



The Book of James

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1 James, a slave^a of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,

To the twelve tribes in the Dispersion:^b
Greetings.

Testing of Your Faith

2 Consider it all joy, my brothers,^c when you encounter various trials, **3** knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. **4** And let endurance have its perfect work, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

5 But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproaching,^d and it will be given to him. **6** But let him ask in faith, without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. **7** For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; **8** he is a double-minded^e man, unstable in all his ways.

9 But Let the lowly brother boast^f in his exaltation, **10** and the rich man should boast in his humiliation, because like flowering grass he will pass away. **11** For the sun rises with a scorching wind and withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beauty perishes; so too will the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits.

12 Blessed is the man^g who endures under trial; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord^h has promised to those who love him. **13** Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be temptedⁱ with evil,^j and he himself tempts no one. **14** But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own desire.^k **15** Then the desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. **17** Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.^l **18** Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

Hearing and Doing the Word

19 Know this, my beloved brothers: let every man be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; **20** for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God. **21** Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and abundance of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.^m

22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. **23** For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural faceⁿ in a mirror.

^g Literally "the man," but here is referring to a man or woman

^h i.e., God (the Father)

ⁱ Lit untempted

^j That is *evil persons*, or *evil things*

^k Or "own lust"

^l Or "with whom there is not a variation or the turning of the shadow."

^m Or "is able to save you"

ⁿ Lit *the face of his birth*

^a Or "servant"

^b Jewish people scattered throughout Gentile lands

^c Both *brothers and sisters*

^d Without *criticizing*

^e Or "indecisive," i.e., wavering in mind

^f Or "rejoice"



²⁴ for he looks at himself and goes away, and immediately forgets what sort of man he was. ²⁵ But he that looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, being no hearer who forgets but a doer of a work, he will be blessed in his doing.

²⁶ If any man thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless. ²⁷ Pure and undefiled religion before^a our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

The Sin of Partiality

2 My brothers, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an attitude of personal favoritism. ² For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and there also comes in a poor man in filthy clothes, ³ and you look with favor upon the one who is wearing the fine clothes, and say, "You sit here in a good place," and you say to the poor man, "You stand over there, or sit down by my footstool," ⁴ have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?

⁵ Listen, my beloved brothers: did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love him? ⁶ But you have dishonored the poor man. Are not the rich the ones who oppress you, and the ones who drag you into court? ⁷ Do they not blaspheme the honorable name by which you have been called? ⁸ If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself,"^b you are doing well. ⁹ But if you show favoritism, you commit sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.

¹⁰ For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all. ¹¹ For he who said, "Do not commit adultery,"^c also said, "Do not murder."^d If you do not commit adultery but do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. ¹² So speak and so act as men who are to be judged by the law of liberty. ¹³ For judgment is without mercy to him who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

Faith Without Works Is Dead

¹⁴ What use is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? ¹⁵ If a brother or sister is without clothes and lacks daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what good^e is that? ¹⁷ Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead in itself.

¹⁸ But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. ¹⁹ You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder. ²⁰ But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is useless? ²¹ Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? ²² You see that faith was working together with his works, and by the works the faith was perfected;^f ²³ and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness,"^g and he was called a friend of God.

²⁴ You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone. ²⁵ And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute

^a Or *in the sight of*

^b Quote from Lev. 19:18

^c Quote from Ex. 20:14; Deut. 5:18

^d Quote from Ex. 20:13; Deut. 5:17

^e Or "benefit"

^f Or "completed"

^g Quoted from Gen. 15:6



justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? ²⁶ For as the body apart from the spirit^a is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.

Controlling the Tongue

3 Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, knowing that we shall receive heavier judgment. ² For we all stumble^b in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says,^c he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body. ³ Now if we put bits into the mouths of horses so that they obey us, we also guide their whole bodies. ⁴ Look at the ships also, though they are so great and are driven by strong winds, are still directed by a very small rudder wherever the inclination of the pilot wills.

⁵ So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things.

See how great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! ⁶ And the tongue is a fire, the world of iniquity;^d the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life,^e and is set on fire by Gehenna.^f ⁷ For

^a Or *breath*

^b Or "make mistakes."

^c Lit., "word"

^d Or "unrighteousness"

^e Lit., "the wheel of birth (existence, origin)."

^f **Gehenna:** *geenna* (Gehenna) occurs 12 times and is the Greek name for the valley of Hinnom, southwest of Jerusalem (Jer. 7:31), where the horrendous worship of Moloch took place, and it was prophetically said that where dead bodies would be thrown. (Jer. 7:32; 19:6) It was an incinerator where trash and dead bodies were destroyed, not a place to be burned alive or tormented. Jesus and his disciples used Gehenna to symbolize eternal destruction, annihilation, or the "second death," an eternal punishment of death.

every kind^g of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind. ⁸ But no man can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. ⁹ With it we bless our Lord^h and Father, and with it we curse men who are made in the likeness of God. ¹⁰ From the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. ¹¹ Does a fountain send forth from the same opening both sweet water and bitter? ¹² Can a fig tree, my brothers, produce olives, or a vine produce figs? Neither can salt water produce fresh water.

The Wisdom from Above

¹³ Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by his good behavior his works in meekness of wisdom. ¹⁴ But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and tell lies against the truth. ¹⁵ This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, soulical,ⁱ demonic. ¹⁶ For where there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there is disorder and every evil practice. ¹⁷ But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial, without hypocrisy. ¹⁸ And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by^j those who make peace.

Warning Against Worldliness

4 What is the source of wars^k and fights^l among you? Are they not from this source, your pleasures that wage war in your members?^m ² You lust and do not have, so you commit murder. You desire, and yet you

^g Lit., "nature"

^h Gr., *ton Kurion*

ⁱ Or *natural, animalistic, unspiritual*

^j Or *for*; or possibly *among*

^k Or *quarrels*

^l Or *conflicts*

^m I.e., *a conflict within you*



do not have, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. ³You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives,^a so that you may spend it on your pleasures.

⁴You adulteresses,^b do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity^c toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. ⁵Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose, “The spirit that dwells in us strongly desires to envy”?^d ⁶But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”^d

⁷Submit therefore to God. Stand against^e the devil and he will flee from you. ⁸Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom. ¹⁰Humble yourselves in the eyes of the Lord, and he will exalt you.

¹¹Do not speak against one another, brothers. He who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. ¹²There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor?

Our Will and His Will

¹³Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit.” ¹⁴Yet you do not know what

your life will be like tomorrow.^g For you are a mist appearing for a little while and then vanishing ¹⁵Instead you ought to say,^h “If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.” ¹⁶As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. ¹⁷Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.

Warning to the Rich

5 Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries which are coming upon you. ²Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten. ³Your gold and your silver have rusted; and their rust will be a witness against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure in the last days. ⁴Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, are crying out against you, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.ⁱ ⁵You have lived on the earth in luxury and in sensual indulgence. You have fattened^j your hearts in a day of slaughter. ⁶You have condemned, and you have murdered^k the righteous one; he does not resist you.

Patiently Waiting for the Lord

⁷Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming^l of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it^m receives the early and the late rains. ⁸You also, be

^a Lit., *wickedly or badly*

^b Or *unfaithful ones*

^c Or *hostility*

^d A quotation from Pro 3:34

^e I.e., *resist or oppose*

^f Or *in the presence of or before*

^g Or *what will happen tomorrow. What kind of life is yours?*

^h Lit *Instead of your saying*

ⁱ I.e