here rendered *cannot obtain* signify *cannot gain the happiness sought after*. Worldly and fleshly lusts are the distemper which will not allow of contentment or satisfaction in the mind ... Your lusts spoil your prayers, and make them an abomination to God. (M. Henry) Even the worst criminal will never be convicted provided that he has enough money ... The deduction will be that there are no good judges in the land ... He tried to buy up whole panels of judges ... No ex-praetor could honorably be convicted for less than three million sesterces ... That, then, is the dangerous crisis with which your Order and your courts are facing. (Cicero, *Against Verres*) We cannot expect God to answer the prayer that our worldly business may prosper, if we secretly resolve to employ what success He sends in catering to self-glorification. The things that we ask must be what we need for the Lord's service; and we must honestly purpose to use them. (C. Jerdan) Another way of justifying our role in fights is by claiming necessity. (G. Stulac)

James 4:2 You keep on lusting (ἐπιθυμέω, PAI2P, Iterative), but (adversative) you will not (neg. adv.) have (ἔχω, PAI2P, Futuristic; frustration from not getting the object of your lust); you commit murder (φονεύω, PAI2P, Dramatic) since (ascensive, causal; inasmuch as, due to) you are full of jealousy (ζηλόω, PAI2P, Descriptive; both forms of violence), but (adversative) you are not (neg. adv.) able (δύναμαι, PMI2P, Gnostic, Deponent) to acquire (ἐπιτυγχάνω, AAInf., Culminative, Result; obtain what you are jealous for and have murdered to get); you quarrel (μάχομαι, PMI2P, Iterative, Deponent; two people in a courtroom battle) and (continuative) fight (πολεμέω, PAI2P, Iterative; many people); you will not (neg. adv.) obtain (ἔχω, PAI2P, Futuristic; possess the inner happiness they originally desired) because (causal) you (Subj. Acc.) are not (neg. particle) asking (αἰτέω, PMInf., Iterative, Causal, Articular; inner happiness comes from Bible doctrine circulating in the soul).

^{BGT} **James 4:2** ἐπιθυμεῖτε καὶ οὐκ ἔχετε, φονεύετε καὶ ζηλοῦτε καὶ οὐ δύνασθε ἐπιτυχεῖν, μάχεσθε καὶ πολεμεῖτε, οὐκ ἔχετε διὰ τὸ μὴ αἰτεῖσθαι ὑμᾶς,

^{VUL} **James 4:2** concupiscitis et non habetis occiditis et zelatis et non potestis adipisci litigatis et belligeratis non habetis propter quod non postulatis

LWB **James 4:3** **You keep on asking [demanding in arrogance], but you will not receive it [the details of life], because you continue to ask [demand] wickedly so that you may squander it [the details of life] in your frantic search for happiness through pleasure.**

^{KW} **James 4:3** You pray for something to be given you and do not receive because you pray with evil intent in order that you may use it [for self-gratification] in your inordinate passions.

^{KJV} **James 4:3** Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume *it* upon your lusts.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

James uses the same Greek word “aiteo” that he used in the prior verse in a positive sense of “asking” (Latin: petitioning), but in this verse he uses it in the negative sense of “demanding.” If you ask for more Bible doctrine, you will get it. God will provide a teacher, a book, a tape, a radio program or a website that will help you grow to the next level. The idea of prayer is in mind in this usage of the word. But in this passage, the reversionist is repeatedly asking for (demanding) the *details of life* (Iterative Present tense) - rather than Bible doctrine which will enable him to grow so that he is ready to *appreciate* the details of life. God does not answer these prayers; James predicts they will not receive the things they are lusting for (Futuristic Present tense) because they are asking for them from a position of wickedness. This “asking” is really the *demand syndrome* in full swing: gimme a new car, gimme a new house, gimme a winning lottery ticket. This kind of request is wrongminded; it is merely an attempt to twist God’s arm to meet the latest fleshly lust of the moment.

The reversionist has no *capacity* for happiness; the reversionist has no *capacity* for Bible doctrine. He does not understand that the two are inextricably intertwined. All he knows is that the lust of his flesh wants *this, that, or the other*, because he thinks the details of life will make him happy. He doesn't realize that it is Bible doctrine circulating in the mentality of his soul that will make him happy, even *without* the details of life. Doctrine in the soul creates *capacity* for true enjoyment of material possessions; without doctrine, they only provide a spiral of frustration. James knows that the reversionist will only squander any money he gets; he will abuse his new horse and carriage; he will trash his new house. In the end (Culminative Aorist tense), he will still be unhappy even if he gets all the material possessions imaginable, because he will have received them by *doing an end-run* around the only thing that is capable of giving him true inner happiness: Bible doctrine. Anything God gives him in this sorry state of mind would be wasted, as yet one more fruitless item in his frantic search for happiness through fleeting pleasures (Latin: concupiscence).

RELEVANT OPINIONS

These carnal Christians to whom James is writing apparently had set their sights on the material things of life. They were jealous of fellow Christians who had more than they. This desire for material things naturally led them to all kinds of wars and fights. Of course, because of the material blessings of life they expected happiness, being blinded to the fact that man's life does not consist of the things he possesses ... It is an established fact that genuine happiness does not increase in ratio to one's wealth. (S. Zodhiates) By using the word *spend* James clearly implies that the benefits they sought from God would soon be used up. They would have no permanent or lasting worth. Coupled with the word *spend* here, the word *pleasures* suggests transient gratifications of the wrong kind. No wonder they *do not receive* answers to requests of this type! James has in mind misguided and undiscerning prayer. (Z. Hodges) Requests arising from evil motives will not be answered. (T. Cargal) Doubt is trusting in one's own machinations or worldly intrigues rather than in God ... Evil motivated prayers will receive no hearing by God. (P. Davids)

Though perhaps you may sometimes pray for success against your enemies, yet it is not your aim to improve the advantages you gain, so as to promote true piety and religion either in yourselves or in others; but pride, vanity, luxury, and sensuality, are what you would serve by your successes, and by your very prayers. You want to live in great power and plenty, in voluptuousness and a sensual prosperity; and thus you disgrace devotion and dishonor God by such gross and base ends; and therefore your prayers are rejected. (M. Henry) We cannot expect God to answer the prayer that our worldly business may prosper, if we secretly resolve to employ that success He sends in catering for self-glorification. The things that we ask must be what we need for the Lord's service; and we must honestly purpose so to use them. (C. Jerdan) *Spend* covers more than money and has an air of lavish waste. Murder and prodigality: some will wonder if Christians can be thus guilty. (R. Ward) Christians can commit any sin in the book. Nothing in their positional status prevents them from doing so. (LWB)

Let us learn in the management of all our affairs, and in our prayers to God for success in them, to see that our ends be right. When men follow their worldly business (suppose them tradesmen or

husbandmen), and ask of God prosperity, but do not receive what they ask for, it is because they ask with wrong aims and intentions. They ask God to give them success in their callings or undertakings, not that they may glorify their heavenly Father and do good with what they have, but that they may consume it upon their lusts – that they may be enabled to eat better meat, and drink better drink, and wear better clothes, and so gratify their pride, vanity, and voluptuousness. But if we seek the things of this world, it is just in God to deny them; whereas, if we seek any thing that we may serve God with it, we may expect He will either give us what we seek or give us hearts to be content without it, and give opportunities of serving and glorifying Him some other way. (M. Henry)

People who are at war with themselves because of selfish desires are always unhappy people. They never enjoy life. Instead of being thankful for the blessings they do have, they complain about the blessings they do not have. They cannot get along with other people because they are always envying others for what they have and do. They are always looking for that “magic something” that will change their lives, when the real problem is within their own hearts. (W. Wiersbe) God will never provide for hedonistic squandering. (J. Blue) God does not answer all prayers directed to Him, for answered prayer must meet His conditions. (D. Hiebert) Anger results when a love for things is substituted for a love of God, and when petitions for lacking pleasures replace petitions for lacking wisdom ... The challenge of James for the canonical audience of every generation is to exchange those desires for material things, which do not last very long, for that longing after the eternal things of God. (R. Wall)

James 4:3 You (reversionist) keep on asking (αἰτέω, PAI2P, Iterative; demanding in arrogance) but (adversative) you will not (neg. adv.) receive (λαμβάνω, PAI2P, Futuristic) it (ellipsis; details of life), because (causal) you continue to ask (αἰτέω, PMI2P, Iterative; demanding in arrogance) wickedly (Adv. Manner; lustfully, wrongfully), so that (purpose) you may squander (δαπανᾶω, AASubj.2P, Culminative, Purpose; spend wastefully) it (ellipsis; material possessions) in your (Poss. Gen.) frantic search for happiness through pleasure (Instr. Manner, Loc. Sph.).

^{BGT} **James 4:3** αἰτεῖτε καὶ οὐ λαμβάνετε διότι κακῶς αἰτεῖσθε, ἵνα ἐν ταῖς ἡδοναῖς ὑμῶν δαπανήσητε.

^{VUL} **James 4:3** petitis et non accipitis eo quod male petatis ut in concupiscentiis vestris insumatis

LWB James 4:4 **Adulteresses [reverse process reversionists], do you not know that friendship with the cosmic system keeps on being alienation from God? Therefore, if someone has decided [in emotional revolt of the soul] to keep on being a friend with the cosmic system [continues in reversionism], he is becoming an enemy of God.**

^{KW} **James 4:4** O, [spiritual] adulteresses [untrue to God your husband, O.T. relation of Israel to God], do you not know that your friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore would desire after mature consideration to be a friend of the world is [thereby] constituted an enemy of God.

^{KJV} **James 4:4** 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.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

James compares the believer who is unfaithful to God to an adultress who is unfaithful to her husband. An adultress, of course, is a wife in reverse process reversionism. She has left the bed of her husband for the bed of another man, like a Christian who leaves the true doctrine of God for false teachings. James asks the adultress a question: Don't you understand (Intensive Perfect tense) that friendship with the cosmic system is complete alienation (Durative Present tense) from God? The two couldn't be any farther apart; one is divine, the other is satanic. You can't flirt with Satan's sphere of power in this world and expect to retain intimate contact with the Lord. Any involvement in Satan's system separates you from God. The two sides are hostile one against the other. The first half of this verse is addressed to the woman who ignores God and engages in illicit activity in the cosmic system. He uses the feminine to represent Israel as the wife of God and the Church as the bride of Christ.

The second half of this verse is addressed to reversionistic men; the thought of the wife and bride is still there, but it is subsumed in a generic idea of spiritual adultery. If one of them has entered emotional revolt of the soul and determined (Ingressive Aorist tense) that he is going to keep on being a friend (Iterative Present tense) with the cosmic system, he is also going to become an enemy of God. It takes two to tango. A man is just as guilty of adultery as a woman, both physically and spiritually. A man cannot flirt with Satan's system and retain intimate contact with the Lord. The more he decides to take Satan's bait, the more he progressively alienates himself (Present tense) from God. The 3rd class conditional clause means maybe he will decide to embrace the cosmic system, and maybe he won't. The decision is up to him. The combination of the aorist and present tenses means he made a decision in the past to engage in spiritual adultery and he is continuing to make the same decision over and over again. He falls into Satan's trap.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

In the OT, Israel is represented as the wife or the betrothed bride of God, and her unfaithfulness is pictured as adultery. Psalm 73:27 speaks of "them that go a whoring from thee." And in the NT we find the Church spoken of as the Lamb's wife. Adultresses is the stern verdict of James on his guilty readers and their shameful conduct ... It wasn't a case of an occasional sin, of an occasional disobedience to the commandments of God, but this had become a state of mind and heart which God could not tolerate. The corruptness of the soul leads to repeated corrupt actions in our everyday conduct. What an indictment it is for our souls to be branded as adultresses. An adulterous soul is an apostate, an unfaithful soul, a soul that delights to have pleasure with others rather than with the Lord ... It is possible for sin to become so habitual that it loses its sinfulness for the sinner ... James shouts at the top of his voice. "What has happened to your spirit of discernment, that you no longer know what is good and evil, what is sin and what is righteousness? Have you completely lost your sense of values?" (S. Zodhiates) Spitta takes it of literal adultery, though he thinks the feminine is used tropically of both sexes when seduced by evil spirits. (J. Mayor) James has in mind this world-

system and scheme of things which runs contrary to the plain teaching of God's Word. This present world-system, or present age, has Satan as its god and prince. (L. Strauss)

Reverse-process reversionism is the status quo or unrestrained and perpetual sinfulness, fragmentation, and extensive cosmic involvement. The believer is brainwashed by satanic propaganda ... The believer's walk is his progress or lack of progress in the spiritual life ... Those who substitute legalism at any point in their phase two experience become "enemies of the cross," enemies of grace, and therefore enemies of God. Rather than Bible doctrine in the soul producing spiritual advance, reversionism produces "enemies of the cross." (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) Often in the NT, the term *world* is used of a system or entity that is hostile to God and is manipulated by Satan. Materialism, immorality, and spiritual blindness are all components of this wicked entity and are in sharp conflict with God's interests and purposes on earth ... One must choose the side he is really on, and when one opts for *friendship with the world*, he automatically opts for *enmity with God*. He has chosen the status of an antagonist toward his Maker and Redeemer. (Z. Hodges) What husband permits his wife to have an illicit affair with another man? And what do you think of a wife who forsakes marital love by engaging in adulterous relations? What do you think is God's reaction when a believer becomes enamored with the world? God is a jealous God. He tolerates no friendship with the world. (S. Kistemaker)

We could really paraphrase this sentence: "Don't you know that when you fall in love with the world, you begin to hate God?" What James is actually stating is that our affections cannot be divided. We cannot be in love with the world and with the Lord at the same time. It has to be one or the other ... He does not need to declare his hatred and enmity toward God. The very fact that he is conforming to the world is in itself a declaration of his having set himself up as an enemy of God. For that he can blame nobody but himself. (S. Zodhiates) A magnetic leader, Satan commands vast forces of fallen angels or demons; Earth and fallen mankind belong to this realm. In the Bible Satan's kingdom is called the *kosmos*, usually translated "world." *Kosmos* refers to a system, an orderly, cohesive organization with a purpose, policy, and structure of authority. When the Bible declares that someone loves the world or lives according to the standards of the world, that individual resides in the satanic system of power. He enslaves himself to Satan's authority, executes Satan's policy, and fulfills Satan's purpose. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) What does the word *world* mean? It represents the whole system of humanity – its institutions, structures, values, and mores – as organized without God ... The world does not tolerate friends of God, for they are considered enemies. The reverse is also true. God regards "a friend of the world" an enemy. An enemy of God. What a terrifying expression! (S. Kistemaker)

The point for James is not just the idea of infidelity, but also the style of this sinner. She commits her deed and feels no remorse. She is detached from any consequence of her evil ways. This sinner has lost, or is suppressing, the moral sensitivity that should characterize a friend of God. (T. Cargal) The spirit of Satan, which thus dominates this evil world system, is basically antagonistic toward God – whatever cloak civilization, human culture, or man's righteousness may cast over it. Jesus distinctly disavowed in John 18:36 that the royal power he exercised as King of the Jews, had any connection with the Satanic world system. "My kingship is not of this world (this Satanic system); if my kingship were of this world (this Satanic system), My servants would fight that I might not be handed over to the Jews, but My kingship is not from the world (the Satanic system). (M. Unger)

James is writing to Jewish Christians who are familiar with the term *adulteress* applied to the marriage relationship of God as husband and Israel as the unfaithful wife. (S. Kistemaker) The world is the Satanic system. (L. Chafer) The unfaithfulness of a believer to the Lord is compared to that of a wife toward her husband ... The Christian who turns from Christ and His Church to seek pleasure and satisfaction at the cisterns of this world are like unfaithful women who leave their husbands to seek sensual pleasure with other men. God is jealous over us with a holy jealousy. He wants us solely for Himself. (L. Strauss)

Besides “enemies of the cross of Christ” (Phil. 3:18), other biblical terms for cosmic believers include “enemies of God” (James 4:4), “haters of God” (John 15:23), “antichrists” (1 John 2:18), “hostile toward God” (Romans 8:7), “men of flesh” (1 Cor. 3:1-3), “double-minded” (James 4:8), “agents of the devil” (1 John 3:8), and “disciples of the devil” (1 John 3:10). All these phrases refer to eternally saved believers, not to unbelievers. Cosmic believers are like aggressors in army field exercises. Often troops who have only a few weeks remaining in the service will be issued weapons and blank ammunition in order to play the role of the enemy against soldiers who are being trained. The aggressors and the men in training are members of the same army, but the only troops benefitting from the simulated combat are those who are being tested, not the aggressors. Likewise, the only reason God sustains the lives of some negative believers is to use them to train others. These “enemies of God” are still members of the royal family; their eternal life is secure. But the only role they can play in the glorification of Christ is to be a test for positive believers. Because of their own failures to execute the protocol plan of God, they become merely a means of building strength in someone else. Obviously, this is not a Christian’s highest calling. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

“Adulteresses” in Ezekiel 45 has symbolic value to the prophet, envisioning Israel’s own spiritual infidelity and the national (self) destruction that results. (R. Wall) The “world” is not so much a negative designation of that which is to be avoided as it is an alternative system of meaning, constantly seeking to influence the believer and turn him or her away from God. “Friendship” with the world, then, means to affirm the values, choices, and priorities of a meaning system that grounds meaning in material possessions, status, and regard ... Another way to think of “friendship” is as a person’s fundamental orientation to life. What is the source of meaning for our lives? Nothing less than a complete repudiation of the “world” will do. There is no halfway, no place for a “double-minded” mixing of fundamental orientations in life. James is surely right about this. We must choose, and we know it. (W. Brosend II) Friends turn against friends in anger as the mark of their unfaithfulness to God, justifying divine judgment ... The “world’s friend” denies both the values and ultimate triumph of God’s reign ... The *world* of the envious person is a closed system opposed to God and concentrated on self, where even the believer forgets that everything good comes from God. Such is the seduction of financial woes, when a passion for lacking pleasures manipulates everything and everyone, including God; when only a “friendship with the world” satisfies one’s deepest desires. (R. Wall)

James 4:4 **Adulteresses** (Voc. Address; reverse process reversionists), **do you not** (neg. adv.) **know** (οἶδα, Perf.AI2P, Intensive, Interrogative) **that** (introductory) **friendship** (Subj. Nom.) **with the cosmic system** (Gen. Assoc.) **keeps on being** (εἰμί, PAI3S, Durative) **alienation** (Pred. Nom; hostility) **from God** (Abl.

Separation)? Therefore (inferential), if (protasis, 3rd class condition, "maybe yes, maybe no") someone (Subj. Nom.) has decided (βούλομαι, APObj.3S, Ingressive, Potential, Deponent; determined in emotional revolt) to keep on being (εἰμί, PAInf., Iterative, Inf. As Modifier) a friend (Pred. Nom.) with the cosmic system (Gen. Assoc.; reversionism), he is becoming (καθίστημι, PPI3S, Progressive) an enemy (Pred. Nom.) of God (Abl. Separation).

^{BGT} **James 4:4** μοιχαλίδες, οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι ἡ φιλία τοῦ κόσμου ἔχθρα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστίν; ὃς ἐὰν οὖν βουληθῆ φίλος εἶναι τοῦ κόσμου, ἐχθρὸς τοῦ θεοῦ καθίσταται.

^{VUL} **James 4:4** adulteri nescitis quia amicitia huius mundi inimica est Dei quicumque ergo voluerit amicus esse saeculi huius inimicus Dei constituitur

LWB James 4:5 Or do you presume [subjective opinion] that the Scripture says for no reason: The spirit which was implanted in us jealously yearns?

^{KW} **James 4:5** Or, do you think that the scripture says in an empty manner and to no purpose, the Spirit [Holy Spirit] who has been caused to make His permanent home in us has a passionate desire [to control us] to the point of envy [of any control indwelling sin may have over us]?

^{KJV} **James 4:5** Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Does James's readers imagine that the scripture says to no purpose the following proverb? The spirit of man which was implanted in us (Constative Aorist tense) is prone to envious lust. God does not toss verses around for no purpose. This particular one speaks of man's spirit which combined with his sin nature leads him into lusts, envies and jealousies. Some believers are so overcome by envy and jealousy that they become *enemies of God*. Their subjective opinions of themselves and of Scripture are unimportant. What is important is that they do not remain in denial, but acknowledge their sins to God and return to fellowship with Him. There is no point in self-justification or self-denial; Scripture accurately points out their sins. As long as they embrace the cosmic system, they are not friends of God. This is James's proof-text, even though the exact verse quoted is somewhat uncertain.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

James simply sums up the total teaching of the Scriptures concerning the propensity of the spirit of man to sin. The Bible teaches that man is corrupt by nature, not because God gave him a corrupt nature, but because he chose it for himself as a result of his disobedience to God. There are any number of Scriptures to support the doctrine of the depravity of man's heart or spirit ... The apostle through this verse is answering his critics and those who have become friends of the world, but dislike to be branded as enemies of God ... James declares in this verse that this spirit of propensity to sin and to love the world has come to dwell within us ... The body itself does not actually have the

capacity of sinning; it has to be prompted by the will, by the spirit of man, which is the life of the body. The propensity of the human personality to do good or evil is spoken of in Scripture as “spirit.” James is speaking of the spirit of the world dwelling in us which is responsible for constantly pushing us to be friends with the world and blowing us away from God. (S. Zodhiates)

James is not here referring to the yearning of God nor that of His Spirit, but to the sinful propensities of the spirit implanted in man ... *Phthonos* states the natural, proud, unregenerate mode of human yearning ... spitefully or covetously, in the spirit which leads men to envy their neighbors, and so rouses strife in vain. (J. Adamson) When we stop to think about it, don't quarreling, fighting, pleasure seeking, adultery, and friendship with the world all stem from this passion of envy, of selfishness and malevolence? This passion is one of the principalities in the malignant passions of the soul. (S. Zodhiates)) Sin is always acting, always conceiving, always seducing and tempting. To dare to stand still is to lose the battle. Indeed, to leave sin alone is to let it bring forth great, cursed, scandalous, soul-destroying sins. Unless we mortify sin daily and constantly, it will get the better of us and destroy us as believers. To neglect this duty is to reject the help God has given to us against our greatest enemy. To neglect this help from God is to allow the heart to become hardened by sin, and to weaken the whole Christian life. (J. Owen)

Because a man's spirit tends toward corruption, we conclude that the term *spirit* is the subject, not the object, of the main verb ... The spirit of man longs for the pleasures of this world and perversely seeks its friendship. (S. Kistemaker) How does a believer declare war against God? By being friendly with God's enemies. James identifies three enemies that we must not fraternize with if we want to be at peace with God: the world, the flesh, the devil. (W. Wiersbe) No longer is James speaking of scripture but of humanity's spiritual apparatus ... Self destructive anger is spiritual failure, and is the historical and interpersonal precipitate of the ongoing cosmic struggle between the demonic and divine worlds. (R. Wall) Knowing of this evil tendency within us, how much more careful we should be in all our external contacts with the world and the exposure of our thoughts and our inward dispositions to it. (S. Zodhiates)

James 4:5 **Or** (disjunctive) **do you presume** (δοκέω, PAI2P, Static, Interrogative Ind.; suppose, imagine, subjective opinion) **that** (introductory) **the Scripture** (Subj. Nom.) **says** (λέγω, PAI3S, Static) **for no reason** (adv.; in vain, to no purpose, meaningless): **The spirit** (Subj. Nom.) **which** (Acc. Gen. Ref.) **was implanted** (κατοικίζω, AAI3S, Constative; placed, caused to live) **in us** (Loc. Sph.) **jealously** (Acc. Manner; prone to envy) **yearns** (ἐπιποθέω, PAI3S, Gnostic; desires, longs for)?

^{BGT} **James 4:5** ἢ δοκεῖτε ὅτι κενῶς ἡ γραφή λέγει· πρὸς φθόνον ἐπιποθεῖ τὸ πνεῦμα ὃ κατώκισεν ἐν ἡμῖν,

^{VUL} **James 4:5** aut putatis quia inaniter scriptura dicat ad invidiam concupiscit Spiritus qui inhabitat in nobis

LWB James 4:6 **However, He keeps on giving greater [super, conquering] grace [greater than the spirit of jealousy implanted within us]. Therefore, it says [in Proverbs 3:34]: “God**

opposes in military fashion the arrogant reversionist, but to the genuinely humble [positive believer] He keeps on giving grace [maximum benefits from doctrine in the soul].”

^{KW} **James 4:6** Moreover, He [the Holy Spirit] gives greater grace. For this reason [in conformity with this] He [the Holy Spirit] says, God sets himself in battle array against the arrogant and haughty but gives grace to the humble and lowly.

^{KJV} **James 4:6** But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Since we all have a spirit of jealousy implanted within us, it seems rather hopeless to live the spiritual life, doesn't it? Don't give up hope! James counteracts this sad truth with some good news: He keeps on giving (Durative Present tense) grace that is greater than the spirit of jealousy we have to contend with! The spirit of jealousy can be beaten by a conquering, victorious super-grace that is more powerful and intense than even the power of the sin nature. For this reason there is a verse in Scripture that states: God opposes the arrogant believer in full battle dress (Pictorial Present tense). But He keeps on giving (Iterative Present tense) grace to the genuinely humble believer, the one with positive momentum in the spiritual life. Not only is *greater grace* able to conquer the spirit of jealousy, it also brings spiritual blessings to the mature believer.

Please note: God does not give “greater grace” to every believer; He only gives it to the genuinely humble believer. In other words, they are reserved for spiritually mature believers. Ignorant believers are not genuinely humble; newly saved believers are not yet genuinely humble. Genuine humility is not an attitude that you cop while shuffling your feet and looking downward at the ground, saying, “Aw, shucks.” Genuine humility comes from years of consistent intake, metabolization and application of Bible doctrine in the filling of the Spirit. Arrogant believers don't have the capacity to receive “greater grace” blessings from God. They wouldn't know what to do with this “greater grace” if they received it anyway. The first article in receiving “greater grace” is spiritual growth on the inside, not power or material objects on the outside.

In both cases (arrogant and humble), James is addressing believers, not unbelievers. The arrogant believer will receive divine discipline from the hand of God. The believer who is positive towards Bible doctrine continues to receive maximum benefits from the doctrine in his soul. The genuinely humble believer is the believer who is teachable, the believer who is positive towards Bible doctrine and cannot get enough of it. His consistent use of the *grace apparatus for perception* enables him to fight the spirit of jealousy and win the battle. The arrogant believer is controlled by the implanted spirit of jealousy. James is contrasting the grace of God with the spirit of envy in man. If utilized according to divine protocol, the grace of God is always victorious.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Envy always seeks to receive that which belongs to another, while grace gives that which belongs to self, which is not necessarily merited by others. Envy is the blight of man, and grace is the gift of God ... It is obvious that where there is the Spirit of God there cannot be the evil spirit of envy. The two cannot coexist ... Our own spirit makes us desire that which is of the world, while the Spirit of God within us makes us desire the things of God ... We cannot cure our spirit of envy, pride, self-confidence or vain-glory; but God gives more grace. A sense of weakness should not be a discouragement, but an advantage ... Nothing, nobody can stop God from giving abundant and free grace to us human beings. In order, however, for that grace to have value to us, we must act as recipients of His grace. The exercise of human will and choice is actually consequent on the provision and the existence of grace ... Men may reject His grace, but that does not make Him any less gracious. The fault is always with man and not with God. (S. Zodhiates) God makes war against the arrogant, attacking arrogance where the discipline will hurt most and be most effective. The believer who remains adamant in his arrogance loses all sensitivity to God's appeals and eventually incurs maximum discipline which removes him from this life. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) *Greater*, literally means greater in comparison with the strength of the evil spirit in man. (J. Adamson)

Divine favor will therefore be available to his readers if they recover the necessary attitude of humility. The rivalries and conflicts that were crippling their churches were manifest expressions of pride. This spirit needed to be decisively set aside. (Z. Hodges) Humility from grace orientation resists self-centeredness and hypersensitivity and abandons irrationality for sound thinking motivated by doctrinal orientation. You do not succumb to frustration or anger caused by stress, unrealistic expectations, or unjust treatment. Being humble counteracts the false solutions of arrogance, human viewpoint, and the pitfalls of emotionalism. Humility exemplifies the virtue and integrity of the spiritual life. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) The mere existence of water does not satisfy all the thirsty. The giving must be coupled with the receiving, the provision with the personal appropriation ... If you are proud, you will not be able to taste the grace of God, but if you are humble, then you stand every opportunity of doing so ... God in His Word makes certain specific promises, but He often makes the application of these promises conditional ... Here is water, but in order that we may benefit from it we have to stoop down and drink it. (S. Zodhiates) Divine grace, inwrought and imparted by the indwelling Spirit, results in a manifestation of the very graciousness of God in and through the heart of the believer. It is in no sense an *imitation* of God's graciousness; it is a *reproduction* by the indwelling Spirit of that graciousness in the life and service of the believer. This truth is one of the most extensive doctrines of the NT. (L. Chafer)

The first stage of the maximum glorification of God in spiritual maturity is the distribution of escrow blessings. In eternity past God created an inheritance of special blessings for each believer. These blessings are the 'prize of that upward calling from God' described in Philippians 3:14. The distribution of these unique blessings demonstrates the matchless grace of God and glorifies Him in the angelic conflict. He placed this unique treasury on deposit, as if in escrow, to be distributed to the believer when he acquires the capacity to enjoy God's "greater grace." The believer gains capacity to receive, utilize, and enjoy his escrow blessings through the execution of the protocol plan of God resulting in spiritual momentum and the attainment of spiritual maturity. Capacity for blessing is a characteristic of spiritual maturity; therefore, the distribution of escrow blessings is also a characteristic of maturity ... Understanding God's Word is the root of all Christian virtues. Transformation of the believer's life occurs on the inside, in the inner person, in the soul. His

persistent intake and application of Bible doctrine enlarges his capacity for life, for love, for service, for blessings, for happiness. God's "greater grace" fills up the mature believer's greater capacities "to all the fullness of God." In so blessing the believer, God is glorified. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) Now note carefully please who it is that receives the privileges of "more grace." Certainly it is not the proud, for pride in a believer's heart keeps him at a distance from God. (L. Strauss) The absolute self-surrender demanded of the Christian is rewarded by richer supplies of divine grace than he could otherwise receive. (J. Mayor)

"Greater grace" or supergrace is beyond God's faithful sustenance of all believers ... The supergrace believer is a "friend of God," a spiritual aristocrat who resides and functions in the love complex. The superior quality of the mature believer's life is a testimony to divine grace ... The principle of greater grace after salvation is expressed by Paul in the words "much more" and "surplus of grace" (Romans 5:17) ... You never stand still in the Christian life! Either you progress into supergrace or you retrogress into reversionism, depending on whether or not you continue to function under *grace apparatus for perception*. As the initial stage of maturity beyond the completed *edification complex*, the supergrace status is God's standard for the spiritual life, the correct exercise of the believer's royal priesthood, and the place of glorifying God. The supergrace nomenclature is derived from the literal Greek of James 4:6: "But He gives a greater grace [superior or supergrace]." No one in arrogance can execute the plan of God. In fact, God "makes war against the arrogant believer." The road to recovery demands much time and effort; yet it can be conquered. The reversionist must first "repent," or change his mind about rebound and the value of doctrine in his life. Then, he must make constant decisions to ingest, metabolize, and inculcate doctrine in his soul. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

James 4:6 However (adversative), He keeps on giving (δίδομι, PAI3S, Durative) greater (Acc. Measure; more, super, conquering grace, victorious) grace (Acc. Dir. Obj.; post-salvation blessings). Therefore (inferential; for this reason), it (Proverbs 3:34) says (λέγω, PAI3S, Static): "God (Subj. Nom.) opposes in military fashion (ἀντιτάσσω, PMI3S, Pictorial; range in battle against) the arrogant reversionist (Dat. Disadv.), but (contrast) to the genuinely humble (Dat. Adv.; maturing believer) He keeps on giving (δίδομι, PAI3S, Iterative) grace (Acc. Dir. Obj.; maximum benefits from doctrine in the soul)."

^{BGT} **James 4:6** μείζονα δὲ δίδωσιν χάριν; διὸ λέγει· ὁ θεὸς ὑπερηφάνοις ἀντιτάσσεται, ταπεινοῖς δὲ δίδωσιν χάριν.

^{VUL} **James 4:6** maiorem autem dat gratiam propter quod dicit Deus superbis resistit humilibus autem dat gratiam

LWB **James 4:7** Be subordinate, therefore, unto God [execute His divine protocol plan]. Moreover, oppose [resist] the devil [by doctrine in the soul in the filling of the Spirit] and he will avoid you.

^{KW} **James 4:7** Be subject with implicit obedience to God at once and once for all. Stand immovable against the onset of the devil and he will flee from you.

^{KJV} **James 4:7** Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Instead of succumbing to the spirit of jealousy, enslaving yourself in Satan's cosmic system, be under the authority of God (Imperative of Command). If you aren't already subordinate to His plan, get with the program! The genuinely humble believer in verse 6 is always a believer who is under submission to the protocol plan of God; the two key elements of divine protocol for Church Age believers are (1) be filled with the Spirit, and (2) feed on the Word of God every day. This is how you become a friend of God as opposed to a friend of the world. In addition, resist the devil (Imperative of Command) and he will avoid you (Predictive Future tense).

If you are making progress in the spiritual life, the devil may be used by God to test you along the way. But as long as you have a reserve of doctrine in the soul and are able to apply it under pressure, he will get tired of you and move on to easier prey. He likes to send his demons to harrass weak believers, but if you refuse to allow him entrance into your house, job or church, he will send them somewhere else where victory is assured. The Greek word *anthisemi* means to oppose, resist or stand against an enemy; it does not mean to go on the offensive and try and chase him down. Don't become a those kooky Satan-chaser; you're asking for trouble.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

We are to place ourselves under the complete and absolute command of God and stay there ... God does not want corpses, but lively personalities, soldiers. Our passivity toward God becomes our activity against Satan. When we place ourselves under the absolute command of an officer, it is for the purpose of effectively fighting against a common enemy. And such is Satan ... One of the tricks of Satan is to make us believe that submission to God means a spiritual stupor. Far from it. It is a battle, it is resistance and first of all to Satan himself. Because he knows that we will turn against him - that is why he wants us to remain asleep. (S. Zodiates) You must either willingly humble yourselves, or be precipitately humbled by Divine Providence. (C. Jerdan) If you doubt that word, then you are well along the path of defeat. But if you count that a true word from God, then you are on your way to victory ... Satan is a coward. Satan is compelled to come against us with deception. He is compelled to use a cloak of secrecy. Because of his cowardice, he tries to overwhelm us with fright just as a lion strikes terror into a man with his mighty roar. (J. Pentecost) The ten aorist imperatives in verse 7-10 constitute an urgent call to repentance, to correct their blameworthy position before God. These imperatives, like curt military commands, demand incisive action. (D. Hiebert)

The world rulers of the darkness of this age, the spiritual powers of wickedness, who are here to wage a ceaseless conflict against us, cannot be overcome by human strategy or strength. The Bible lends no sanction to foolish suppositions that the devil will flee at the mere resistance of a determined human will. We are to "resist the devil," but it must be done "steadfast in the faith," and while "submitting" ourselves unto God. Satan, being by creation superior to all other creatures cannot be conquered by one of them. Certainly a Christian, with all his limitations, must appeal to

the power of God in the conflict with this mighty foe ... The believer's conflict with Satan is as fierce and unceasing as that mighty being can make it. Before him we of ourselves are as nothing; but God has anticipated our helplessness and provided a perfect victory through the indwelling Spirit (1 John 4:4). A Christian, because of the power of the new enemy, must "walk by means of the Spirit" if he would be spiritual. (L. Chafer) Satan, in a manner, acts playfully, when he is not in earnest repelled; but against those who really resist him, he employs all the strength he possesses. And further, he is never wearied with fighting; but when conquered in one battle, he immediately engages in another. (J. Calvin)

James 4:7 Be subordinate (ὑποτάσσω, APImp.2P, Ingressive, Command; under the authority of His plan), therefore (coordinating), unto God (Dat. Adv.). Moreover (continuative), oppose (ἀντίστημι, AAImp.2P, Ingressive, Condition; resist, stand against) the devil (Dat. Ind. Obj.; by doctrine in the soul and the filling of the Spirit) and (continuative) he will avoid (φεύγω, FMI3S, Predictive; shun) you (Gen. Adv.).

^{BGT} **James 4:7** ὑποτάγητε οὖν τῷ θεῷ, ἀντίστητε δὲ τῷ διαβόλῳ καὶ φεύξεσθε ἀφ' ὑμῶν,

^{VUL} **James 4:7** subditi igitur estote Deo resistite autem diabolo et fugiet a vobis

LWB **James 4:8** **Come close to God [reversion recovery] and He will come close to you [intimate fellowship based on the filling of the Spirit and metabolized doctrine in the soul]. Cleanse your hands [confession], sinners [carnal believers], and purify the mentality of your soul [post-salvation epistemological rehabilitation], double-minded ones [reverse process reversionists].**

^{KW} **James 4:8** Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse [your] hands, O sinners, and purify [your] hearts, O double-minded.

^{KJV} **James 4:8** Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *ye* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *ye* double minded.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

James continues to outline divine protocol for believers with a series of commanding proverbs to live by. "Come close to God" is a command for reversion recovery (Imperative mood). This recovery process consists of confession of sin, being filled with the Spirit, and continued metabolization of Bible doctrine. The use of the ingressive aorist means it is time to get started back on the right path, the precisely correct protocol for Church Age believers. If you follow these steps, He will draw near to you once again in intimate fellowship (Predictive Future tense). "Cleanse your hands" is a command for carnal believers to confess their sins to God, also known as the *rebound technique* in 1 John 1:9. All believers are sinners, but this category of sinners refers to carnal believers – those who have been headed down the path to reversionism.

“Purify your hearts” refers to replacing the garbage in your mind with Bible doctrine. A technical name for this process of doctrinal inculcation is *post-salvation epistemological rehabilitation*. The believer who is out of fellowship for a prolonged period of time has opened his thinking to cosmic panaceas, demonic philosophies and psychologies, and all sorts of false concepts that are contrary to God. The only way to get rid of this garbage is by replacing it with pure Bible doctrine in the filling of the Spirit. James issues this command to double-minded believers, spiritual schizophrenics. These are believers who have not only rejected Bible doctrine, but they have gone 180-degrees in the opposite direction and have embraced satanic concepts with gusto, e.g., communism, socialism utopianism, environmentalism, internationalism, etc.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

It is not sufficient to get rid of the devil; it is necessary to get hold of God, to keep in close communion with Him in order that the devil may never be successful in his attacks against us ... *Draw nigh* means to take the first step of faith and approach God. Once you have come to believe that God is accessible to you, go to Him. This requires action on the part of man on himself, since it is an intransitive verb. We have here the exercise of man’s will to go to God, or rather the command to man to exercise his will to approach God ... It is the picture of the prodigal son coming back to the father’s house ... Conformity to God is the ground of communion. (S. Zodiates) Of course, as the apostle John makes clear (1 John 1:9), confession of sin is the first step in drawing near to God again. But renewed prayer and meditation on Scripture are also appropriate steps. (Z. Hodges) Here *hands* and *hearts* represent *deeds* and *thoughts* respectively. (J. Adamson)

James believes that his readers should by now see that their “desires” for “friendship with the world” and even for positions of status within their Christian community have led them “away from the Truth” and indeed made them “enemies of God.” In an effort to “restore” them, he urges them to once again “humble themselves in the presence of the Lord,” to “come near to God” in the confidence that “God will come near” to them. (T. Cargal) Every human being is a sinner, but James is using a term that fits the Jewish context of his people. In the Gospels, the name *sinner* was given to someone who disregarded the law of God and flouted standards of morality. (S. Kistemaker) *Hands* symbolize the outer act and the *hearts* the inner intention. (R. Ward) “Draw nigh to God” indicates that their worldliness has resulted in a distance separating them from God. They must return to an intimate relationship with Him. (D. Hiebert)

James 4:8 Come close (ἐγγίζω, AAImp.2P, Ingressive, Command; approach, draw near) to God (Dat. Adv.; reversion recovery) and (continuative) He will come close (ἐγγίζω, FAI3S, Predictive; draw near) to you (Dat. Adv.; intimate fellowship after utilizing rebound and the *grace apparatus for perception*). Cleanse (καθαρίζω, AAImp.2P, Ingressive, Command) your (ellipsis) hands (Acc. Dir. Obj.; rebound), sinners (Voc. Address; carnal believers), and (continuative) purify (ἀγνίζω, AAImp.2P, Ingressive, Command) the mentality of your soul (Acc. Dir. Obj.; post-salvation

epistemological rehabilitation), **double-minded ones** (Voc. Address: reverse process reversionists, spiritual schizophrenics).

^{BGT} **James 4:8** ἐγγίσατε τῷ θεῷ καὶ ἐγγιεῖ ὑμῖν. καθαρῖσατε χεῖρας, ἁμαρτωλοί, καὶ ἀγνῖσατε καρδίας, δίψυχοι.

^{VUL} **James 4:8** adpropiate Domino et adpropinquabit vobis emundate manus peccatores et purificate corda duplices animo

LWB **James 4:9** You [reverse process reversionists] will be miserable and you will lament and you will weep. Your laughter will be turned into grief and your temporary happiness into depression.

^{KW} **James 4:9** Be sorrowful and distressed and grieve and weep audibly [over your sins]. Let your laughter be turned to sadness and your joy to gloominess.

^{KJV} **James 4:9** Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and *your* joy to heaviness.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

James addresses the reverse process reversionists among his readers in this verse. They are the double-minded believers from the previous verse, those who have not cleansed their hands or purified the mentality of their souls. He issues a series of predictions (Futuristic Aorist tense) that are likely to come true if they don't change directions immediately (Imperative of Concession). They will become horribly miserable. They will mourn over the extent of all the bad decisions they have made in life. They will weep and wail over their lost opportunities to learn the Word of God in a local church. Their laughter will be turned (Latin: converted) into grief and their temporary happiness from the details of life will become depression and gloom.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

This is not the sorrow that we experience as a result of our contact with the outside world or the infirmities of the flesh. This is a self-imposed sorrow which constitutes an evidence of repentance ... The laughter of his former sinful life was turned to mourning for those with whom he formerly laughed, and his joy was turned to heaviness ... The laughter of his sinful life ought to become the mourning of his Christian life. (S. Zodiates) The burden of indwelling sin was a load which the apostle Paul could neither cast off nor bear. He could only groan under its pressure, and long for deliverance by a power greater than his. (C. Hodge) This is a stern call to worldly and frivolous Christians to grieve and lament for their sins. (J. Adamson) Their humiliation is nothing less than the rejection of the fiction that equates laughter and joy with financial rather than with spiritual wealth. (R. Wall)

The "laughter" and "joy" that come from "friendship with the world" must be turned to the "sadness" and "dejection" of knowing one has become "an enemy of God." (T. Cargal) Many people in our day, both outside the church and within it, are marked by a superficial joy and brittle

laughter. They live the hedonist philosophy (eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die), that ignores the terrifying reality of God’s judgment. But even the committed Christian can slip into a casual attitude towards sin, perhaps presuming too much on God’s forgiving and merciful nature. (D. Moo) Apparently their friendship with the world has provided occasions for hilarity and merry-making which is quite out of keeping both with the spiritual peril in which they are living, and the urgent needs of those about them. (C. Mitton)

James 4:9 You (reversionists) will be miserable (ταλαιπωρέω, AAImp.2P, Futuristic, Concession; endure hardship) and (continuative) you will lament (πενθέω, AAImp.2P, Futuristic, Concession; mourn) and (continuative) you will weep (κλαίω, AAImp.2P, Futuristic, Concession; wail). Your (Poss. Gen.) laughter (Subj. Nom.) will be turned (μετατρέπω, APImp.3S, Futuristic, Concession) into grief (Adv. Acc.) and (continuative) your (Poss. Nom.) temporary happiness (Subj. Nom.; minus H) into depression (Noncompl. Acc.; gloominess).

^{BGT} **James 4:9** ταλαιπωρήσατε καὶ πενήθησατε καὶ κλαύσατε. ὁ γέλως ὑμῶν εἰς πένθος μετατραπήτω καὶ ἡ χαρὰ εἰς κατήφειαν.

^{VUL} **James 4:9** miseri estote et lugete et plorate risus vester in luctum convertatur et gaudium in maerorem

LWB James 4:10 Receive genuine humility [a disciplined, grace oriented life] in the opinion of the Lord [principles of the supergrace] and He will promote you.

^{KW} **James 4:10** Permit yourselves to be humbled in the Lord’s presence and He will exalt you.

^{KJV} **James 4:10** Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

James commands his readers to receive genuine humility in the opinion of the Lord (Imperative mood). The passive voice means you don’t “work up” some kind of false humility by changing your personality or demeanor. It is also reflexive, which means when you are filled with the Spirit, genuine humility is provided to you as part of His “greater grace.” It doesn’t mean the Lord drops a permanent form of humility on top of your head after prayer either. He has designed a protocol plan for developing this humility in the believer by means of the filling of the Spirit and Bible doctrine. He doesn’t set aside His protocol plan to “dump” humility into your personality. Genuine humility is composed of grace orientation and a self-disciplined life of Bible study.

The “opinion” of the Lord is an expression for the principles of the supergrace life, the same principles that enable the growing believer to receive the blessings called “greater grace.” James promises that if you live this life of genuine humility, the Lord will promote you (Predictive Future tense) when the time is ripe. The level of promotion of exaltation is different for every

believer; we don't all become presidents of a corporation or political heads of state. You might be promoted to head greenskeeper on a golf course, or chief plumber or pointman for a SWAT team. Stick with doctrine and your place in His plan will become manifest to yourself and others.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

This is not a continuous thing, but it is something which God does to us. (S. Zodhiates) It is not that God seeks to entice us into right conduct by the offer of reward, but rather it is an affirmation about the structure of life itself, as made by God, that obedience to His will normally leads to great spiritual blessings, even though temporal loss and persecutions may also be suffered. (C. Mitton) "The Lord" is generally taken to mean God rather than Christ, but it seems more probable that James is thinking of the living God who has revealed Himself in Christ Jesus our Lord. (D. Hiebert)

James 4:10 Receive genuine humility (ταπεινώ, APImp.2P, Constative, Command, Reflexive; grace orientation, self-disciplined life) **in the opinion** (Prep. Gen.; sight, presence) **of the Lord** (Adv. Gen. Ref.; principles of the supergrace life) **and** (continuative) **He will promote** (ὑψώω, FAI3S, Predictive; exalt, lift up) **you** (Acc. Dir. Obj.).

^{BGT} **James 4:10** ταπεινώθητε ἐνώπιον κυρίου καὶ ὑψώσει ὑμᾶς.

^{VUL} **James 4:10** humiliamini in conspectu Domini et exaltabit vos

LWB James 4:11 Stop speaking evil of one another, brethren [members of the royal family]. The one who continually slanders [maligning, gossiping] a brother [fellow believer] or continually judges his brother [fellow believer] is slandering the law and judging the law [law of liberty or supergrace principles from Bible doctrine]. Moreover, if you judge the law [by slandering, gossiping or maligning someone], you are not a doer [supergrace believer] of the law [law of liberty or supergrace principles from Bible doctrine], but a judge [opposed to the supergrace life].

^{KW} **James 4:11** Stop defaming one another, brethren. He who defames his brother [Christian] or passes a condemnatory judgment upon his brother [Christian], defames the law and passes a condemnatory judgment upon the law. Now, if you pass a condemnatory judgment upon the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge.

^{KJV} **James 4:11** 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.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

James issues another command to his readers (Imperative of Prohibition), this time to stop speaking evil of one another. They have been maligning, slandering, gossiping and backbiting their fellow believers and it has to stop. They are all members of the same royal family, but they aren't acting like it. Speaking ill of another believer destroys that believer's freedom; it harms

his or her reputation. It shuts social doors in their face and sometimes creates financial harm. The believer who makes it a habit to slander or judge a fellow believer (Iterative Present tense) is violating the *law of liberty*. He is not living by the supergrace principles embedded in the Word of God, especially the law of *virtue love*. He is, in fact, slandering (Gnomic Present tense) the very *law of liberty* he is sworn to live by. He is, in fact, judging the very supergrace principles of life he is trying to follow. This is a violation of divine protocol and a repudiation of Bible doctrine.

Not only that, but remember the earlier passages in this letter concerning “doers” of the Word? The believer who is judging the *law of liberty* by slandering or maligning a fellow believer is not a *doer* of the *law of liberty*. There is a definite malfunction in progress here. He is living in the flesh and is legalistically imposing a self-righteous judgment on another believer. This is completely opposed to the supergrace life. Now a person might slip occasionally in the heat of an argument and say something bad about a fellow believer. That is a verbal sin which needs to be acknowledged before God in order to regain fellowship. Even a supergrace believer can slip-up occasionally and say something he later regrets. But James is talking about a habitual pattern of verbal sins in this prohibition. This continuous habit of slandering and judging can prevent a believer from residing in the love complex as well as destroy his supergrace status over time.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

What James is actually telling us here is that the person who speaks against his brother, degrading him, does not demonstrate thought. When we see a person constantly gossiping and criticizing others, we may safely arrive at the conclusion that he is fairly empty-headed. God did not give us the tongue to utilize independently of the mind. Let us allow our tongues to have a commander-in-chief, a mind that is wholly sanctified by God ... It is possible that man in his thought and will may become so degenerated in his opinions of self and others, may have such an exalted idea of self and such a low estimate of others, that when he comes to talk about others he does so without due consideration of the justification or the consequences of such talk ... Words spoken carelessly out of a selfish will and mind are made of rubber; they have the ability to bounce back sometimes with greater strength if the surface they hit happens to be as hard as we describe it to be. (S. Zodhiates)

One of the greatest temptations of an advanced, well-informed Christian is to assume an authoritative attitude toward other Christians. If we live close to God, it is sometimes possible that Satan may try to make us consciously or unconsciously act as though we ourselves are little gods and therefore have the right and sometimes the imperative duty to assume the responsibilities that belong to God, especially the responsibility of passing judgment upon others. It is good to remember that there are certain responsibilities and prerogatives that God does not choose to pass on to us, no matter how close we are to Him ... “Katalaloon” means to speak flippantly, without the exercise of the faculty of reason. “Krino” means to condemn ... God’s laws are not for you and me to criticize and condemn because we do not like to keep them, but for us to obey, to do what they command us to, and to leave undone what they prohibit. (S. Zodhiates) The very thought of another Christian prospering causes some Christians to create a build-up for themselves and so they speak disparagingly or slanderously of the one prospered. (L. Strauss)

The verb translated *speak evil* is broad enough to cover any kind of negative talk that is harmful to the best interests of a Christian brother or sister, regardless of whether the subject matter was true or false ... In flouting this command by their criticisms of others, they were in effect criticizing and condemning *the royal law* itself. Since all such speech was forbidden by this law, the one who disobeyed it was virtually saying, "This law is unworthy of my obedience and I judge it to be invalid for me in this case." The lawbreaker was passing his own negative judgment on whatever command he disobeyed. Such behavior was anything but humble. (Z. Hodges) Having such an attitude of humility will mean that believers will "not speak against one another," and so quarrels and disputes will not arise within the community ... The one Lawgiver and Judge is the same Lord before whom believers are to humble themselves. (T. Cargal) Detraction may be couched in truth and clothed in fair language. It is that tendency to disparage good actions, to look for blemishes and defects in them, using care and artifice to pervert or misrepresent things for that purpose. It is a poison often infused in sweet liquor and administered in a golden cup. (E. Gibson)

The apostle's words are to be interpreted according to their spirit. He does not condemn all judging. God has implanted within us the critical faculty, the judgment; and we cannot avoid using it. Indeed, it is a Christian duty to pronounce upon conduct and character. We are required to do so within our own breasts for our own moral guidance; while to judge publicly is a function of the civil magistrate and of Church rulers. What James condemns here is evil judging, all judging that is censorious or calumnious. We are not to judge rashly, harshly, uncharitably. Even good Christians are tempted to transgress in this matter in many ways: from listening to mere rumor, from trusting to our own first impressions, from narrow-mindedness, from self-conceit, from mistaken views of the sufferings of others, from forgetting that we cannot look into our neighbor's hearts. (C. Jerdan) The word *law* is without the article in both cases and thus refers to the law governing the Christian life in general, not the specific law of Moses. James has already referred to it as the "perfect law, the law of liberty," and the "royal law" or law of Christian love. (W. Baker)

We must not take pleasure in making known the faults of others, divulging things that are secret merely to expose them, nor in making more of their known faults than really they deserve, and least of all, in making false stories, and spreading things concerning them of which they are altogether innocent. (M. Henry) The habitual practice of the sins of the tongue is the manifestation of verbal reversionism. Of the seven sins on God's "abomination list" in Proverbs 6:16-19, three are verbal: lying, slander, and gossip. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) Slander, by its very nature, involves a secret judging (and condemnation) of an associate. It is clear that to assume the right to judge and condemn another is to claim a privileged position of superiority over that person ... Slander serves to both lower the neighbor and to elevate the self; it take away status from another and ascribes it to the one doing the slandering, who poses as the superior judge. Slander, therefore, is a form of arrogance that seeks to assert the self by destroying another. It can thrive between those calling each other "brother," because it is evil speech carried out in secret. (L. Johnson)

Scripture teaches that all of us will have to appear before God in the day of judgment and at that time we have to give an account of "every careless word we have spoken" (Matt. 12:36). God holds us responsible for the very words we speak and especially the words spoken against our fellow man. (S. Kistemaker) Those James called to repentance seemed to have taken a nonchalant or carefree attitude toward sin and toward God. These people believed that they were "masters of their own

destiny” and in the end responsible to no one but themselves. They are indicted for their “love of the world.” (R. Martin) In court a judge must be impartial in evaluating the evidence, and be just in applying the law and passing sentence. The slanderer, by contrast, generally neglects to learn the facts, avoids speaking in the presence of the accused, sets aside the law of love, and as a self-appointed judge hands down the verdict. (S. Kistemaker)

James 4:11 Stop (neg. particle) speaking evil of (καταλαλέω, PAImp.2P, Static, Prohibition; slander) one another (Dat. Disadv.), brethren (Voc. Address; members of the royal family). The one (Subj. Nom.) who continually slanders (καταλαλέω, PAPtc.NMS, Iterative, Substantival) a brother (Dat. Disadv.; fellow believer) or (disjunctive) continually judges (κρίνω, PAPtc.NMS, Iterative, Substantival) his (Gen. Rel.) brother (Acc. Dir. Obj.; fellow believer) is slandering (καταλαλέω, PAI3S, Gnostic) the law (Obj. Gen.; law of liberty or supergrace principles from Bible doctrine) and (continuative) judging (κρίνω, PAI3S, Gnostic) the law (Acc. Dir. Obj.; law of liberty or supergrace principles from Bible doctrine). Moreover (inferential), if (protasis, 1st class condition, “assumes you are”) you judge (κρίνω, PAI2S, Static) the law (Acc. Dir. Obj.; law of liberty or supergrace principles from Bible doctrine by slandering someone), you are (εἰμί, PAI2S, Gnostic) not (neg. adv.) a doer (Pred. Nom.; supergrace believer) of the law (law of liberty or supergrace principles from Bible doctrine), but (contrast) a judge (Pred. Nom.; opposed to the SG life).

^{BGT} **James 4:11** Μὴ καταλαλεῖτε ἀλλήλων, ἀδελφοί. ὁ καταλαλῶν ἀδελφοῦ ἢ κρίνων τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ καταλαλεῖ νόμου καὶ κρίνει νόμον· εἰ δὲ νόμον κρίνεις, οὐκ εἶ ποιητὴς νόμου ἀλλὰ κριτὴς.

^{VUL} **James 4:11** nolite detrahere de alterutrum fratres qui detrahit fratri aut qui iudicat fratrem suum detrahit legi et iudicat legem si autem iudicas legem non es factor legis sed iudex

LWB James 4:12 There is one Lawgiver and Judge [God the Father] who is able to deliver [supergrace believers] and to destroy [discipline reversionistic believers]. So who are you to judge a fellow believer?

^{KW} **James 4:12** One only is a lawgiver and a judge, He who is able to save and to destroy. But as for you, who are you who passes a condemnatory judgment upon your fellow-man?

^{KJV} **James 4:12** There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

James reminds his readers that there is only one Lawgiver and Judge (God the Father) who has the power (Gnostic Present tense) to deliver supergrace believers (Constative Aorist tense) and

to discipline reversionistic believers (Result Infinitive). That is a prerogative that God reserves for Himself. This is an answer to those who are guilty of verbal and overt sins against other believers. This does not take authority out of the hands of police officers, soldiers, or courtroom judges from performing their legitimate duties. It has nothing to do with the criminal justice system (Latin: legislator) or conducting military operations against an enemy, whether overt or covert. Nor does it have anything to do with pastoral discernment and discipline of rebellious, verbal sinning in his congregation.

God established legitimate forms of authority for men to exercise on earth; He isn't overturning them by prohibiting sins of the tongue. All kinds of nonsense have come from these erroneous interpretations. This is a rebuke against believers who judge other believers by verbal sinning – speaking evil of them, gossiping about them, maligning them – as just discussed in the prior verse. This is a sarcastic condemnation on believers who can't keep their mouths shut, those who are constantly *running down* other believers in their assembly. So, since there is a Supreme Lawgiver and Judge who takes care of that, *who do you think you are* to take on His role as judge (Dramatic Present tense) over another believer? As we shall see in the next unit, we should not be judging our fellow believers, but instead making an effort to *restore* them to fellowship.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

When you set up yourselves as judges of others and of God's law, you are endeavoring to dethrone God and to establish your own law of judgment. If you criticize the law of God, that means you think that you have a better one; otherwise you wouldn't criticize it, but you would rather obey it ... We were not helping God when He was instituting His laws, physical, moral, and spiritual. Why then are we so anxious to help Him now in judging our brethren as to whether they keep the laws of God or not? (S. Zodiates) The disjunctive pronoun is sarcastic, emphasizing the folly of the world to judge, while the vigorous proleptic *you* serves to widen the gulf between God's judgment and man's. (J. Adamson) When we criticize and condemn others, we are in fact pronouncing our own verdict over their spirituality and destiny. This charge shows that James is not prohibiting the proper, and necessary, discrimination that every Christian should exercise. (D. Moo)

“Apollumi” does not mean to destroy utterly and completely. It does not mean extinction or annihilation, but rather complete loss and estrangement. (S. Zodiates) There is no reason to read the doctrine of eternal salvation here. (Z. Hodges) Whereas the theme of the preceding unit focused on sparing oneself from judgment, the theme of the following unit emphasizes sparing others from judgment. (T. Cargal) Alas! Even in Christian circles a small and slight rumor will sometimes expand speedily into a huge inflated calumny, which will scatter mischief and misery along its path. And even mere idle speaking degenerates into evil speaking. Gossip soon becomes backbiting; scandal grows out of tittle-tattle. (C. Jerdan) These words of James may mean that those who judge others pronounce judgment upon themselves. James is not discounting the need for honest discussion and constructive criticism within the body of believers. (R. Martin)

What does it mean to call God “lawgiver” and “judge”? First, it serves to place God at the beginning and end of salvation history, with Moses on Sinai and upon the “mercy seat” at the last day. Second, by reminding the reader that God has power “to save and to destroy,” judgment and mercy are lifted

up as possibilities. Taken together, the reader is chastised for presuming to take God’s place, instructed that one should look for judgment to the one who is also the giver of the law, and challenged to rely on the one who is able to destroy or save them. (W. Brosend II) Bear in mind, of course, that discernment of the behavior of others is something else ... The judging forbidden here is that which arises out of animosity and worldliness. (W. Baker) Salvation can mean the restoration of the human personality (body and soul) to what God intended it to be. (C. Mitton)

James 4:12 There is (εἰμί, PAI3S, Durative & Gnostic) one (Nom. Measure) Lawgiver (Pred. Nom.) and (connective) Judge (Pred. Nom.) Who is able (δύναμαι, PMPTc.NMS, Durative & Gnostic, Substantival, Deponent; has the power) to deliver (σώζω, AAInf., Constative, Result; SG believers) and (continuative) to destroy (AAInf., Constative, Result; discipline reversionistic believers). So (inferential), who (Subj. Nom.) are (εἰμί, PAI2S, Descriptive, Interrogative Ind.) you (Pred. Nom.) to judge (κρίνω, PAPtc.NMS, Dramatic, Modal) a fellow believer (Acc. Dir. Obj., adverb)?

^{BGT} **James 4:12** εἷς ἐστὶν [ὁ] νομοθέτης καὶ κριτὴς ὁ δυνάμενος σῶσαι καὶ ἀπολέσαι· σὺ δὲ τίς εἶ ὁ κρίνων τὸν πλησίον;

^{VUL} **James 4:12** unus est legislator et iudex qui potest perdere et liberare tu autem quis es qui iudicas proximum

LWB James 4:13 Come now, you [reversionistic businessmen] who say: “Today or tomorrow we will travel to such and such a city and produce [fleece] in that place for a year and engage in business and make a profit.”

^{KW} **James 4:13** Come now, you who are saying, Today or tomorrow we shall proceed to this city and we shall spend a year there and buy and sell and make a profit.

^{KJV} **James 4:13** 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:

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

James addresses the reversionistic businessmen among his readers by calling them to his side (Aoristic Present tense) for a private one-on-one chat (Imperative of Entreaty). He does this by using a hypothetical conversation with them, attributing the following group of activities to their master plan. They are planning to (a) travel to a hypothetical city within a day’s journey from their current living accommodations, (b) work in this new location for a year, (c) engage in whatever business they are experts in, (d) with the intention of making a profit. There’s nothing wrong with these plans; they are the basis of free enterprise capitalism. The problem is that they are making these complex plans (Predictive Future tense) as if God did not exist.

His divine plan for their lives is nowhere to be found in their business thoughts or plans. They are reversionistic, Christian businessmen (Latin: mercantile). Maybe their business is legitimate and maybe it isn’t. Maybe they are just backsliders who go through life as if God has retired

from directing events on planet earth. Maybe they are planning to con the residents in this neighboring city out of their hard-earned money. He does not say directly that they are planning some sort of nefarious business deal, but the negative comments that follow do paint a picture of money-grubbing. James is going to question their priorities and their motives for this out-of-town business deal; there is nothing but making money in their future plans.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

It seems that James is envisioning traveling merchants rather than local shopkeepers. (T. Cargal) With attention-getting abruptness, James denounces those who brag about their business plans with total disregard for the transient nature of their lives. (Z. Hodges) They would go where they liked, and for as long as they liked. Their resolve, together with the refusal to reckon with death, has a modern ring. (J. Adamson) Unlike good men, they judge everything by profits and gain, which seem to them just as valuable as what is right. (Cicero, *On Duties*) Man in his pride does not want to acknowledge that he cannot determine his own fate and make his own plans. Proud man forgets God when he plans his life and his business for the future ... As we toil and labor, we forget that the actual increase cannot come from anyone else but God ... Profit-making is essential in any business, but when it becomes a passion and the motivation of all our activities, then we are on very dangerous ground. (S. Zodiates) James has no quarrel with the merchant's occupation. Nor does he write about the ethics of buying and selling; he only states that the merchants "carry on business and make money." And that is what we expect when trade flourishes. James takes the businessman to task for their disregard for God. To them money is much more important than serving the Lord. They make plans for the future without seeking the will of God. (S. Kistemaker)

For three long years during Verres' governorship in Sicily he so thoroughly despoiled and pillaged the province that its restoration to its previous state is out of the question. A succession of honest governors, over a period of many years, could scarcely achieve even a partial rehabilitation ... All the property that anyone in Sicily still has for his own today is merely what happened to escape the attention of this avaricious lecher, or survived his gluttonous appetites. In Sicily, during those three years, not a single lawsuit was decided without his connivance. Inheritances from a father or a grandfather, however authentic, were cancelled – if Verres said the word. Under a new and immoral ruling, the properties of farmers were robbed of countless sums. Allies of unassailable loyalty were treated as enemies; Roman citizens were tortured and put to death like slaves. Criminals of the deepest dye would bribe their way to acquittal, while men of impeccable honesty were prosecuted in their absence, and convicted and banished unheard. Powerfully fortified harbours, great and well protected cities, were left open for pirates and robbers to attack. Silician soldiers and sailors, allies and friends of ours, were starved to death. Splendid, beautifully equipped fleets were squandered and thrown away. It was an appalling disgrace for our country. (Cicero, *Against Verres*)

We cannot fault a traveling salesman for moving on and doing business. This is part of his life. (S. Kistemaker) We form plans about our business and family affairs, plans about our houses and fields, plans to improve our social status; and we forget that all these are dependent upon an unknown quantity – our continuance in life and health, our possession of the future, and of property in it. (C. Jerdan) James is not attacking the profit motive so much as the failure to take God into their thinking. They act as if they control the future. They do not say "let us go" but exhibit the cold,

merciless confidence of grand administration with a whole year in prospect. Relentless bureaucracy could hardly go further. (R. Ward) James warns against presumption and forgetting the sovereign will of the Lord in matters of daily living ... The words “today” or “tomorrow” imply a sense of personal sovereignty, a confidence that the speaker is able to direct his life on a whim ... People of wealth entertain the illusion – after some success in doing as they please and succeeding in a competitive world – that they are in complete command. Such people are often the least prepared to be thwarted in their purposes and often, when they fail, have extreme difficulty coping with unexpected bad fortune. (W. Baker)

James is addressing people who tend to make ordinary business plans. James does not condemn such planning. He does not even condemn the plans to make money. What it condemns is presumptuous planning; that is, plans that ignore the principle of God and the sovereignty of God to prosper or to frustrate our plans. (T. Schreiner) Business and religion must not be kept in separate water-tight compartments. The Jews of the dispersion were mostly engaged in commerce, and traveled from town to town in the pursuit of their occupation. (E. Sugden) Money per se is not sinful, in fact it is an extremely useful commodity. As a medium of exchange, money is necessary for the efficient function of an economy related to the laws of divine establishment. Monetary transactions are recorded from Genesis to Revelation as a normal activity of life. To possess, to save, and to spend money are all absolutely legitimate as far as the Word of God is concerned. Money is a form of logistical grace provision. Not to enjoy the benefits of money would be abnormal. But when money is magnified out of proportion or becomes an obsession and distracts the believer from the plan of God, it is evidence of monetary reversionism. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) The town of destiny is where money is made rather than where God’s will is performed. (R. Wall)

Here is something else Christians do – we like to make big plans for the future. It has taken me a long time in life to learn to just play it by ear. (J. McGee) James also challenges the very view of reality assumed by such friends of the world. Their speech shows that they see the world as a closed system of limited resources, available to their control and manipulation, yielding to their market analysis and sales campaigns ... James calls for a profoundly different perception of reality. He is recommending the view provided by faith and friendship with God that the world is an open system, created by God at every moment and infinitely rich in resources provided by God for humans to exist and to prosper ... Being heedless of anything else but making a profit is one thing; committing actual violence against others in order to live luxuriously on the earth is another and far more perverted form of arrogance. (L. Johnson) It is quite possible that my plans and predictions may turn out tomorrow as I arranged them in my mind today, but of this I cannot be certain ... But mind you, it is not the careful planning that James here condemns. He is not speaking about preparing for the future. Frankly, we can do with more careful planning and good business sense in our churches. (L. Strauss)

James 4:13 Come (ἄγω, PAImp.2S, Aoristic, Entreaty) now (Adv. Time), you (Subj. Nom.; reversionists) who say (λέγω, PAPtc.NMP, Static, Substantival, Articular; with ease and indifference): "Today (Adv. Time) or (disjunctive) tomorrow (Adv. Time) we will travel (πορεύομαι, FMIIP, Predictive, Deponent) to such and such (Acc. Spec.) a city (Acc. Place) and (continutative) produce (ποιέω,

FAIIP, Predictive; fleece, work) in that place (Adv. Place) for a year (Acc. Extent of Time) and (continuative) engage in business (ἐμπορεύομαι, FMIIP, Predictive, Deponent) and (continuative) make a profit" (κερδαίνω, FAIIP, Predictive),

^{BGT} **James 4:13** Ἔγε νῦν οἱ λέγοντες· σήμερον ἢ αὔριον πορευσόμεθα εἰς τήνδε τήν πόλιν καὶ ποιήσομεν ἐκεῖ ἐνιαυτὸν καὶ ἐμπορευσόμεθα καὶ κερδήσομεν·

^{VUL} **James 4:13** ecce nunc qui dicitis hodie aut crastino ibimus in illam civitatem et faciemus quidem ibi annum et mercabimur et lucrum faciemus

LWB **James 4:14** **Such a person [reversionistic businessman] does not understand [due to lack of doctrine] what kind of life yours [prospective client] *may be* tomorrow. For you are a vapor trail which appears for a short time and then disappears.**

^{KW} **James 4:14** You are of the class [of men] that does not know what shall be tomorrow [and] of what character is your life. For you are a mist which appears for a little time and then disappears.

^{KJV} **James 4:14** 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.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

The reversionistic businessman does not understand (Latin: ignorant) what kind of life yours may be tomorrow (Gnomic Present tense). He can't even ascertain the details of his own life. He can't be certain about the future, and without doctrine in his soul, all his plans are mere guesswork. "Yours" may refer to you as his next victim, if he is a crooked businessman. However, it might not have a negative connotation; perhaps "you" are merely a client or buyer. In either case, nobody knows for sure what will happen tomorrow. We are all vapor trails in this life - mere wisps of smoke. We appear on earth for a short time and then we disappear from the scene forever. We have to make plans for the future, because it is a responsible thing to do. But we should not make plans without acknowledging God's providence in our plans.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Ignorance of the future is a wonderful school of humility and a challenge and inducement to dependence upon Divine Providence ... The things that He has not chosen to reveal to us are the probable even course or disruption of our lives, the success or failure of our endeavors, and the outcome of our daily efforts and relationships. None of us knows for certain whether he is going to live to see the light of another day. We start off for work in the morning, but in reality we do not know whether we are going to get there safely and whether we are going to return home at night. These are the uncertainties of life which are entirely in the hands of God. (S. Zodiates) The steam or smoke, which appears for a little and then vanishes, graphically depicts the transience of life – a common idea even among pagans, and here used parenthetically to point to the folly of planning without God. (J. Adamson) The merchants James addresses have not asked about the meaning and

duration of life. They talk about the future with absolute certainty. Yet they have no control over it. They live their life but fail to inquire into its purpose. They are blind and ignorant. (S. Kistemaker)

The first lesson to be learned from this is that we should take full advantage of today and the opportunities of today. The second lesson is that our ignorance of the content of tomorrow does not mean that we ought not to think about and make provision for tomorrow ... Most of the duties for which God holds us responsible call us to work for the morrow. The call to take no thought for tomorrow is certainly not a call to neglect duties and evade responsibilities, but a call to trust in Providence when the time only to trust has come. (S. Zodiates) We dare not omit from our conversation the recognition that not only our lives, but all of our activities, are as fragile as a wisp of smoke. We must acknowledge that God alone can enable us to do whatever we hope, or plan, or do. (Z. Hodges) Increasingly the word *secularism* appears in Christian circles as if it has a legitimate place in Christianity. The expression refers to a world and life view that ignores God and flouts His Word. Secularism is a philosophy that penetrates all spheres of life, that exalts man and rejects God. (S. Kistemaker) James has touched what has become a major pathology in our society. It is alarmingly commonplace, even among Christians, to be overextended in commitments, to be stressed because of time pressures and finally to become dissatisfied, compulsive people. (G. Stulac)

Monetary reversionism is well documented in Scripture. A few outstanding case histories are those of Solomon (Eccl. 5:10-6:2), Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-10), and Balaam (2 Peter 2:15). The “error” or “deceit” of Balaam (Jude 11) describes three areas of delusion regarding money: (1) that money is a means to happiness, (2) that money brings security, and (3) that money can buy anything. Apart from doctrine resident in the soul, there can be only superficial and fleeting happiness in possessing money, or any other detail of life. Security is provided through logistical grace and the supergrace or ultra-supergrace life, not through the accumulation of wealth (Matt. 6:24-33). No amount of money can purchase salvation, peace, stability, or love. The principle of monetary reversionism is found in 1 Timothy 6:3-5. All forms of reversionism are characterized by the neglect or rejection of Bible doctrine. Paul therefore begins his discourse on monetary reversionism by stating the great fundamental issue of the spiritual life: Sound doctrine is the lifeblood of spiritual growth; false doctrine is the poison that stunts the growing process. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

James 4:14 Such a person (Subj. Nom.; reversionist) does not (neg. adv.) understand (ἐπίσταμαι, PMI2P, Gnostic, Deponent; due to lack of doctrine) what kind of (Nom. Spec.) life (Subj. Nom.) yours (Poss. Gen.; the victim) may be (ellipsis) tomorrow (Adv. Time). For (explanatory) you are (εἰμί, PAI2P, Descriptive) a vapor trail (Pred. Nom.; mist) which appears (φαίνω, PPPTc.NFS, Descriptive, Attributive; is visible) for a short time (Acc. Extent of Time) and (continuative) then (Adv. Time) disappears (ἀφανίζω, PPPTc.NFS, Descriptive, Attributive).

^{BGT} **James 4:14** οἵτινες οὐκ ἐπίστασθε τὸ τῆς αὔριου ποία ἡ ζωὴ ὑμῶν· ἀτμὶς γάρ ἐστε ἢ πρὸς ὀλίγον φαινομένη, ἔπειτα καὶ ἀφανιζομένη.

^{VUL} **James 4:14** qui ignoratis quid erit in crastinum quae enim est vita vestra vapor est ad modicum parens deinceps exterminatur

LWB **James 4:15** Instead [of focusing solely on making money], you [Christian businessmen] ought to say this: “If the Lord wills [divine guidance], we shall both live [residence] and do [function] this or that [according to supergrace principles].”

^{KW} **James 4:15** Instead of your saying, If the Lord so desires it, we shall both live and do this or that.

^{KJV} **James 4:15** For that ye *ought* to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Instead of focusing solely on making money as if there is no God, you ought to say this (Tendential Present tense): If the Lord wills (Potential Subjunctive mood), we shall both live and do this or that. “Living and doing” can also be expressed as “residing and functioning.” When expressed in this manner, it refers to being filled with the Spirit and applying doctrine to daily business life according to supergrace principles. The predictive future means in this case planning is legitimate, because God is included in the picture. This kind of planning acknowledges His sovereignty and omnipotence over the affairs of life. The 3rd class conditional clause acknowledges our dependence on His will, even though we don’t know what He has planned for us next. This is a corrective for an arrogant attitude.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

What James encourages is not the constant verbalization of the formula *If the Lord wills*, which can easily become a glib and meaningless repetition, but a sincere appreciation for God’s control of affairs and for His specific will for us. (T. Cargal) In place of being so proudly confident about their plans, they ought to recognize God’s sovereign control over their business operations and even over their lifespan. (Z. Hodges) He says that instead of ignoring God in our daily activities, we ought to place Him first ... In some circles and cultures, the cliché *the Lord willing* is rather common. It is a pious formula that because of its repeated usage begins to lose its intended significance ... The NT gives no indication that the apostles had coined a formula that was to be used frequently. Paul fails to employ this formula in places where we would have expected it. This means that we do not need to use the words *God willing* as a threadbare phrase. (S. Kistemaker)

The great matter is for every one really to permeate his business life with religion, and to live up to the measure of his spiritual knowledge. (C. Jerdan) The person using the expression honestly will have a respect for divine sovereignty and be willing to have something interrupt his or her plans and cheerfully make the most of it. It expresses an attitude of willingness to conform to the divine will, whatever it may be. Such a person indeed makes plans, but he or she does not worship those plans. Everything is contingent on God’s will. (W. Baker) James 4:13-16 does not address what is called “exhaustive divine sovereignty.” By that expression we refer to the belief that “God has decreed down to the very last detail the actual course this world will take” and that “all events are consequent and hence subservient to the will of God.” To address this issue we must turn elsewhere in the Bible. (T. Shreiner, Basinger)

Too many Christians look upon the will of God as bitter medicine they must take, instead of seeing it as the gracious evidence of the love of God ... The will of God is a living relationship between God and the believer ... The believer's relationship to the will of God is a growing experience ... God wants us to understand His will ... His will is made known in His Word ... We must become obedient to that will. (W. Wiersbe) James does not place the onus on the haves and their misconduct and inadequate practice. Instead the onus is on the have-nots for what is in their control – their inordinate desires, desires that have even overwhelmed the efficacy of their prayer lives by turning their prayer away from what *God wills* to what *they want*. (W. Brosend II) There is nothing in the merchant's world that transcends the marketplace; it is a kind of functional atheism that fails the test of faith. (R. Wall)

James 4:15 Instead (Prep. Gen.; of focusing solely on making money), you (Subj. Acc.) ought to say (λέγω, PAInf., Tential, Inf. As Subj. of Verb, Articular) this (Obj. Gen.): "If (protasis, 3rd class condition, "maybe He will, maybe He won't") the Lord (Subj. Nom.) wills (θέλω, AASubj.3S, Culminative, Potential; by divine guidance), we shall both (connective) live (ζάω, FAIP, Predictive; residence) and (continuative) do (ποιέω, FAIP, Predictive; function) this (Acc. Dir. Obj.) or (disjunctive) that (Acc. Dir. Obj.; according to SG principles)."

^{BGT} **James 4:15** ἀντὶ τοῦ λέγειν ὑμᾶς· ἐὰν ὁ κύριος θελήσῃ καὶ ζήσομεν καὶ ποιήσομεν τοῦτο ἢ ἐκεῖνο.

^{VUL} **James 4:15** pro eo ut dicatis si Dominus voluerit et vixerimus faciemus hoc aut illud

LWB James 4:16 But as things stand, you [reversionistic businessmen] keep on boasting in your arrogance. All this boasting is evil [wicked & degenerate].

^{KW} **James 4:16** But now you are glorying in your self-deceived and groundless trust in the stability of your life and possessions. All such glorying is pernicious.

^{KJV} **James 4:16** But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

In spite of James's advice, the reversionistic businessmen continue to boast (Iterative Present tense) in arrogance. They make their plans for the future and completely ignore the will of God in those plans. They brag to each other about their predicted profits as if there was no chance that such plans might fail; there were no contingencies in mind because they were sure of their capabilities. This is, of course, unacceptable behavior – as well as poor business practice. Even in non-Christian business practice, there should be a set of "what if" assumptions. All this boasting (Latin: exultation) is evil and degenerate (Latin: malignant), an expression of arrogant thinking.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

James's point is that the self-confident words he has just condemned were more than a lapse in the awareness of God's sovereignty. Rather, such pretentious plans were themselves a source of pride to those who announced them. (Z. Hodges) The voice of the braggart centers in self and is consummated in an absolute self-exaltation. (J. Adamson) Pulling ourselves up by our own bootstraps, or forcing others to elevate us so that we can be seen by all, does not always work to our ultimate advantage and eternal profit. (S. Zodiates) Here it implies confidence in one's cleverness, luck, strength, skill, etc., unfounded, in so far as the future result is not dependent on them, but not necessarily unfounded in regard to actual possession of these qualities. (J. Mayor) They act as though human skill and cleverness were omni-competent. (D. Hiebert)

Some of the businessmen had ventured out; they had taken risks and made a profit. As always happens, success breeds success and along with prosperity comes pride and self-sufficiency. These merchants relied on their own insights and now boasted about their accomplishments ... Human boasting is worthless, for it gives man and not God the glory. Such boasting includes bragging about accomplishments. This is not only unjustified but also totally unacceptable to God. It is evil. (S. Kistemaker) The arrogance here lies in deliberately claiming to be more than you are, the proud master of life and of time. (R. Ward) A life lived without a conscious submission to the sovereignty of God in everyday affairs is tantamount to "boasting in arrogance." (T. Schreiner)

James 4:16 But (contrast) as things stand (temporal), you keep on boasting (καυχάομαι, PMI2P, Iterative, Deponent) in your (Poss. Gen.) arrogance (Loc. Sph., Instr. Manner). All (Nom. Measure) this (Nom. Spec., correlative: "this kind of") boasting (Subj. Nom.; pretention) is (εἰμί, PAI3S, Descriptive) evil (Pred. Nom.; wicked, degenerate, worthless).

^{BGT} **James 4:16** νῦν δὲ καυχᾶσθε ἐν ταῖς ἀλαζονείαις ὑμῶν· πᾶσα καύχησις τοιαύτη ποιηρὰ ἐστίν.

^{VUL} **James 4:16** nunc autem exultatis in superbiis vestris omnis exultatio talis maligna est

LWB James 4:17 Therefore, to the one knows the honorable thing to do [daily intake, metabolization, and application of doctrine] but who does not do it [negative volition towards doctrine], to him it is missing the mark [complete failure in the spiritual life].

^{KW} **James 4:17** Therefore, to the person who knows how to be doing good and is not doing it, to him it is sin.

^{KJV} **James 4:17** Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth *it* not, to him it is sin.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

James utters one of the saddest remarks that a pastor or teacher will ever hear. There will be some Christians, like the reversionistic businessmen he has been addressing, who will know

what the honorable thing is to do (Intensive Perfect tense), but will refuse to do it (Result Participle). The honorable thing for all believers to do is to inculcate, metabolize and apply Bible doctrine to daily life – including business practices. This is the protocol plan of God for the Church Age believer. The reversionistic believer, however, refuses to abide by this divine plan; he exhibits negative volition towards doctrine even though he is a Christian. This failure to execute the plan of God is missing the mark; it is a sin against the experiential sanctification process provided to us by the Father. It grieves and quenches the Holy Spirit. It shames our Lord Jesus Christ. In the past few verses, arrogant thinking leads to arrogant speech which leads to arrogant behavior.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Sin is a state of delusion and deception. It is not merely a deed. There can be no act apart from principle, and sin is the source from which the act proceeds. Sin is a quality of being. There is no sin separated from a sinner, and there is no act apart from an actor. The fact that man sins verifies that he is a sinner. One who knows what he should do and does not do it reveals that he is a sinner. In that case, the act of sin is not involved; his disobedient heart proves he sinned. Although his sin is not manifested, it comes from the source or principle of his being. (W. Best) If we continue to shut God out of our plans, we commit sin. Responsibility accompanies knowledge. When we commit sin unwittingly, it is wrong; but when we commit sin willfully and knowingly, we are open for a more severe chastisement. (L. Strauss)

James repeats two important motifs, “knowing” and “doing.” The relationship between the two is introduced in the book’s opening statement, where “knowing” wisdom is the *precondition* for “doing” it (1:19). At the center of every mess of congregational life is the believer who “knows” what to do but then does not “do” it. Both are required ... Although James does not define what “the good thing” is that the congregation must do, the reader should presume that it is what conforms to God’s will, the “Word of truth,” wisdom. (R. Wall) Their circumstances reveal that as believers they are not dealing effectively with the conflicting tendencies of their inner nature ... In yielding to the self-centered demands of their old nature, they are allowing self to act as the governing force in their aspirations and activities. Acting in disregard of God’s sovereign claims upon their lives, they are motivated by the spirit of worldliness. (D. Hiebert)

James 4:17 **Therefore** (inferential), **to the one who knows** (οἶδα, Perf.APtC.DMS, Intensive, Substantival) **the honorable thing** (Acc. Dir. Obj.) **to do** (ποιέω, PAInf., Gnostic, Inf. As Dir. Obj. of Verb; daily doctrinal inculcation leading to supergrace status) **but** (adversative) **who does not** (neg. particle) **do it** (PAPtC.DMS, Iterative, Result; negative volition towards doctrine), **to him** (Dat. Disadv.) **it is** (εἰμί, PAI3S, Descriptive) **missing the mark** (Pred. Nom.; sin).

^{BGT} **James 4:17** εἰδóτι οὖν καλὸν ποιεῖν καὶ μὴ ποιῶντι, ἁμαρτία αὐτῷ ἐστίν.

^{VUL} **James 4:17** scienti igitur bonum facere et non facienti peccatum est illi

Chapter 5

LWB **James 5:1** Come on now, you rich men, burst into weeping and scream over your miseries [divine discipline] which are coming upon you [if you continue in monetary reversionism].

^{KW} **James 5:1** Come now, O rich men, burst into audible weeping, wailing, and crying aloud, because of your miseries which are coming upon you.

^{KJV} **James 5:1** Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

James uses the Greek word “ago” as a command to the rich reversionistic believers (Imperative mood) to get in line for the heavy dose of divine discipline they are about to receive for monetary reversionism (Gnomic Present tense). They have ignored the Word of God; they have left Him out of their business plans. They have been taking unfair advantage of fellow believers in other communities in order to get rich quick. They have perhaps had some initial success in their endeavors, maybe as a means to teach some naïve believer to be more discerning in his financial matters in the future. But God is not going to allow these misguided believers to succeed in getting rich by dishonest means. James commands them to start weeping (Ingressive Aorist tense) and screaming (Dramatic Present tense) over the troubles that are about to unfold upon them. They have ignored God long enough and trusted in their money as security for the last time; it’s payback time. There’s nothing wrong with having money, but how you get it and use it is an important responsibility.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

These rich people whom James is addressing seem to have made their money in crooked and deceitful ways, and almost invariably have oppressed the poor and taken advantage of the Christians of their day ... James does not criticize the rich simply because they are rich. It all depends on how they are acquired and how they are spent. (S. Zodhiates) The implied audience of James is the “poor but wanna be rich” Christians, whose foolishness fails to recognize the anti-God motives and anti-human results of their materialistic zeal. (R. Wall) The American Dream used to include God; now it is based on arrogant presumption, greed, class struggle and violence. (LWB) The implication is that the “rich” are much too interested in controlling their own worlds to be “rich” in faith toward a transcendent God ... The prophetic condemnation of the rich, whose wealth derives from unfair business practice, indicates the close connection between social practice and spiritual devotion ... The rich “weep and wail” not because they fail to receive the promised blessing of God but because their life’s work does not endure. In itself, this is reason for God’s harsh verdict: they wail not over the loss of human life (including their own), but over the loss of “things.” (R. Wall) Riches are a

blessing of the Lord, as Solomon testifies: “The blessing of the Lord brings wealth, and he adds no trouble to it” (Prov. 10:22). But when wealth is devoid of the Lord’s blessing, trouble accompanies it in the form of envy, injustice, oppression, theft, murder, abuse, and misuse. (S. Kistemaker)

At present, with the courts as they are, a governor takes enough for himself, and his protectors, and his counsel, and the president of the court, and the judges! In other words, there is no end to it. A greedy man’s lust for gain they could satisfy, but they cannot afford a guilty man’s acquittal ... People believe that strictness and good faith are not to be found in our courts – indeed, that the courts themselves no longer have any reality ... When Gaius Verres was in Sicily, a number of people heard him saying this sort of thing on occasion: “I have a powerful friend. Whatever I steal from the province, I am sure he will protect me. My intention is not just to make money for myself; I have mapped out the three years of my Sicilian governorship like this. I shall consider myself to be doing nicely if I can earmark one year’s profits for my own use, the second year’s for my protectors and counsel, and the whole of the third year’s – the richest and most lucrative – for the judges who try me!” (Cicero, *Against Verres*) The destruction of Jerusalem was in the near future, for in A.D. 70 Titus the Roman came and destroyed Jerusalem as it had never been destroyed before. He plowed it under. He hated Christians and he hated Jews, and they both were in that city. Believe me, when he got through, there were no rich Jews left. They had either been killed or had been put in slavery, and all the riches had been destroyed or lost or confiscated. (J. McGee) In the NT, condemnations of wealthy people are almost always attributed to a *misuse* of wealth. Certainly James’s enumeration of the sins of the rich people that he condemns shows that this is the case here. It is particularly obvious that James does not intend to pronounce judgment on all rich people. (D. Moo)

A cursory reading of these first six verses might give the impression that James is teaching a socialistic doctrine of “soak the rich” or “let’s divide the wealth.” But on the contrary, a careful reading of these verses reveals that James is not teaching any such thing. He was instructing believers as to their attitude and action in a world that was going to the bow-wows, a world filled with injustice, where freedom was only a dream. The Roman world of James’s day was not like the modern world in which we live. The lifestyles were entirely different. There was no middle class in the days of James. There were the very rich - the filthy rich, and the very poor - the filthy poor. The majority of Christians of that day come from the very poor and slave classes ... As we approach this passage of Scripture, we should understand that James is not condemning riches. Riches in themselves are not immoral; they are not moral, either. The Bible actually does not condemn money. A great many people have the viewpoint that there is something dirty about money; they call it “filthy lucre.” Scripture doesn’t say that. What Scripture does say is that “the love of money is the root of all evil” (1 Tim. 6:10). The problem is not in the coin; the problem is in the hearts of men and women. It is the *love* of money that is the root of all evil. James was not condemning people just because they were rich but because of their wrong relationship to their riches. He was concerned with how they got their money and what they were doing with it after they got it. (J. McGee) According to the logic of envy, they had identified their *being* with their *having* and thus had been willing to do anything to get more wealth, including fraud, violence, and murder. (L. Johnson)

James 5:1 Come on (ἄγω, PAImp.2P, Static, Command; exclamatory interjection) now (temporal adv.), you (Nom. Spec.) rich men (Subj. Nom.; monetary reversionists), burst into weeping (κλαίω,

AAImp.2P, Ingressive, Command; wailing) **and scream over** (ὀλολύζω, PAPTc.NMP, Dramatic, Circumstantial) **your** (Poss. Gen.) **miseries** (Dat. Disadv.; divine discipline, troubles, distresses) **which** (Dat. Ref.) **are coming upon you** (ἐπέρχομαι, PMPTc.DFP, Gnomic & Futuristic, Attributive, Deponent; if you continue to choose reversionism).

^{BGT} **James 5:1** Ἄγε νῦν οἱ πλούσιοι, κλαύσατε ὀλολύζοντες ἐπὶ ταῖς ταλαιπωρίαις ὑμῶν ταῖς ἐπερχομένας.

^{VUL} **James 5:1** age nunc divites plorate ululantes in miseriis quae advenient vobis

LWB James 5:2 Your wealth [riches obtained in monetary reversionism] has rotted away [along with your soul] and your clothes have become moth-eaten [loss of capacity for life].

^{KW} **James 5:2** Your wealth has rotted away and your garments have become moth-eaten.

^{KJV} **James 5:2** Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Wealth obtained in monetary reversionism will not last. In the case of these hucksters, Christian con men, the riches they have been accumulating are rotting away (Latin: putrifying) at the same rate that their souls are rotting away. The dramatic perfect points to the rotting away of their souls in reversionism along with the rotting away of their money because of the rotten way they obtained it. James chose a particularly ironic verb and tense to paint this picture. Not only will their accumulated wealth rot away, but the very clothes on their backs will become moth-eaten (Dramatic Perfect tense). They are even losing their capacity for the most basic things in life, as represented by the clothes stored in their closet. What they obtained without God's blessing will eventually fail them; in fact, it is already starting to happen as James is writing this warning to them.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

It is not God who has turned His back on the rich, but the rich who have turned their backs on God ... Wealth can be good or evil ... It is a mistake to despise the rich simply because they are rich, and to praise the poor simply because they are poor. (S. Zodiates) You, who, far from being a slave, are an autocratic ruler: you, who employed the treasure in the Temple of Ops to wipe off your gigantic debts, who after manipulating these same account books squandered countless sums, who transferred enormous possessions from Caesar's house to your own. What an immensely profitable output of fake memoranda and forged handwritings your home produces! The place is a forger's workshop, a black market: whole properties and cities, mass exemptions from tribute and taxation are the wares of its truly scandalous trade. Nothing short of Caesar's death could have rescued you from your debtor's ruin. (Cicero, *Second Philippic Against Anthony*) In Revelation 3:17 Christ condemns those whose riches have made them spiritually numb, unable to allow the future judgment of God to impinge and determine their present spiritual course. (R. Wall)

James 5:2 Your (Poss. Gen.) wealth (Subj. Nom.; riches from monetary reversionism) has rotted away (σήπω, Perf.AI3S, Dramatic; rotting of the soul while accumulating money) and (continuative) your (Poss. Gen.) clothes (Subj. Nom.) have become (γίνομαι, Perf.AI3S, Dramatic, Deponent) moth-eaten (Pred. Nom.; loss of capacity for life);

^{BGT} **James 5:2** ὁ πλοῦτος ὑμῶν σέσηπεν καὶ τὰ ἱμάτια ὑμῶν σητόβρωτα γέγονεν,

^{VUL} **James 5:2** divitiae vestrae putrefactae sunt et vestimenta vestra a tineis comesta sunt

LWB James 5:3 Your gold and silver [material possessions] will become tarnished and the venom of your soul [scar tissue] shall be your evidence [of reversionism] and shall devour the pieces of your flesh [worldly possessions] like fire [sin unto death]. You have accumulated treasure [in the energy of the flesh] for the last time [sin unto physical death].

^{KW} **James 5:3** Your gold and your silver have become completely tarnished and corroded, and their rust shall be for a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh like fire. You stored up treasure in the last days.

^{KJV} **James 5:3** Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

I'm not a metallurgist, but from what I understand gold and silver do not rust, but they do become tarnished. But the metaphors here are mixed and should not be strictly followed or tortured for unwarranted meanings. Gold and silver represent the wealth of reversionistic rich men. In this case, James predicts their wealth will become tarnished (Futuristic Perfect tense). This metallic metaphor represents wrong priorities in life, placing material possessions over the spiritual life. James then immediately equates the pursuit of wrong priorities with an accompanying poison in the soul. Scar tissue of the soul will be the evidence (Predictive Future tense) of their reversionism. Scar tissue of the soul is a testimony to reversionistic activity. This same poison or scar tissue of the soul will also devour (Predictive Future tense) pieces of their flesh like fire.

The plural of “sarx” would be translated “fleshes” if we had such a word, but since we don’t “pieces of flesh” will have to do. These “pieces of flesh” represent material possessions. There is a double meaning here: the reversionistic believer who is dying the sin unto death is compared to his material possessions being burned-up by fire. James also tells reversionistic rich men that they have stored up material possessions in the energy of the flesh (Culminative Aorist tense) for the last time. This is yet a second reference to the approach of the sin unto death. If they don’t change the direction and priorities of their live quickly, God is going to discipline them until they die a miserable death. Saving for future retirement is not “accumulating treasure” in a dishonest or selfish way. Planning for future retirement is commanded in other Bible passages; the believer who doesn’t do so is “worse than an infidel.”

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Millionaires who laugh are rare. My experience is that wealth is apt to take the smiles away. We are not for one moment precluding the possibility of being rich and happy. (S. Zodiates) The matter at stake was nothing less that your itch to plunge the whole country into anarchy and desolation for personal gain. The pleas of the nation's leaders, the warnings of your elders, a crowded Senate, none of them sufficed to deter you from this measure you had been bribed and bought into proposing ... He has been our Helen of Troy! He has brought upon our country war, and pestilence, and annihilation. (Cicero, *Second Philippic Against Anthony*) James takes the wealthy Christian to task for failing to handle his riches properly. (W. Baker) This should serve as a word of warning to the rich man, to great corporations and labor unions, and also to great church organizations. God will judge the way men make their money and the way they spend it. (J. McGee)

James 5:3 Your (Poss. Gen.) gold (Subj. Nom.) and (connective) silver (Subj. Nom.) will become tarnished (κατιόω, Perf.PI3S, Futuristic; scar tissue of the soul) and (continuative) the venom (Subj. Nom.; poison) of your soul (Poss. Gen.; intensive: of self) shall be (είμι, FMI3S, Predictive) your (Poss. Gen.) evidence (Pred. Nom.; of reversionism) and (continuative; the venom) shall devour (έσθίω, FMI3S, Predictive) the pieces of your flesh (Acc. Dir. Obj.; plural: worldly possessions) like (comparative) fire (Acc. Gen. Ref.; burned up: the sin unto death). You have accumulated treasure (θησαυρίζω, AAI2P, Culminative; gathered, stored up by the energy of your flesh) for the last (Dat. Spec.) time (Loc. Time; you will die the sin unto death).

^{BGT} **James 5:3** ὁ χρυσὸς ὑμῶν καὶ ὁ ἄργυρος κατίωται καὶ ὁ ἰδὸς αὐτῶν εἰς μαρτύριον ὑμῖν ἔσται καὶ φάγεται τὰς σάρκας ὑμῶν ὡς πῦρ. ἐθησαυρίσατε ἐν ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις.

^{VUL} **James 5:3** aurum et argentum vestrum eruginavit et erugo eorum in testimonium vobis erit et manducabit carnes vestras sicut ignis thesaurizastis in novissimis diebus

LWB **James 5:4** Behold, the wages of the workers who harvested your fields which have been stolen by you [fraud, deprivation] continue to scream out [for justice]. Moreover, the shouts of those who had completed the harvest have entered into the ears of the Lord of the Armies [Jesus Christ will eventually avenge them].

^{KW} **James 5:4** Behold, the pay of the laborers who mowed your fields which has been withheld by you cries out. And the cries of those who reaped have entered the ears of the Lord of hosts.

^{KJV} **James 5:4** Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Some of these reversionistic businessmen were cheating the harvesters (Dramatic Perfect tense) they had hired to work their land. These rich landowners worked them long hours and then refused to pay them the previously agreed upon wages when the job was done. The wages of these unpaid harvesters were crying and screaming to be paid (Durative Present tense). This is an anthropomorphism, since wages do not really scream or cry. The idea James is communicating is that these workers have been cheated and their families need the food, clothing and money desperately. They are crying out to God in heaven to receive their fair pay. I also extend the idea of paying fair wages to include paying all other debts you have entered into, including such modern financial instruments as credit cards, second mortgages, and car payments. The money you borrowed may have come from a bank, but a bank is made up of many citizens who loan their money for a financial return on investment (ROI). The sin committed by the rich is not having money, but oppressing and abusing their employees in order to get even richer. The shouts of the workers who had completed the harvest (Culminative Aorist tense) have entered the ears of the Lord of the Armies. Jesus Christ is the Lord of the Armies. "Ears" is an anthropomorphism when attributed to the Lord while He is in heaven; if He was walking in the flesh on earth in His humanity they would not be an anthropomorphism. The idea is that the Lord hears their shouts and His angelic army will avenge those who have been wronged.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Justice will thus overtake unscrupulous wealthy men of this sinful world. (Z. Hodges) The consummation of the rich in 5:1-6 includes some farmers who do not promptly and punctually pay the wages of men who have been working for them in the fields. (J. Adamson) The metaphor of war and battle is applied to futile competition between rivals in greed, competing with one another ... of worldly success by the rich in their exploitation, and even judicial murder, of the underdog. (J. Adamson) There seems always to have been an employer and an employee. There must have been an original capitalist who put his capital to work for him, and in order to do that he had to hire servants or laborers ... The employer should not forget that the employee is entitled to a decent wage, and the employee should recognize the right of the employer to make a reasonable profit. The one should not steal from the other. (S. Zodiates) Instead of the joy of the harvest season, these laborers had to cope with anger because of broken promises, delays, and the prospect of not being paid at all. They cried out against the rich and demanded justice. (S. Kistemaker)

By entertainments, public works, food distributions, and banquets, he seduced the ignorant populace; his friends he bound to his allegiance by rewarding them, his enemies by what looked like mercy. By a mixture of intimidation and indulgence, he inculcated in a free community the habit of servitude. (Cicero, *Second Philippic Against Anthony*) The remarkable hostility of James toward the rich in this passage helps to envisage their hostility toward the working-class poor whom they mistreat in order to maximize their own profit margin ... Fraud and violence are blithely used to secure greater wealth and more creature comforts, as though the rich were not accountable to anyone or anything in their worlds. (R. Wall) Cultivated fields that yielded crops belonged to prosperous landowners. Some of them had appointed managers while they themselves lived elsewhere. They hired extra farm laborers to cut the standing grain, bundle it, and to collect the sheaves into shocks. These workers were needed so that the ripened grain did not spoil because of bad weather or other

reasons. (S. Kistemaker) The title *Lord of hosts* pictures God as the almighty, powerful leader of a great army. (D. Moo)

James 5:4 Behold (interjection), the wages (Subj. Nom.) of the workers (Poss. Gen.) who have harvested (ἀμάρω, AAPtc.GMP, Culminative, Substantival, Articular) your (Poss. Gen.) fields (Acc. Dir. Obj.) which have been stolen (ἀποστερέω, Perf.PPtc.NMS, Dramatic, Attributive, Articular; deprived, robbed) by you (Gen. Agency) continue to scream out (κράζω, PAI3S, Durative). Moreover (adjunctive), the shouts (Subj. Nom.) of those (Adv. Gen. Ref.) who had completed the harvest (θερίζω, AAPtc.GMP, Culminative, Substantival, Articular) have entered (εἰσέρχομαι, Perf.AI3P, Dramatic, Deponent) into the ears (Prep. Acc.; anthropomorphism) of the Lord (Poss. Gen.; Jesus Christ) of the Armies (Gen. Spec.).

^{BGT} **James 5:4** ἰδοὺ ὁ μισθὸς τῶν ἐργατῶν τῶν ἀμησάντων τὰς χώρας ὑμῶν ὁ ἀπεστερημένος ἀφ' ὑμῶν κράζει, καὶ αἱ βοαὶ τῶν θερισάντων εἰς τὰ ὦτα κυρίου σαβαὼθ εἰσεληλύθασιν.

^{VUL} **James 5:4** ecce merces operariorum qui messuerunt regiones vestras qui fraudatus est a vobis clamat et clamor ipsorum in aures Domini Sabaoth introiit

LWB James 5:5 You have lived in luxury and self-indulgence on the earth and you have lived the life of a sensual voluptuary. You have fattened the mentality of your soul for a day of slaughter.

^{KW} **James 5:5** You spent a luxurious life upon the earth and lived voluptuously. You fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter.

^{KJV} **James 5:5** Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

James continues to address the monetary reversionists among his readers. They have been living in the lap of luxury on the earth (Constative Aorist tense). They were carousing, reveling, partying their brains out. They were living the voluptuous life of a sensualist (Constative Aorist tense). Anything they wanted in a whim, they obtained it. But the problem wasn't their money or material possessions. There's nothing inherently wrong with wealth. The problem was, they ignored their spiritual life; they had flunked the prosperity test. When success came to them, they changed their lifestyle; the Word of God was pushed aside for other priorities. While they were fattening themselves physically with the luxuries of life, the mentality of their soul was being fattened for a day of eventual slaughter. Their wealth will not go with them to heaven and it will not help them at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The thought here is not of specific cases but of a general social evil of the time among Jews, viz., oppression of the poor and weak, by judicial process and otherwise. It is an evil from which our modern world can scarcely claim to be free. (J. Adamson) This is an indication that the rich whom James has in mind spent their money in sumptuous living like the rich man in Luke 16. The word really means “indulging in the delicacies and delights pertaining to the senses.” (S. Zodiates) The image of a “fattened heart” is of a spiritual arteriosclerosis, whose arteries are hardened beyond repair. (R. Wall) Actors and actresses grabbed everything they wanted. The place was packed with gamblers, crammed with inebriates. For days on end, in many parts of the house, the orgies of drinking went on and on. Gaming losses piled up; Anthony’s good luck did not always hold ... In his home, every dining-room is a taproom, every bedroom a brothel. (Cicero, *Second Philippic Against Anthony*) The sarcastic illustration was vivid for Jewish believers who had seen many fattened sheep and oxen meet their fates in sacrifice. (R. Jamieson)

The present passage is not rendered in the idiom of an anti-money polemic, where God’s judgment roasts the rich and toasts their riches as parts of an inherently evil material order. Rather, the rich are judged by God because of their arrogance and hostile actions toward the poor, whom God has chosen to be heirs of the coming kingdom. (R. Wall) The money taken from the poverty-stricken laborers is spent on extravagances ... They are able to afford all the bodily comforts they desire and literally squander their resources on wasteful living ... As cattle being fattened for the day of slaughter, so the rich are indulging themselves in luxury and licentiousness and are unaware of the impending day of judgment. Yet their doom is certain and their destruction swift. (S. Kistemaker) The sin lay in the wealthy living luxuriously while those for whom they were responsible went without ... Pleasure had become an occupation, not merely a diversion. (W. Baker) Job often showed some lack of patience with his “comforters,” but he did display a wonderful perseverance in his faith in God. (R. Earle)

James 5:5 You have lived in luxury and self-indulgence (τροφάω, AAI2P, Constative; revel, carouse) on the earth (Gen. Place) and (continuative) you have lived the life of a sensual voluptuary (σπαταλάω, AAI2P, Constative; wanton luxury). You have fattened (τρέφω, AAI2P, Constative; nourished) the mentality of your (Poss. Gen.) soul (Acc. Dir. Obj.; right lobes) for a day (Loc. Time) of slaughter (Gen. Disadv.).

^{BGT} **James 5:5** ἐτρυφήσατε ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς καὶ ἐσπαταλήσατε, ἐθρέψατε τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν ἐν ἡμέρᾳ σφαγῆς,

^{VUL} **James 5:5** epulati estis super terram et in luxuriis enutristis corda vestra in die occisionis

LWB James 5:6 You have condemned the innocent [in court]; you have murdered the just [honest believer]. He [God] does not oppose you [because you are destroying yourself].

^{KW} **James 5:6** You condemned, you murdered the just and upright person, and he does not resist you.

^{KJV} **James 5:6** Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Some of the rich reversionists James was writing to had condemned innocent believers in court (Dramatic Aorist tense) in order to steal their property. Some of them went so far as to murder an honest believer (Dramatic Aorist tense) for the purpose of taking over his estate or removing him from the political scene. There was nothing these men wouldn't do to obtain more money. The hardest thing for the just believer to accept was that God did not oppose (Latin: resist) these rich men. He let them continue thieving and murdering, but while they were getting away with these activities before men, they were in effect destroying themselves on the inside. In other words, God didn't need to step in and discipline them because they were doing a good job of creating their own self-induced misery.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

We have advanced a great deal in our technical civilization, but we have not made any progress in correcting the ruthlessness of wickedness ... Not only did they withhold the salaries of their workers and oppress them, but, when they saw that it was necessary to do away with them, they set up puppet courts to pronounce judgment upon them ... Their guilt was predetermined and the sentence was foreknown ... These wicked men did not merely condemn the just; they proceeded to execute the decisions of the puppet court. Kill them and with them kill the possibility of their protest. A potential enemy may one day become an actual enemy. (S. Zodiates) Since the time when the tribunes' powers were legally restored only one Senator has been found guilty; he was a man of negligible resources. (Cicero, *Against Verres*) Such a standpoint is the parent of assassinations, poisonings, forged wills, thefts, malversations of public money, and the ruinous exploitation of provincials and Roman citizens alike. (Cicero, *On Duties*) *Condemn* is a judicial term, and suggests rather that the rich are using, and perhaps perverting, the legal processes available to them to accumulate property and to gain wealth. (D. Moo)

I don't mean to be a pessimist, my friend, but you simply cannot look to mankind, to men who are grasping for power and money, and expect them to act righteously. It does not matter what they promise. Our only hope is in Jesus Christ. (J. McGee) The only way to get ahead was not to work hard but to work the system. In pre-industrial societies, profit and gain normally refer to something that accrues to a person by fraud or extortion, that is, something other than wages, customary rent, reciprocal lending, or direct sale from producer to consumer. (W. Brosend II) James had made it very clear what kind of world we live in. It's a big, bad world with a dog-eat-dog philosophy. Those who are climbing up the ladder of riches are stepping on the fingers of others as they go up. Should Christians join some organization and go all out for good government? Certainly we ought to be interested in trying to elect the best men. However, we cannot change this world, my friend. What, then, *can* we do? Listen to God; He is speaking now to His own children. (J. McGee)

James 5:6 You have condemned the innocent (καταδικάζω, AAI2P, Dramatic; in court); you have murdered (φονεύω, AAI2P, Dramatic) the just (Acc. Dir. Obj.; honest believer, model citizen). He

(God) does not (neg. adv.) oppose (ἀντιτάσσω, PMI3S, Static) you (Dat. Ind. Obj.; because you are destroying yourself).

^{BGT} **James 5:6** κατεδικάσατε, ἐφονεύσατε τὸν δίκαιον, οὐκ ἀντιτάσσεται ὑμῖν.

^{VUL} **James 5:6** addixistis occidistis iustum non resistit vobis

LWB **James 5:7** Therefore, brethren [abused members of the royal family], persevere [continually apply doctrine] until the coming of the Lord [at the rapture]. Behold, the farmer waits with expectation [in spiritual self-esteem] for the valuable fruit of the land [grace blessings], constantly persevering over it [applying doctrine] until he has received the early rain [spiritual autonomy] and the latter rain [spiritual maturity].

^{KW} **James 5:7** Be long-suffering, patiently enduring the mistreatment of others, restraining your soul from the passion of anger, therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Consider this. The farmer waits with expectation for the precious produce of the earth, patiently waiting, long and hoping over it, until [that time in which] it [the earth] may receive and early and a late rain.

^{KJV} **James 5:7** Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

James transitions from chewing-out his readers who are in monetary reversionism to those who have been abused by these reversionists. He commands the members of the royal family that have been abused (Imperative mood) to persevere until the Lord returns at the rapture (parousia) of the Church. “Persevering” means consistently applying Bible doctrine to daily life. Believers should not stop learning, metabolizing and applying doctrine until the rapture or physical death, whichever comes first. He then uses an agricultural metaphor to portray various stages in the spiritual life. There is more to this scenario than a farmer cultivating his land and waiting patiently for the spring and summer rains. The farmer is a positive believer. He waits with expectation in the stage of spiritual self-esteem (Durative Present tense) for the valuable fruit of the land. Fruit represents grace blessings. The land is the spiritual life. This farmer continues to persevere in the land, waiting for the early rain and the latter rain. This means he continues to make progress in the spiritual life, eventually attaining the status of spiritual autonomy and finally spiritual maturity. In other words, these agricultural terms represent an experiential sanctification timeline. Maybe this will make the parallels more apparent:

Persevere = apply doctrine

Until the coming of the Lord = at the rapture of the Church

Wait with expectation = in the status of spiritual self-esteem

For valuable fruit = grace blessings

Of the land = spiritual life

Constantly persevering = applying more doctrine

Until the early rain = the status of spiritual autonomy
Until the latter rain = the status of spiritual maturity

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Countries to the south and east of Israel, or even Syria to the north, do not experience the recurring cycle of autumn and spring rains peculiar to Israel. (S. Kistemaker) There is very little the farmer himself can do in determining the exact fullness of time for the yielding of the fruit. That is in the hands of the earth and of the God of the earth. The only thing the farmer can do is patiently wait and look forward. And that is exactly what we should do, not knowing the hour or the day of His appearing. (S. Zodiates) The passivity of the abused poor, when they “do not resist” the rich, may recall either a renewed sense of their political powerlessness because they are unable to afford legal counsel or their innocence. Their legal “execution” by the court system only intensifies the outrage of God at the injustice of this workplace in which the rich farmer withholds wages from the working-class poor. (R. Wall) James seems to be clearly writing about the rapture of the Church when he says, “The Judge is standing right at the door.” (W. Baker)

Parousia was used in the east as a technical expression for the royal visit of a king or emperor ... The Christians of the first century felt the parallelism between the *parousia* of the reigning emperor and the *parousia* of Christ. In the case of the rapture, it will be the royal visit of the Bridegroom into the atmosphere of this earth to receive His bride the Church to Himself and to take her with Him to heaven ... Note again if you will the parallelism which exists. As the royal visit of a Roman emperor was marked by elaborate and brilliant festivities, so our blessed Lord’s *parousia*, both when He comes *for* His bride, and when He comes to the earth *with* His bride to reign as King of kings, will be accompanied by a heavenly splendor that will far outshine the displays of earthly sovereigns. As the *parousia* of a Roman emperor brought in a new era, so the first advent of our Lord ushered in a new era, both dispensationally, and for the world at large ... Such was the imperialism of Christianity in the first century that it clearly saw the parallel between the *parousia* of an earthly sovereign and the *parousia* of the Lord Jesus, and at the same time, the rival claims of each. (K. Wuest)

Patience is a virtue possessed by few and sought by many. We are living in a society that champions the word *instant*. Patience is the art of enduring someone whose conduct is incompatible with that of others and sometimes even oppressive. A patient man calms a quarrel, for he controls his anger and does not seek revenge. (S. Kistemaker) From a dispensational standpoint, the word is somewhat vague, except for the fact that the other two words for Christ’s second advent, *epiphaneia* (“appearing”) and *apocalupsis* (“revelation”), lend themselves by virtue of their intrinsic meaning to the aspect of the return of Christ to earth to establish His millennial kingdom. *Parousia* is used of both the assembling of the living and dead believers before the Tribulation period as well as the triumphant return to earth following the Tribulation period ... I hereby propose this “coming” of the Lord as the pretribulational rapture and resurrection of the Church ... Biblical imminency means that the coming of Christ to translate living believers and resurrect dead believers could have been and still could be possible at any moment. (W. Baker)

The early and late rains are the rains of autumn and spring. The first germinates the seed; the second matures it. Some of the best MSS omit “rain” and it has been thought that “fruit” should be repeated. (T. Carson) The pious believer recognizes that the spiritual harvest that we anticipate also is dependent upon the intervention of God in human affairs. (D. Hiebert) The idea is to set the timer of one’s temper for a long run. Think long. Focus on the final lap in the race of life. Have a long fuse. Look ahead to the Lord’s coming. (R. Jamieson) In other words, when the farmer plants his grain, he doesn’t go out the next morning to see if it is time to harvest it. James says, “Be patient. The harvest is coming.” I teach the Word of God, and there is nothing in the world I can do but simply give it out. I’m just sowing seed. Some falls on good ground. Maybe not too much of it, but some falls on good ground. Hallelujah for that! (J. McGee) It does not call for passive resignation to one’s fate, but an attitude of self-restraint that enables one to refrain from hasty retaliation in the face of provocation. (D. Hiebert)

James 5:7 Therefore (inferential), brethren (Voc. Address; abused members of the royal family), persevere (μακροθυμέω, AAImp.2P, Constative, Command; doctrine in the launching pad) until (temporal) the coming (Adv. Gen. Time) of the Lord (Adv. Gen. Ref.; at the rapture). Behold (interjection), the farmer (Subj. Nom.; capitalist) waits with expectation (ἐκδέχομαι, PMI3S, Durative, Deponent) for the valuable (Compl. Acc.) fruit (Acc. Dir. Obj.; production) of the land (Abl. Source; capital gains from doctrine spent in supergrace life), constantly persevering (μακροθυμέω, PAPtc.NMS, Iterative, Circumstantial; applying doctrine) over it (Dat. Ind. Obj.; the land or the D.D.) until (temporal) he has received (λαμβάνω, AASubj.3S, Dramatic, Potential) the early rain (Acc. Dir. Obj.; building the ECS) and (connective) the latter rain (Acc. Dir. Obj.; the supergrace life).

^{BGT} **James 5:7** Μακροθυμήσατε οὖν, ἀδελφοί, ἕως τῆς παρουσίας τοῦ κυρίου. ἰδοὺ ὁ γεωργὸς ἐκδέχεται τὸν τίμιον καρπὸν τῆς γῆς μακροθυμῶν ἐπ’ αὐτῷ ἕως λάβῃ πρόϊμον καὶ ὄψιμον.

^{VUL} **James 5:7** patientes igitur estote fratres usque ad adventum Domini ecce agricola expectat pretiosum fructum terrae patienter ferens donec accipiat temporivum et serotinum

LWB James 5:8 Persevere [through testing by the application of doctrine] and stabilize the mentality of your soul [by building an edification complex], because the return of the Lord [at the rapture] is near.

^{KW} **James 5:8** As for you, you also be long-suffering, patiently enduring the mistreatment of others, restraining your soul from the passion of anger. Stabilize your hearts, because the coming of the Lord has drawn near and is imminent.

^{KJV} **James 5:8** Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

James commands his readers to persevere and to stabilize the mentality of their soul (Imperative mood). In spiritual terms, perseverance is the daily application of doctrine in both good times and bad. Stabilizing the mentality of the soul is done simultaneously by building an edification complex in the soul, a complete systematic theology ready on the mental launching pad for application in daily life. He commands perseverance before stabilization first. Why is that? He wants them to pass the trial or test they are enduring with whatever doctrinal resources they currently have in their soul, and then begin studying again to make sure they are ready for the next pressure test. Why is James sounding so urgent here? He wants them to “get cracking” (Ingressive Aorist tense) because the return of the Lord (parousia) at the rapture of the Church is approaching (Gnomic Perfect tense).

Now on the surface this sounds kinda strange. If you knew the Lord was returning next week, would the first thing on your mind be “I need to study the Word of God and stabilize my soul” in preparation for His arrival? Most people would be out spending the last of their savings on great meals at the fanciest restaurants in town. Some of you would take that vacation you had always planned, but postponed for one reason or another. Maybe some of you would try witnessing to that friend or family member one last time before it’s too late. But James is thinking of the Judgment Seat of Christ that follows His return, and he wants his readers to receive an excellent evaluation with maximum rewards and decorations. So he focuses on the most important thing that will be assessed by the Lord on that day: the content of their soul. Is it full of doctrine or full of garbage?

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The highest good, of necessity homogeneous, cannot be a composite mixture of contradictory qualities. (Cicero, *On Duties*) The deeper logic of James’s message is that wisdom, if presently practiced, forms the eschatological community that will triumph with the Lord at His *parousia*. In this sense, James’s interpretation of biblical wisdom comports well with the larger Jewish world, which had come to recognize that wisdom’s goal was to direct Israel’s future entrance into the Lord God’s promised *shalom*. (R. Wall) Throughout the Church Age the doctrine of the imminence of the rapture holds true. This means the resurrection of the Church is the next prophetic event, but the time is simply not announced. The rapture could have occurred in Paul’s day or yesterday or may take place a thousand years from now. Speculation by Christians has no biblical foundation and only hinders spiritual momentum. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) It is an undated event; each generation of believers is thus given the opportunity to live in the hope of His return. (D. Hiebert)

James 5:8 **Persevere** (μακροθυμέω, AAImp.2P, Ingressive, Command; by the daily application of doctrine) **and** (connective) **stabilize** (στηρίζω, AAImp.2P, Ingressive, Command) **the mentality of your** (Poss. Gne.) **soul** (Acc. Dir. Obj.; right lobe, building an edification complex), **because** (explanatory) **the return** (Subj. Nom.) **of the Lord** (Subj. Gen.; at the rapture) **is near** (ἐγγίζω, Perf.AI3S, Gnomic; approaching).

^{BGT} **James 5:8** μακροθυμήσατε καὶ ὑμεῖς, στηρίξατε τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν, ὅτι ἡ παρουσία τοῦ κυρίου ἤγγικεν.

^{VUL} **James 5:8** patientes estote et vos confirmate corda vestra quoniam adventus Domini adpropinquavit

LWB **James 5:9** Brethren, stop complaining against others of the same kind [fellow believers], so that you are not judged [divine discipline]. Behold, the Judge [God the Father] stands along the paths [to continually discipline you].

^{KW} **James 5:9** Stop complaining, brethren, about one another, in order that you may not be judged. Consider this. The judge has taken His stand before the doors.

^{KJV} **James 5:9** Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

James addresses his readers as “brethren,” not so much to soften the blow for the next remark he is about to make, but as to say “I can’t believe I have to chew you out on this next topic.” He tells them to stop their incessant complaining (Imperative of Prohibition) against their fellow believers. There were a bunch of malecontents in their midst. All they did was moan and groan about what this believer said and that believer did. This was verbal sinning and it must stop before they are disciplined (Culminative Aorist tense) by God. Every complaint about your lot in life is a verbal sin against God, as if He has nothing better to do than make your life miserable. “Behold,” says James, God the Father as “the Judge” stands along the path (Gnomic Perfect tense) to continually discipline complainers. There could be an idea here that Jesus Christ is the Judge and the complaining believer should watch his tongue before he arrives at the Judgment Seat of Christ. The translation “stands at the entrance or door” leans towards the possibility that He may return at any moment. It is also possible, as I maintain, that the Judge is God the Father; He is present during your life (along the various ways you travel) disciplining you when you complain and don’t acknowledge your complaints as verbal sin.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Realism called for him to caution against even the most subdued complaints of Christians against one another ... His Christian readers must fully silence their complaints against one another in the realization that their Lord and Judge can at any moment appear and sit down on the Bema (Judgment Seat) in order to assess their lives. They must therefore be careful that He does not find them nurturing a complaining spirit against their fellow believers. (Z. Hodges) Let us not be continuous grumblers. We may not express much on the outside, but let not our souls be full of grumbling. There are Christians who are chronic grumblers. Because they don’t have all the blessings other Christians have and because they have more trials than others, at least in their own estimation, they continually grumble. (S. Zodiates) Groaning and grumbling is the opposite of being joyful and thankful. Although at times the believer may find himself in unenviable living conditions, the fact remains that when he begins to grumble, he falls into sin. He sins because he accuses God, perhaps indirectly, for the misfortunes he receives. (S. Kistemaker)

Of the three stages of divine punishment, the first warns the believer that his negative volition to doctrine has drawn him away from the plan of God. The caution signals are generally flashing

during the first four stages of reversionism: reaction and distraction, the frantic search for happiness, Operation Boomerang, and emotional revolt. Warning discipline can occur in either adversity or prosperity, but the removal of prosperity definitely sounds the alarm. Standing or knocking at the door, a most gentle reminder, expresses the first phase of punitive action. Warning discipline hurts enough so that you become alert to the fact that something is wrong. You need to rebound and start moving forward in the spiritual life. Therefore, the purpose of warning discipline is to motivate you to rebound, restrain sin, and execute the spiritual life. When reversionism is checked in its early stages before doctrine is destroyed by scar tissue of the soul, recovery is relatively simple: rebound followed by the consistent utilization of the grace apparatus for perception. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

James 5:9-20 is an illustration of verbal reversionism and its corresponding punishment – physical illness (verses 14-16), national catastrophe (verses 17-18), and the sin unto death (verse 20). What is forbidden is not the loud and bitter denunciation of others but the unexpressed feeling of bitterness or the smothered resentment that may express itself in a groan or a sigh. (F. Gaebelein) While the primary reference is to the inner feeling of dissatisfaction rather than the vocal expression of complaint, it involves a feeling of criticism and faultfinding directed against others ... He is not unsympathetic toward them amid their trying circumstances, which tend to make them irritable. But he is concerned about eliminating their tendency to grow sullen and exasperated “one against another.” The use of the reciprocal pronoun indicates that this half-suppressed feeling tends to be mutual. (D. Hiebert)

James 5:9 Brethren (Voc. Address), stop (neg. particle) complaining (στενάζω, PAImp.2P, Iterative, Prohibition; moaning, groaning) against others of the same kind (Dat. Disadv.; fellow believers), so that (purpose & result) you are not (neg. particle) judged (κρίνω, APSubj.2P, Culminative, Result; divine discipline). Behold (interjection), the Judge (Subj. Nom.; God the Father) stands (ἵστημι, Perf.AI3S, Gnostic) along the paths (Gen. Place; to continually discipline you).

^{BGT} **James 5:9** μὴ στενάζετε, ἀδελφοί, κατ' ἀλλήλων ἵνα μὴ κριθήτε· ἰδοὺ ὁ κριτὴς πρὸ τῶν θυρῶν ἔστηκεν.

^{VUL} **James 5:9** nolite ingemescere fratres in alterutrum ut non iudicemini ecce iudex ante ianuam adsistit

LWB **James 5:10** Brethren, receive an example of endurance through suffering and perseverance through testing [by applying doctrine] from the prophets [OT male teachers], who have communicated [doctrine] in the name of the Lord.

^{KW} **James 5:10** Take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord, brethren, as an example of suffering and of patience under the mistreatment of others.

^{KJV} **James 5:10** Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

James asks his readers (Imperative of Entreaty) to grasp an example of endurance through suffering and perseverance through testing (Gnomic Aorist tense) from the prophets. These men communicated what they learned and experienced through the OT Scriptures (Constative Aorist tense) in the name of the Lord. Their lives are our lessons, recorded in the Word of God. James is going to remind them with two examples, Job and Elijah. Both men applied the doctrine they knew in extremely difficult, high pressure situations. Both men came through their suffering and testing successfully.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

One of the paradoxes of the Christian life is that the more one approaches God the more the devil and his agents attack him. It would only seem logical and right that proximity to the Saviour would drive Satan away. But it does not seem to work that way. We can well judge whether we live close to God by our consciousness of the onslaught of the enemy. If a person does not believe in Satan or thinks he is never around, it is doubtful whether he has any real sense of the presence of Christ. (S. Zodhiates) James 5:10-11 is parenthetically inserted to remind us that not all adversity is punitive action. The growing believer and the believer in supergrace will experience suffering for the purpose of blessing and this is especially true for the ultra-supergrace believer. When the storm clouds are overhead, evaluate your spiritual status to determine whether you are “nose diving” into the stages of reversionism or whether the pressure is being applied to facilitate spiritual growth. If you are positive to doctrine, then the latter will be true. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

This “testing of faith” is provoked by a variety of external and historical circumstances or “trials.” Yet, more importantly, every test occasions a theological crisis, when the believer is more easily deceived or confused about who God is and how God acts. Within a crucible of theological reflection, *largely internal and spiritual*, a decision is called forth that ultimately measures the believer’s “true” devotion to God, which determines whether one is fit to participate in God’s coming reign. To remain faithful to God in the present is to receive promised blessings from God in the future. (R. Wall) The prophets of old exhibited this trait of self-control all the while that they bore up under many serious trials. (Z. Hodges) Honored as they were, the still had to bear persecution. (J. Mayor)

James 5:10 Brethren (Voc. Address), receive (λαμβάνω, AAImp.2P, Gnomic, Entreaty; grasp, obtain) an example (Acc. Dir. Obj.) of endurance through suffering (Adv. Gen. Ref.) and (connective) perseverance through testing (Adv. Gen. Ref.; by applying doctrine) from the prophets (Acc. Source; male teachers), who (Subj. Nom.) have communicated (λαλέω, AAI3P, Constative; doctrine) in the name (Loc. Sph.) of the Lord (Adv. Gen. Ref.).

^{BGT} **James 5:10** ὑπόδειγμα λάβετε, ἀδελφοί, τῆς κακοπαθίας καὶ τῆς μακροθυμίας τοῦς προφήτας οἱ ἐλάλησαν ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι κυρίου.

^{VUL} **James 5:10** exemplum accipite fratres laboris et patientiae prophetas qui locuti sunt in nomine Domini

LWB James 5:11 Behold, we congratulate the ones who have endured suffering [by applying doctrine]. You have heard [through teaching] of the perseverance of Job [by applying doctrine] and you have seen the end result from the Lord [his restoration after passing evidence testing], because the Lord keeps on being compassionate and merciful.

KW James 5:11 Put your thought upon this. We consider those who patiently remain under their trials spiritually prosperous and fortunate. You heard of the patience of Job, how he patiently remained under the trials to which he was subjected, and you saw the consummation [of those trials] brought about by the Lord, that the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

KJV James 5:11 Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

It is natural for us to congratulate believers who have enduring suffering by applying Bible doctrine (Perfective Present tense). We read their stories with a sense of awe; we honor them and consider them greatly blessed by God. But we can all endure suffering in the same manner, and have God pat us on the back, so to speak. James reminds his readers that they have heard of the perseverance of Job through years of teaching and reading the account of his life (Constative Aorist tense). Job applied Bible doctrine under a series of extremely intense pressures and physical suffering, and in the end, they have seen his restoration by the Lord (Culminative Aorist tense). He successfully passed evidence testing. The Lord was compassionate and merciful to him and his friends. He continues to be compassionate and merciful to us in the same manner (Durative Present tense).

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The spiritual benefits of trials are likely to be uppermost in James's mind. (Z. Hodges) His lapse in patience proper did not exclude him from the Lord's pity and mercy. (J. Adamson) The community is encouraged to exercise patience, like Job, and to be vigilant in prayers for healing, like Elijah, in order to insure participation in the coming triumph of God's reign. (R. Wall) Even in the book of Job, patience is not one of Job's outstanding characteristics. Job betrays his impatience when he curses the day of his birth (3:1) and when he says that the "long-winded speeches" of his three friends never end (16:3). Then, what makes Job unforgettable? He is known for his steadfastness, that is, his persevering faith that triumphed in the end. Because "Job did not sin in what he said" (2:10), God eventually blessed him with twice as many possessions as he had before. (S. Kistemaker) Though Job was baffled about why God had allowed his sufferings and accordingly protested to God about them, he never lost faith in and loyalty to God and was consoled by God's revelation to him of His power and greatness (Job 40-41) as well as His compassion and mercy. (W. Baker)

Job's tenacity is related to the essence of God. The focus of the doctrine of suffering is not suffering itself but the character of God. Job had successfully passed numerous phases of suffering for blessing. In spiritual self-esteem, he had encountered providential preventative suffering in four categories that serve as warm-ups for momentum testing. Having passed these tests, he gained

spiritual autonomy and faced the four categories of momentum testing which propelled him into spiritual maturity. Then as a mature believer he suffered the sudden temporary loss of escrow blessings in three increments of evidence testing ... And yet he is identified as a happy man. The only explanation for Job's happiness and the only means of genuine, sustained happiness for anyone in the devil's world is the execution of God's plan. The Lord is the One who brought about the conclusion of happiness in Job's life, not just at the end of his life but with increasing strength at each step along the way. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

James 5:11 Behold (interjection), we congratulate (μακαρίζω, PAI1P, Perfective; honor, consider blessed) the ones (Acc. Dir. Obj.) who have endured suffering (υπομένω, AAPTc.AMP, Constative, Substantival; by applying doctrine). You have heard (ἀκούω, AAI2P, Constative; by teaching) of the perseverance (Acc. Dir. Obj.; by applying doctrine) of Job (Poss. Gen.) and (continuative) you have seen (ὁράω, AAI2P, Culminative) the end result (Acc. Dir. Obj.; conclusion, reward) from the Lord (Abl. Source; his restoration after passing evidence testing), because (causal) the Lord (Subj. Nom.) keeps on being (εἰμί, PAI3S, Durative) compassionate (Pred. Nom.) and (connective) merciful (Pred. Nom.).

^{BGT} **James 5:11** ἰδοὺ μακαρίζομεν τοὺς ὑπομείναντας· τὴν ὑπομονὴν Ἰὼβ ἤκούσατε καὶ τὸ τέλος κυρίου εἶδετε, ὅτι πολὺσπλαγχνός ἐστιν ὁ κύριος καὶ οἰκτίρμων.

^{VUL} **James 5:11** ecce beatificamus qui sustinuerunt sufferentiam Iob audistis et finem Domini vidistis quoniam misericors est Dominus et miserator

LWB James 5:12 **But before all things, my brethren [members of the royal family], stop making promises with an oath [lying as a con job], neither by heaven [using God as a cover], nor by earth [using a sacred object as a cover], nor by any other oath [such as your mother's grave], but let your Yes be Yes and your No be No [exhibiting honesty and integrity], so that you do not fall under condemnation [divine discipline for verbal reversionism].**

^{KW} **James 5:12** But especially, my brethren, stop the practice of putting yourselves under oath, neither by the heaven, nor by the earth, nor by any other oath, but be letting your Yes be Yes and your No be No in order that you may not fall under judgment.

^{KJV} **James 5:12** But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and *your* nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Before all things, James prohibits his readers (Imperative of Prohibition) from making promises with an oath (Iterative Present tense). That may not sound like much of a prohibition to you, but what he is referring to is the deliberate, planned lying of a con artist. This is what is often called "operation strap-on," where the one who promises with an oath is out to deceive his next victim. James then broadens the scope of such oaths. He forbids them from using God as a cover for deceitful plans

(swearing an oath by heaven). He forbids them from using a sacred object as a cover for deceitful plans (swearing an oath by earth). He then includes swearing an oath by any other means, an all inclusive phrase that covers such things as “your mother’s grave” or “on a stack of Bibles.”

Swearing an oath by these things can also be called “operation patsy,” because the idea is to divert your lying by shifting attention to someone or something other than yourself. A supergrace believer, or even a believer on the way to supergrace, should make his simple word of honor his bond. James asks his readers (Imperative of Entreaty) to let their Yes be Yes and their No be No. This elliptical phrase is called an *epanadiplosis*, a repetition of important words for emphasis. This excellent advice will prevent them from falling into condemnation (Culminative Aorist tense). Instead of divine discipline for verbal reversionism (Result Subjunctive), they will remain in fellowship – exhibiting the honesty and nobility which accords with their status as members of the royal family.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

James includes oaths here as an example of an improper means of invoking God’s name as a response to the difficulties of life ... It is not to be invoked as a magical or mechanical talisman and not an exorcistic form of words. (T. Cargal) Oaths taken to establish one’s veracity in communication with others implied that one’s normal affirmations were inadequate. The readers, therefore, should abstain from this kind of oath-taking ... Alternatively, oath-taking could become a mere façade behind which the truth is hidden. (Z. Hodges) The Christian does not need to swear, for his word is his bond. (J. Adamson) In times of trial, let us guard our speech, for what we say in times of tribulation is very important ... The use of the name of God in a sincere, honest, and meaningful affirmation is not forbidden. Observe that the phrase “in vain” is twice repeated to make it absolutely clear what God meant by the commandment. (S. Zodiates) The habitual practice of sins of the tongue is the manifestation of verbal reversionism. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

The intention of this verse is not to forbid a Christian to take an oath before a magistrate, as is plain from the example of the Lord, who made no objection when the high priest virtually put him under oath, nor to forbid oaths in circumstances of special solemnity, but rather to discourage the use of oaths in the ordinary relationships of life and above all as an expression of impatience. (T. Carson) In other words, my friend, when you say you are going to promise something, it ought to be as if you were in a courtroom and had taken an oath to tell the truth. All your *conversation* ought to be like that ... Some people, even if they take an oath on a stack of Bibles, do not honor their word. (J. McGee) The profanation of God’s name is not a slight offense. For James does not speak of oaths in general; but condemns that evasion which had been devised when men took the liberty to swear without expressing the name of God, which was a liberty repugnant to the prohibition of the law. (J. Calvin)

Verbal reversionists are dishonest in their souls; thus, their bombastic and treacherous talk is peppered with blasphemous oaths ... Politicians – be they reversionistic believers or dishonest unbelievers – seeking influence and power, dupe the masses through hypocrisy and deception. With half-truths and fraudulent promises many of these political predators feed on the so-called underprivileged. They allege to champion their demands while actually using their cause as a stepping-stone to power. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) The swearing that James here prohibits is not “dirty”

language as such, but the invoking of God's name, or substitutes for it, to guarantee the truth of what we say ... Concern about the devaluation of oaths because of their indiscriminate use and the tendency to try to avoid fulfilling them by swearing by "less sacred" things led to warnings against using them too often ... The intention is not to avoid any oath, but only oaths that would have the intention of avoiding absolute truthfulness. (D. Moo)

James 5:12 But (adversative) before all things (Prep. Gen.), my (Gen. Rel.) brethren (Voc. Address; members of the royal family), stop (neg. particle) making promises with an oath (ὄμνυμι, PAImp.2P, Iterative, Prohibition; "operation strap-on" by lying, Matt. 5:33-37), neither (neg. copula) by heaven (Acc. Manner; using God as a cover), nor (neg. copula) by earth (Acc. Manner; any sacred object), nor (neg. copula) by any (Acc. Measure) other (Acc. Spec.) oath (Acc. Manner; operation patsy - such as you mothers' grave), but (adversative; in supergrace) let your (Poss. Gen.) Yes (affirmative) be (εἰμί, PAImp.3S, Descriptive, Entreaty) Yes (affirmative) and (connective) your (ellipsis) No (negative) be (ellipsis) No (negative; epanadiplosis: repetition of important words for emphasis, honesty, nobility), so that (result) you do not (neg. particle) fall (πίπτω, AASubj.2P, Culminative, Result) under condemnation (Adv. Acc.; divine discipline for verbal reversionism).

^{BGT} **James 5:12** Πρὸ πάντων δέ, ἀδελφοί μου, μὴ ὀμνύετε μήτε τὸν οὐρανὸν μήτε τὴν γῆν μήτε ἄλλον τινὰ ὄρκον· ἦτω δὲ ὑμῶν τὸ ναὶ ναὶ καὶ τὸ οὐ οὐ, ἵνα μὴ ὑπὸ κρίσειν πέσητε.

^{VUL} **James 5:12** ante omnia autem fratres mei nolite iurare neque per caelum neque per terram neque aliud quodcumque iuramentum sit autem vestrum est est non non uti non sub iudicio decidatis

LWB James 5:13 Is anyone among you suffering affliction? Keep praying. Is anyone cheerful? Keep singing.

^{KW} **James 5:13** Is anyone among you suffering misfortune? Let him keep on constantly praying. Is anyone cheerful? Let him keep on singing praises.

^{KJV} **James 5:13** Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

James asks two questions: Is anyone among them suffering affliction, and is anyone cheerful? There is a different response (Imperative of Command) to each one of these interrogatives. If someone is sick, he or she should keep praying. If someone is cheerful, he or she should keep singing. There are commands to keep on following his respective advice (Iterative Present tense). In other words, keep praying until you are no longer ill. This doesn't necessarily mean to pray for healing itself, although that is acceptable. But an even better prayer is for the strength to endure illness and still maintain a positive, spiritual attitude. And keep singing as long as you are cheerful. These are sound, simple

proverbs for life. So far, the use of the singular restricts the praying or singing to the person who is ill or cheerful. James is going to pull in fellow believers to help in the next passage.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

It is the readers who believe God has a purpose or design in human suffering, namely that they learn patience and wisdom from their trials. (T. Cargal) A rash oath is a poor response to any situation. But suppose someone was really suffering? In that case prayer was in order. And what if someone were cheerful? In that case praise was in order. (Z. Hodges) The Christian is not happy and merry because of what is going on around him but in spite of it. There is an inner world which is molded by God who made it and who directs it. That is why one finds Christians passing through the valley of the shadow of death singing. It isn't because of what they experience in the valley, but because of the inner state of their minds and hearts. One may be surrounded by all the pleasures of the world, by health and strength and riches, and yet be an old grumbler. The outside does not necessarily determine the inside. The Bible never promises the Christian favorable outward conditions, but inner tranquility and peace of heart. (S. Zodiates)

The believer must not allow his trials to exasperate him. Instead of swearing over them, he should pray over them. That is a graceless heart which, when under the rod, challenges God's sovereignty, or impugns his justice, or distrusts his goodness, or arraigns his wisdom. (C. Jerdan) The true remedy for trouble is not complaining, far less swearing, but praying, and the true outlet for joy is not worldly frivolity but the singing of praise. (T. Carson) If you say that it is God's will for every Christian who gets sick to be healed, you must agree that the logical conclusion of that line of thinking is that the Christian will never die. He will be healed of every disease which causes death. May I say, that is ridiculous. (J. McGee) The mature believer expresses his capacity for life in prayer and joyous singing; the reversionist utilizes his voice for propagating deceit. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

James 5:13 Is anyone (Subj. Nom.; supergrace believer) among you (Dat. Association) suffering affliction (κακοπαθέω, PAI3S, Dramatic, Interrogative Ind.)? Keep praying (προσεύχομαι, PMImp.3S, Iterative, Command, Deponent). Is anyone (Subj. Nom.; supergrace believer) cheerful (εὐθυμέω, PAI3S, Descriptive; happy and prosperous)? Keep singing (ψάλλω, PAImp.3S, Iterative, Command).

^{BGT} **James 5:13** Κακοπαθεῖ τις ἐν ὑμῖν, προσευχέσθω· εὐθυμεῖ τις, ψαλλέτω·

^{VUL} **James 5:13** tristatur aliquis vestrum oret aequo animo est psallat

LWB **James 5:14** **Is anyone [Jewish believers] among you sick [dying the sin unto death due to apostasy]? Let him call elders [local community pastors] from the church [not the synagogue], and after they have anointed him with oil [given him medical attention], let them offer prayer for him [the dying apostate believer] in the name of the Lord.**

^{KW} **James 5:14** Is anyone among you ill? Let him call at once the elders of the [local] assembly, and let them pray over him, having massaged him [with olive oil] in the Name of the Lord.

^{KJV} **James 5:14** Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

If there are any Jewish believers among his readers who are sick, James wants the sick believer to call (Imperative of Entreaty) elders from the church. James knows there is such a person, at least one. He knows this person is dying the sin unto death due to apostasy. He knows there will be more unfortunate candidates that will need a last-minute effort to save their physical lives. But the onus is on the sick believer to ask a number of local pastors in his/her geographical location (Ingressive Aorist tense) to come to his bedside because his illness is quite serious. These elders are to come from the Christian church, not from the Jewish synagogue. He is a Christians now, after all. Nor does “elders” refer to old men among the non-Christian population. What good would there prayers be? It is also my view that these are not multiple pastor-elders from one assembly but multiple pastor-elders from a community.

Some think there are many elders (pastors) in one church; there is no support for that form of church government in Scripture. This passage is one of their alleged “prooftexts,” but it doesn’t prove their premise unless you approach the passage with their interpretation in mind. My position is that in every case in the NT where “presbuteros” is used in the plural, it refers to local pastors in a large city or geographical location. There are probably 500 or more pastors within the city limits where I live. If I was on my death-bed, it would be rather easy to call 2-3 of them for prayer – assuming they are concerned about restoring a believer from death. The same is true here. This (perhaps) hypothetical believer is dying the sin unto death. Maybe he has church-hopped all over town and rejected every pastor in the vicinity. But that won’t prevent him from calling upon them in an emergency!

First, the sick believer should be anointed with oil (Temporal Participle). This is not some charismatic mumbo-jumbo, nor is it a ritual or sacrament. Don’t get out your recipe box and start mixing some cajun potion (Latin: unguent) and don’t call the pope’s minions. This refers to medical attention, whatever oils and herbs they had to offer at the time (Constative Aorist tense). Oil was considered a curative agent among the Talmud and Babylonian Jews. The idea for us today is to allow doctors and prescription drugs to do their work before contacting pastors to pray for you. In the case of an apostate or reversionistic believer dying the sin unto death (Latin: infirmity), all the medicine in the world won’t cure him. So he is to ask the elders (pastors) that he has summoned to his deathbed to pray for him (Culminative Aorist tense) in the Name of the Lord. Again, this is a request for local Christian pastors to pray for his healing (Imperative of Entreaty).

RELEVANT OPINIONS

There is nothing here at all about a gift of healing possessed by any of the elders. Rather, these church leaders function simply as intercessors on behalf of the one who is sick ... It is the *sick* person who initiates the process, not the *elders*. (Z. Hodges) Probably this is one of the most misunderstood verses of the whole Bible and one that has caused many quacks to proclaim themselves qualified healers of the sick ... He is now saved from his weariness as a result of God’s will in answer to believing prayer, *after the application of some medicinal means*. (S. Zodhiates) Physical ailments are

often related to a guilty conscience. God often uses a period of sickness in the life of a person to have him come to self-examination and a plea for the forgiving grace of God. Once he recognizes his sin, uncovered for him by the Spirit of God, he must confess. God is ready to forgive sin we confess. (S. Kistemaker) It is noteworthy that anointing with oil is not prescribed for Christians in any other letter ... It seems impossible to rule out all reference to its therapeutic value ... The initiative lay with the sick person and the ceremony was in the privacy of the home and had little in common with modern healing movements. (T. Carson) “Are any among you sick?” Then for heaven’s sake call a doctor. That is what we would say. (W. Brosend II)

The union of the community’s elders and the coming Lord constructs another layer of solidarity, this one between earth and heaven ... Sick individuals belong to a healing community ... The elder was not “elder” in age but in spiritual competency. Nor does the elder possess the Spirit as an agent of power; rather, the elder of this congregation possesses “wisdom and understanding” (3:13). The elders are called by the sick as a group, whose collective authority was in their spiritual “office” rather than in their personal charisma. (R. Wall) We see this use of the word “aleipho” in Mark 6:13 and James 5:14, where the word is used of the application of oil for medicinal purposes. Thus we find in the latter text, the two God-appointed resources in the case of illness, prayer and medical help. (K. Wuest) The use of olive oil was one of the best remedial agencies known to the ancients. They used it internally and externally. Some physicians prescribe it today. It is clear both in Mark 6:13 and here that medicinal value is attached to the use of the oil and emphasis is placed on the worth of prayer. (A. Robertson) By many oil is regarded as medicinal. It is pointed out that oil was a common remedy at the time (Luke 10:34) and that *aleipho* (“anoint”) is used only in a non-religious sense. (T. Carson)

You remember when Hezekiah was sick, they put something medicinal on that boil he had. James is saying something very practical here. He says, “Call for the elders to pray, and go to the best doctor you can get.” You are to use medicine, my friend. It is a mistaken idea to say that this refers to some religious ceremony of putting a little oil from a bottle on someone’s head, as if that would have some healing merit in it. It has no merit whatsoever. James is too practical for that. (J. McGee) In Luke 10:34, Jesus tells us that the Samaritan who stopped to help the man who had been robbed and beaten “went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine.” What James may be saying is that the elders should come to the bedside of the sick armed with both spiritual and natural resources – with prayer and with medicine. Both are administered with the Lord’s authority and both together can be used by Him in healing the sick. (D. Moo) The institution of elders was taken over from the OT, in which the elders appear as representatives of the important families responsible for the government of cities and villages ... Their functions partly correspond to those of modern congregational ministers. (B. Reicke) In the cases of Rome and Corinth the church in the locality surely included more than one congregation. The call is a general call: whether one or many or all of the elders respond is not mentioned, although the plural verb indicates James expects several to come. (P. Davids)

Those who claim power to heal people as our Lord did are not as divine as they would have us believe. Their method of procedure is anything but divine. Modern “healers” claim to be doing Christ’s work and the “greater works” of which He spoke (John 14:12); but why to modern “healers” go to all people when Christ said explicitly that His followers were to “go rather to the lost

sheep of the house of Israel” (Matt. 10:6)? Why do modern healers appeal for money in their healing campaign when our Lord stated clearly that they were to take none (Luke 10:4)? Our Lord, as well as the Apostles also, not only healed the sick but raised the dead. I have never heard of any “healers” who have raised the dead. Attempting to duplicate the miracles of Jesus Christ is definitely not what James is writing about, for our Lord’s miracles of healing, contrary to present day healings, were instantaneous, not gradual (Mark 1:42), complete, not partial (Matt. 8:15), and permanent, not temporary (Luke 7:15) ... Also, in all of the healing meetings that I have observed there has always been a great deal of effort put forth to bring the sick people to the public meeting. This is a violation of the Word of God and of good common sense. God told those who are sick to send for the elders of the church. (L. Strauss) It is not the duty of elders to go scouting for the sick. (D. Hiebert)

James 5:14 Is anyone (Subj. Nom.; Jewish believers) among you (Dat. Assoc.) sick (ἀσθενέω, PAI3S, Descriptive, Interrogative Ind.; ill, dying the sin unto death due to apostasy)? Let him call (προσκαλέομαι, AMImp.3S, Ingressive, Entreaty; summons) elders (Acc. Dir. Obj.; local pastors) from the church (Abl. Source; not from the synagogue or non-Christian population, pastors whose authority he had rejected), and (continuative) after they have anointed (ἀλείφω, AAPtc.NMP, Constativ, Temporal; medicines were useless in this condition) him (Acc. Dir. Obj.) with oil (Instr. Means; given him medical attention), let them offer prayer (προσεύχομαι, AMImp.3P, Culminative, Entreaty, Deponent) for him (Acc. Adv.; the dying apostate) in the name (Loc. Sph.) of the Lord (Gen. Spec.);

^{BGT} **James 5:14** ἀσθενεῖ τις ἐν ὑμῖν, προσκαλεσάσθω τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους τῆς ἐκκλησίας καὶ προσευξάσθωσαν ἐπ’ αὐτὸν ἀλείψαντες [αὐτὸν] ἐλαίῳ ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου.

^{VUL} **James 5:14** infirmatur quis in vobis inducat presbyteros ecclesiae et orent super eum unguentes eum oleo in nomine Domini

LWB James 5:15 **And the prayer of faith from a doctrinal person [pastor-elder] shall deliver [bodily restoration] the one who is hopelessly sick [under severe divine discipline], and the Lord [respecting the authority of the pastor] shall restore him [the dying reversionist]. Moreover, if he committed sins, he shall be forgiven [as part of his recovery] by Him [the Lord].**

^{KW} **James 5:15** And the prayer offered in faith shall make the sick person well, and the Lord shall raise him up. And if he is in a state of having committed sin [i.e., under the moral or physical consequences of having sinned], it shall be forgiven him.

^{KJV} **James 5:15** And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

The prayer of faith from a doctrinal person, such as a pastor-elder or teacher, shall deliver the body of the apostate believer (Predictive Future tense) who is hopelessly sick. The apostate or

reversionistic believer under the sin unto death cannot be healed by medical treatment. No doctor or medication can heal a person who is under maximum divine discipline. But prayer from mature, doctrinal believers can heal such a person. It's not a guarantee, but it is a definite possibility. It is a predictive future, not a gnostic future. God reserves the final say in who is healed and who is not. Moreover, this deliverance refers to bodily restoration only, not restoration of the soul. If the believer survives to live another day, it will be up to him to get with God's protocol plan for the Church Age in order to break the downward spiral he has been living.

The second predictive future means God honors the prayers of a faithful, doctrinal pastor. And if the apostate believer has committed sins (Conditional Participle), which is a guarantee in his current helplessly sick condition, he shall be forgiven (Predictive Future tense) by the Lord as part of his reversion recovery. The sins committed by this believer have been continuous and dramatic or he would not be on his deathbed calling for emergency help from pastors he has rejected over and over again. There is a condition for this healing, which is mentioned in the next verse. Confession of sin (1 John 1:9) by the sick believer is a requirement for healing. The sin unto death is a serious matter, so serious that departure from this world in misery is likely. If the sick believer doesn't acknowledge his sins, all the prayers of the mature pastor-elder will receive a negative answer.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Confession of sin, in this passage, is required for physical healing; and this confession of sin must be a continuing element of authentic Christian worship according to scripture. (R. Wall) The responsibility of believers to deal honestly, pray, and rejoice with other believers is bound up in the believer's relationship with God. (T. Cargal) Some casual reader of James 5:15 will immediately jump to the conclusion that God is obligated to answer prayer affirmatively in every instance of illness, that He *has* to heal the sick. This may be called an attitude of arrogance toward God, and God must hate such an attitude on our part. Don't you dislike the attitude of your child when he comes and demands favors from you? Neither do you give him everything, if you really love him. You give him only those things that will be good for him and that will ultimately contribute to making him into a man who will bring honor to your name. That is exactly the attitude of God toward His children. (S. Zodiates) The concern is not for evangelism but for restoration ... Most churches, frankly, are better at recruitment than retention, the steady stream of those who "come forward" to join the church matched or exceeded by those who slip quietly out the back, rarely to return. (W. Broseid II)

In this case, prayer taps those internal spiritual resources that do battle against the evil within (whatever the form or agency), which is the real source of sickness and suffering. According to James, spiritual healing is requisite for physical healing, even as physical healing heralds the coming triumph of God's reign. (R. Wall) These elders have offered a prayer, have expressed a wish (vow) for the healing of this sick brother whom they have visited ... Here we have the definite qualification of man's wish that it conform to God's will, to faith ... in this particular case, the wish concerning the healing of this man conformed to God's revelation and plan, and therefore it was granted. Because that wish was granted, we must not think for one moment ours must necessarily be granted. In fact, we have a number of instances in the NT when such a wish was not granted. And it was not because of the lack of fervor and trust on the part of the praying ones or on the part of the suffering

ones, but simply because it was not God's will. The apostles themselves did not have indiscriminate powers of healing (Phil. 2:27, 2 Tim. 4:20, 2 Cor. 12:7-9). It is impossible, therefore, to believe that the elders have unrestricted power to heal the sick. If they did, no Christian would ever need to die. (S. Zodhiates)

Prayer when rooted in a faith that is as "hard as nails" takes the offensive in redressing the evils of human suffering. (R. Wall) The "prayer offered in faith" is faith that God is *able* to heal. Those who take faith healing to the unbiblical extreme, such as the "name it and claim it" faith cult, intimidate people with accusations of lack of faith. They claim that God *will* heal all who make requests "offered in faith." It is quite possible to believe God is able to heal without insisting that He must heal ... Illness is one of God's means of discipline to bring about repentance and spiritual restoration. But illness can also be a trial God allows to bring about the strengthening of faith and refinement of character. (W. Baker) We are to confess our *sins* to God but our *faults* one to another. If I have injured you, then I ought to confess that to you. But I will not confess my sins to you, and I do not want you confessing your sins to me. You are to confess that to the Lord (1 John 1:9). I cannot forgive sins; neither can any clergyman forgive sins – only God can do that. (J. McGee) Whenever sickness does come, it is desirable for each believer to examine himself to determine before the Lord if the sickness is due to personal sin. (D. Hiebert)

James 5:15 And (continuative) the prayer of faith (Subj. Nom.) from a doctrinal person (Gen. Agency; the pastor/elder) shall deliver (σώζω, FAI3S, Predictive; bodily restoration, not restoration of the soul) the one (Acc. Dir. Obj.) who is hopelessly sick (κάμνω, PAPtc.AMS, Descriptive, Substantival, Articular; discouraged, weary, the reversionist under maximum discipline), and (continuative) the Lord (Subj. Nom.; respecting the authority of the pastor/elder) shall restore (ἐγείρω, FAI3S, Predictive) him (Acc. Dir. Obj; the dying reversionist). Moreover (continuative), if (protasis, 3rd class condition, "maybe yes, maybe no") he committed (ποιέω, Perf.APtc.NMS, Dramatic, Conditional) sins (Acc. Dir. Obj.), he shall be (εἰμί, PASubj.3S, Descriptive, Result) forgiven (ἀφίημι, FPI3S, Predictive; as part of his recovery) by Him (Instr. Agency; the Lord).

^{BGT} **James 5:15** καὶ ἡ εὐχὴ τῆς πίστεως σώσει τὸν κάμνοντα καὶ ἐγερεῖ αὐτὸν ὁ κύριος· καὶ ἁμαρτίας ἧ πεποιηκώς, ἀφεθήσεται αὐτῷ.

^{VUL} **James 5:15** et oratio fidei salvabit infirmum et adlevabit eum Dominus et si in peccatis sit dimittentur ei

LWB James 5:16 Therefore, [those who are dying the sin unto death] acknowledge your sins [verbal reversionism] to others of the same kind [pastor-elders as the victims or recipients of verbal sin], and may [the pastor-elders] offer prayer for others of the same kind [fellow believers, even if they are reversionists], in order that you [reversionists] may be restored. The prayer of a righteous [mature, doctrinal] believer has great power when it is operational [effectively working].

^{KW} **James 5:16** Be confessing therefore your sins to one another for your own benefit, and be praying for one another that you may be healed. A prayer of a righteous person is able to do much as it operates.

^{KJV} **James 5:16** Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

James is going to summarize the reciprocal relationship between believers dying the sin unto death and a mature, doctrinal group of local pastors. He commands sick believers to acknowledge their sins (Imperative mood) to others of the same kind. The “others of the same kind” refers to the pastor-elders who are present who have been the victims of the sick believer’s verbal sins. This is not a passage for believers to confess their sins to other believers in some kind of reversionistic, verbal sin orgy. We are in the home of reversionistic brothers or sisters who are about to die the sin unto death. We are not in a chapel, tent, or synagogue. They are on their hypothetical deathbeds acknowledging to those they have maligned, slandered or gossiped about to their face. Then comes the reciprocity. This confession of sins is limited to the context of a sick person on his deathbed, and to the pastors of several community churches that are present and praying for the sick person.

James asks the pastor-elders who have been the victims of verbal sinning (Imperative of Entreaty) to put that behind them and to offer prayer to the very believer who is under maximum divine discipline. The purpose for these prayers is so the reversionistic believer might be restored (Potential Subjunctive mood) to fellowship with God with physical health. If God grants the restoration, it will be a dramatic miracle indeed. How does it work? The prayer of a righteous believer has great power (Gnomic Present tense) when it is effectively working (Temporal Participle). The righteous believers in this scenario are mature, doctrinal pastor-elders. This listening to another believer acknowledge his personal guilt is not a recommended practice for every believer. We are commanded in other passages not to pray for a believer who is dying the sin unto death. If you do get “pulled into” a situation like this, be extremely cautious about who is confessing what to whom.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

There is no biblical command to publicly confess all our known sins. Confession to God is necessary in regard to any sin we are aware of, and should be made in conformity with 1 John 1:9. But only here do we find a command to make confession to one another and this lies fully within the parameters of our need for prayer by the elders ... If the sick person has reason to believe that God’s hand of discipline is upon him, he should be prepared to acknowledge his failures openly so as to clear the path for effective prayer. Prayer *can* work wonders! Not, however, if it comes from an unrighteous heart, or if it is shallow, glib, and superficial. (Z. Hodges) I am still cogitating on this statement; I’m not sure I agree with it, but plan to research it more out of respect to Dr. Hodges. (LWB) Since the purpose of this confession and prayer is physical healing, it is best to understand the confession as involving any sins which may hinder that healing and the prayers to be specifically for the cure of bodily afflictions. (D. Moo) I see no change of persons from those mentioned in verse

14, namely “the sick” and the “elders of the church.” I know of no biblical interpretation that will warrant the interpreter to read into the context a change that is not there. The sick want healing, and the elders of the church are present to pray for the healing. Since no one else is included in the context, it follows that the sick and the elders of the church are to confess their faults to one another. (L. Strauss)

Sickness or bodily weakness may be the direct result of personal sin ... The sorriest plight for a Christian is to be habitually sinning, and not realizing it, and to continue in this habitual sin until the Lord brings him to the brink of death to make him come to his senses, as seems to have been the case here ... There is confession addressed to God for sins that we have committed against Him, and there is confession to our fellow human beings concerning affronts we have committed toward them ... Confession toward God is not made just once and for all, but constantly for daily cleansing ... Now, of course, there are sins, specific sins, which we commit against our fellow men and our fellow believers. For these we are primarily forgiven by God, but we are also to seek the forgiveness of our fellow men ... These two kinds of forgiveness, then, make clear that there is a distinction between confession to God and confession to man. (S. Zodhiates) Again, I’m not sure I agree with this statement, but plan to research it. (LWB) It is utter foolishness for one to look to God for miraculous healing if there is sin in the life that has not been confessed ... James 5:16 does not mean that the members of any local assembly are to stand up and publicly confess their sins. To scatter these abroad among gossipers and busybodies does much damage to the testimony of our Lord Jesus Christ. (L. Strauss) James’s counsel is not to be construed as a call for indiscriminate public confession of all sins. (D. Hiebert)

It is wrong for Christians to “hang dirty wash in public,” for such “confessing” might do more harm than the original sin. (W. Wiersbe) There are those who would make this verse apply more particularly to those who are aware that estrangement and ill-feeling exist between them, because of wrongs committed and suffered. In this case James is understood to be advising each party, instead of accusing each other, to be ready to admit his own faults, and by mutual apology to heal the breach. This interpretation would be in accord with the instruction of Jesus (in Matt. 5:23-24) to seek reconciliation with a brother whom we have hurt before “offering our gift at the altar.” Mayor acknowledges that this may possibly be the meaning ... The thought is not confession in general as urged in 1 John 1:9, but of confessing sins which might be regarded as causing the sickness ... It is to be noted that this is shared confession *in the confidence of a private conversation between two or more Christians*. (C. Mitton) Many think that James points out here the way of brotherly reconciliation, that is, by mutual acknowledgment of sins, since hatred takes root and becomes irreconcilable because everyone pertinaciously defends his own cause. (J. Calvin) James does not instruct the believer to send for a faith healer. (W. Wiersbe) In the present, broken condition of things in the church it might be difficult to say just where these righteous are to be found. (H. Ironside)

James 5:16 Therefore (inferential), acknowledge (ἐξομολογέω, PMImp.2P, Perfective, Command; those who are dying the sin unto death) your (Acc. Poss.) sins (Acc. Dir. Obj.; verbal reversionism) to others of the same kind (Gen. Adv.; pastor/elders as victims, the recipients of verbal sin), and may (continuative;

the pastor-elders) offer prayer (εύχομαι, PMImp.2P, Iterative, Entreaty, Deponent) for others of the same kind (Gen. Adv.; reversionistic believers), in order that (purpose) you (reversionists) may be restored (ιάομαι, APSubj.2P, Dramatic, Potential; cured, healed). The prayer (Subj. Nom.) of a righteous believer (Poss. Gen.) has great (Acc. Measure) power (ισχύω, PAI3S, Gnostic) when it is operational (ἐνεργέω, PMPTc.NFS, Dramatic, Temporal; effectively working).

^{BGT} **James 5:16** ἐξομολογεῖσθε ὁὖν ἀλλήλοις τὰς ἀμαρτίας καὶ εὔχεσθε ὑπὲρ ἀλλήλων ὅπως ἰαθῆτε. Πολὸν ἰσχύει δέησις δικαίου ἐνεργουμένη.

^{VUL} **James 5:16** confitemini ergo alterutrum peccata vestra et orate pro invicem ut salvemini multum enim valet deprecatio iusti adsidua

LWB **James 5:17** Elijah was a man with the same [sin] nature as us, and by means of prayer he prayed that [God] send no rain, and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months.

^{KW} **James 5:17** Elijah was a human being of like nature and constitution to us. And he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and it did not rain upon the earth for three years and six months.

^{KJV} **James 5:17** Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

James offers an example of a prayer offered by Elijah that all Jewish believers would easily recall from their youth. Initially it was a prayer *against* the nation; the continuation of that prayer in the next verse was a prayer *for* the nation. Elijah was a man (Descriptive Imperfect tense) with the same sin nature (Latin: similar passions) as the rest of us. He was not deity. But he prayed a prayer (Ingressive Aorist tense) that God would not send any rain (Dramatic Aorist tense). This prayer was aligned with God's will, because He answered it in dramatic fashion: it did not rain on the face of the earth (Culminative Aorist tense) for 3-1/2 years! Not only is this in the Bible, it is also attested by extra-biblical historians. If Elijah could pray for the rain to stop and it actually stopped, imagine what might happen if some faithful, doctrinal pastors got together and prayed for the restoration of a reversionistic believer. Elijah was indeed an example of a righteous man whose prayer worked effectively and powerfully.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Elijah was as human as we are, yet his prayer shut up the heavens for three years and six months. (Z. Hodges) That the drought lasted three and one-half years is a well-known fact of history, one that was certainly not forgotten by the Jews who knew their history so well. (R. Lenski) In this sense, prayers that heal sickness and sin anticipate the new creation in the coming age. (R. Wall) Beginning with James 5:17, James records the experience of an OT supergrace believer in a national crisis. In

this illustration the prophet Elijah, a spiritual giant, patriot, and supergrace hero, stemmed the tide of national reversionism with his prayer. Elijah was facing the apostasy and reversionism that threatened his nation with catastrophe. Aware that Israel was on the verge of the fifth cycle of discipline (Lev. 26:27-39), Elijah sought God on behalf of the people ... While unbelievers with hardened hearts and believers in reversionism wasted precious time worshipping Baal, Elijah redeemed the time through prayer and Bible doctrine. He became God's man for the crisis ... Elijah's first prayer, begun in Ahab's palace, launched the national depression ... Elijah's second prayer was fully answered: the economic slide ended on Mount Carmel in 1 Kings 18:42-45. The land was revived and the nation was delivered. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

There is no doubt that the Lord put it in his heart to pray about this, and he believed that God was able to do it, and therefore he prayed definitely and resolutely, without in the least doubting that it was going to take place ... Here is shown in a prayer the mystery of the coordination of man's will with God's will. And when this coordination and agreement are full and complete, then we, the children, the prophets of God, can control the forces of nature. This does not mean we can act out the whims of our will and desires, but we simply pray for that which God has already revealed to us that He is going to do. Otherwise, if every Christian were able to control the forces and laws of nature, there would be complete anarchy in the physical world ... When we remember this basic fact of God's revelation to us as to what we should pray for in such circumstances of life, we shall have no difficulty in understanding why so many of our prayers go unanswered. Let us be frank about it, most of them go unanswered, anyway. And the reason is that they are prayed without the prior understanding of the mind of God. They are merely the expression of our own minds, of our own desires of vengeance or of blessing. (S. Zoddhiates)

James 5:17 Elijah (Subj. Nom.) was (εἰμί, Imperf.AI3S, Descriptive) a man (Pred. Nom.) with the same nature as (Associative Nom.; similar constitution) us (Dat. Ind. Obj.), and (continuative) by means of prayer (Instr. Means, *polyptoton*: verb with a cognate noun) he prayed (προσεύχομαι, AMI3S, Ingressive, Deponent; to redeem time) that (Adv. Gen. Ref; God) send no (neg. particle) rain (βρέχω, AAIInf., Dramatic, Purpose, Articular), and (result) it did not (neg. adv.) rain (βρέχω, AAI3S, Culminative) on the land (Gen. Place) for three (Acc. Measure) years (Acc. Extent of Time) and (connective) six (cardinal) months (Acc. Extent of Time).

^{BGT} **James 5:17** Ἡλίας ἄνθρωπος ἦν ὁμοιοπαθῆς ἡμῖν, καὶ προσευχῆ προσηύξατο τοῦ μὴ βρέξαι, καὶ οὐκ ἔβρεξεν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἐνιαυτοὺς τρεῖς καὶ μῆνας ἕξ·

^{VUL} **James 5:17** Helias homo erat similis nobis passibilis et oratione oravit ut non plueret super terram et non pluit annos tres et menses sex

LWB **James 5:18** Then he prayed again [resumed his earlier prayer 3-1/2 years later], and the heaven brought forth rain, and the earth sprouted forth its fruit [agriculture].

^{KW} **James 5:18** And he prayed again and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.

^{KJV} **James 5:18** And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Elijah resumed his earlier prayer 3-1/2 years later (Culminative Aorist tense) and the heaven brought forth rain (Dramatic Aorist tense). Can you imagine what the earth was like without rain for such a long period of time? Immediately after rain resumed again, the earth sprouted forth its usual agricultural production (Culminative Aorist tense). So Elijah's prayer was able to stop the rain and bring it back again according to the sovereign will of God.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Elijah did not take the initiative of conceiving this retribution of God upon the apostates of his day among the Israelites. He simply looked into the heart of God, became aware of His intentions and plans, and told them forth. James calls this a prayer, inasmuch as Elijah adopted God's known will to become his wish. Actually, then, Elijah did not initiate the punishment of the drought, but he consented to the foreknown action of God. He could not have set himself against the divine will. (S. Zodhiates) This example of the tremendous power of prayer does not mean that Elijah could suspend the laws of nature at will. (D. Hiebert)

James 5:18 Then (temporal) he prayed (προσεύχομαι, AMI3S, Culminative, Deponent) again (Adv.; resumed his earlier prayer three and one-half years later), and (result) the heaven (Subj. Nom.) brought forth (δίδωμι, AAI3S, Dramatic) rain (Acc. Dir. Obj.) and (continuative) the earth (Subj. Nom.) sprouted forth (βλαστάνω, AAI3S, Culminative; germinated, produced) its (Poss. Gen.) fruit (Acc. Dir. Obj; generic term for agricultural production).

^{BGT} **James 5:18** καὶ πάλιν προσηύξατο, καὶ ὁ οὐρανὸς ὑετὸν ἔδωκεν καὶ ἡ γῆ ἐβλάστησεν τὸν καρπὸν αὐτῆς.

^{VUL} **James 5:18** et rursum oravit et caelum dedit pluviam et terra dedit fructum suum

LWB James 5:19 My brethren [members of the royal family], if anyone among you has been seduced [deceived by scar tissue of the soul] away from doctrine and someone [presumably a mature believer] turns him around [changes his attitude toward the truth],

^{KW} **James 5:19** My brethren, if any one among you wanders away from the truth and anyone brings him back,

^{KJV} **James 5:19** Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him;

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

These last two verses of James's letter summarize the last chapter quite well. It is all about reversion recovery. James addresses his readers as "brethren" because it is an honorable and rewardable thing

to restore a reversionistic believer to doctrine. If anyone among them has been deceived by scar tissue of the soul and has been seduced away from Bible doctrine (Potential Subjunctive mood), he is in a world of hurt. “To wander from the truth” is to apostasize, to reject the revealed will of God and to act contrary to it, either through willfulness or the deceit of others – including demonic powers.” (P. Davids) James uses the 3rd class conditional clause to pose his question as a potential but unknown situation. Maybe some of his readers have been seduced away from doctrine and maybe they haven’t. It’s hard for me to understand why James didn’t use a 1st class conditional clause, assuming his statement was true, because in today’s world millions of Christians have been seduced away from doctrine. But that’s not the point in this passage. He starts his second sentence, but only gets the first half (protasis) of it stated here. If someone, presumably a mature believer, turns the reversionistic believer around (Culminative Aorist tense), it will obviously be a great accomplishment and a wonderful benefit to the stumbling believer. Any time a negative believer turns positive towards doctrine there is angelic cheering in heaven!

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Let us beware of seductive outside influences. They concentrate on deflecting us primarily from the sound doctrine of the gospel, and when they have done that, our love for Christ will diminish and our lives will not honor Him ... The discussion is not in any way about those who have never tasted the grace of God in Christ Jesus. He refers to those who possessed the truth at one time but deflected from it. It is important to realize that there is a tremendous difference between the original returning to God in the initial conversion of man, and the returning of the erring Christian to the truth. (S. Zodhiates) In light of James’s overall system of convictions, we can also identify this apostasy as the rejection of or failure to perform the will of God ... Since this believer “wanders from the truth,” we may infer that the negative subject lacks (or perhaps more accurately has lost) some type of knowledge, specifically knowledge regarding the will of God. (T. Cargal) We must notice, at the outset, the supreme importance which our apostle ascribes here, and throughout his Epistle, to “the truth.” He strikes as loyal a note as Paul does, regarding the necessity of “consenting” to sound doctrine if one would live the Christian life. He assumes that all backsliding is aberration from the truth. His words cover both forms which apostasy may take – errors of creed and of conduct. A brother may go astray as regards doctrine, or as regards practice. (C. Jerdan)

The word “truth” here also means all that Christ taught and instituted. It is His whole doctrinal and practical teaching. And where is this teaching to be found? In the Word of God, in the Bible. Let us be careful not to deflect from the Bible. We may safely conclude that James, in referring primarily to Jesus Christ as the “truth,” places emphasis both on doctrine and on the Christian life ... Generally, when one deflects in doctrine, he will also deflect in life. Let him cease to believe some fundamental doctrine of the Word of God, and he will cease to behave as a Christian should ... We conclude that this deflection in doctrine or life is not a mortal sin, but that there is a possibility of recovery from it. We as fallible human beings often go astray both in doctrine and life. But the important thing is not to stay away from the truth when we realize our error ... Let none of us boast of perfection here on earth or of infallibility in doctrine or in life, for then we would be laying claim to that which belongs to heaven as a part of our experience on earth. (S. Zodhiates) Erring members of the church are not necessarily passively waiting to be brought back to the truth. They are not like sheep that have gone

astray and are waiting patiently for the shepherd to rescue them. Tactfully reproving a person who is wandering from the truth is one of the most difficult tasks in the work of the church. (S. Kistemaker)

James concludes by confirming the central importance of the way of wisdom, which is able to guide wayward souls back into fellowship with God. This parting accent is apropos in a wisdom writing, where a decisive “yes” to the “Word of truth” and a “no” to falsehood resist the very duplicity that leads to deception and undermines the spiritual formation of the immature believer ... The commission instructs the congregation to have special concern for foolish believers who have been deceived by falsehood and have departed from the “Word of truth” that defines the way of wisdom. Their spiritual healing will result in salvation rather than condemnation at the end of the age. (R. Wall) James closes this epistle with a great concern that his readers do not stray from the truth ... To wander from the truth is a step *toward* committing some moral sin; thus, the fundamental preventative from moral sin is adherence to truth, primarily theological truth. Such theological truth underlies all of James’s teaching in this letter. (W. Baker) According to James, it is possible for a true Christian to stray from the truth. The conditional clause implies that it is by no means inevitable that he will always be turned back. (J. Dillow) Correct doctrine cannot be separated from correct behavior. (D. Moo) The power of worldliness and heretical allurements is prominent. (D. Hiebert)

James 5:19 My (Gen. Rel.) brethren (Voc. Address; members of the royal family of God), if (protasis, 3rd class condition, “maybe you will, maybe you won’t”) anyone (Subj. Nom.) among you (Dat. Assoc.) has been seduced (πλανάω, ASubj.3S, Dramatic, Potential; deluded, deceived, misled) away from doctrine (Abl. Separation; scar tissue of the soul in full operation) and (continuative) someone (Subj. Nom.; a supergrace believer) turns him (Acc. Adv.) around (ἐπιστρέφω, AASubj.3S, Culminative, Potential; changes his attitude towards the truth),

^{BGT} **James 5:19** Ἀδελφοί μου, ἐάν τις ἐν ὑμῖν πλανηθῆ ἀπὸ τῆς ἀληθείας καὶ ἐπιστρέψῃ τις αὐτόν,

^{VUL} **James 5:19** fratres mei si quis ex vobis erraverit a veritate et converterit quis eum

^{LWB} **James 5:20** Let him know that the one [mature believer] who turns the sinner [reversionist] away from the delusion of his way, shall deliver his soul [person] from the [sin unto] death and shall cover a large number of [unconfessed] sins.

^{KW} **James 5:20** Let him be knowing that he who has turned a sinner from the error of his way shall save his soul from death and shall cover up a large number of sins.

^{KJV} **James 5:20** Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

The mature believer should understand (Perfective Present tense) that when he turns a reversionistic sinner away from the deceit and delusion of his manner of life (Ingressive Aorist tense), he will deliver this person from the sin unto physical death (Predictive Future tense). Just like our deathbed apostate earlier in this chapter, where a faithful group of doctrinal pastors prayed and delivered the sinner in verbal reversionism from a miserable death, a believer who restores a fellow believer to the truth is delivering him from a terrible fate. Not only that, he will also be covering a multitude of unconfessed sins (Predictive Future tense) that have either been committed already and are hidden from view - or they have yet to be committed and the restoration of the believer might end up avoiding them altogether. "Deliverance," of course, is temporal and experiential. This has nothing to do with the eternal destiny of the fellow believer; that was already decided by God in eternity past. This refers to a believer with blackout of the soul who was about to be "taken home" by physical death, but was instead restored to the spiritual life by the assistance of a caring friend with maximum doctrine in his soul.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

James underscores that the Christian who is walking the way of righteousness is responsible for the wanderer ... and that there is some type of blessing for the one who rescues the brother or sister from error ... They cannot "restore" others by "grumbling against one another" and "condemning" their sisters and brothers in the faith; rather, they must encourage "patient endurance" by directing the attention of "wandering" and "suffering" believers toward God's goodness and provision through communal prayer, praise and confession. (T. Cargal) The restored sinner's multitude of sins are now out of sight through the pardon he has received. And the loving brother who turns him back is credited not only with the preservation of his fellow Christian's life, but also with making him clean, as if his efforts have removed from view all unsightly moral disfigurements which sin creates. Thanks to such personal involvement, the formerly erring Christian is both physically alive and spiritually clean. (Z. Hodges) If someone of the church wanders from the truth and falls into one of Satan's traps, the other members must be prepared to rescue the wayward. If we fail to warn or speak out, we ourselves are guilty, for God holds us responsible, i.e., Ezek. 3:17-19. (S. Kistemaker)

When we restore an erring brother or sister to the truth, many sins that would otherwise flow from that error are prevented from occurring. (W. Baker) The last admonition which James gives in his epistle is a very appropriate one in view of the fact that backsliding from the truth is a great possibility among Christians. This possibility is acknowledged by nearly all theologians ... A doctrine of the irretrievability of the apostate would logically ruin some of the most precious doctrines of the Word of God. It would make the salvation of Christ of no real avail. If Christ's redemption is not sufficient from start to finish, what good is it? The salvation wrought by Christ is efficacious to the very end. (S. Zodhiates) The vocation of the "user friendly" church, then, is the restoration of the foolish to the way of wisdom ... The "diaspora" of wandering believers who have lost their way through foolish deception or disobedience will end with the *parousia*. There will be no sin or suffering in the coming age; neither will there be deception or disobedience. (R. Wall) Physical death is the ultimate form of divine discipline. (W. Baker) Salvation here is the deliverance from the spiritually impoverishing consequences of sin and the experiential blessing of God now. It is not final deliverance from hell. (J. Dillow)

When a believer fails to respond to discipline, God may take him home ... Truly regenerate people are certainly in view here. These sheep within the fold have “wandered.” The restoration of carnal Christians is in view. The death here may be the “sin unto death” referred to in 1 Cor. 11:30 and 1 John 5:16. Certainly this is the ultimate consequence of divine discipline brought upon the sinning Christian. But short of that, the life of the sinning Christian can only be characterized as spiritually dead. (J. Dillow) If we the Lord’s children see a brother behaving in this dangerous way, we are encouraged to make some effort to correct him if possible. Most of us are reluctant to do this, all too aware of our own spiritual frailty ... There is no question of personal salvation being at stake, but of turning an erring brother back from a course of action which can only have fatal consequences for his life here on earth if he persists. (A. Custance) Wandering ones need to be brought back to the fold. James referred here not to evangelism but to restoration. Revival, not redemption, is in view. The rescue action is of great significance. A lost sheep is saved from destruction and his sins (the sins of the restored one, not the restorer) are covered as if a veil were thrown over them. He can move ahead again on the path toward spiritual maturity. (J. Blue)

James 5:20 Let him know (γινώσκω, PAImp.3S, Perfective, Entreaty) that (introductory) the one (Subj. Nom.; the mature believer) who turns (ἐπιστρέφω, AAPtc.NMS, Ingressive, Substantival, Articular) the sinner (Acc. Dir. Obj.; reversionist) away from the delusion (Abl. Separation; deception, error) of his (Poss. Gen.) way (Adv. Gen. Ref.), shall deliver (σῶζω, FAI3S, Predictive) his (Poss. Gen.; the reversionist's) soul (Acc. Dir. Obj.) from (the sin unto) death (Abl. Separation; physical) and (continuative) shall cover (καλύπτω, FAI3S, Predictive) a large number (Acc. Measure; multitude) of (unconfessed) sins (Gen. Adv.).

^{BGT} **James 5:20** γινωσκέτω ὅτι ὁ ἐπιστρέψας ἁμαρτωλὸν ἐκ πλάνης ὁδοῦ αὐτοῦ σώσει ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἐκ θανάτου καὶ καλύψει πλῆθος ἁμαρτιῶν.

^{VUL} **James 5:20** scire debet quoniam qui converti fecerit peccatorem ab errore viae suae salvabit animam eius a morte et operit multitudinem peccatorum

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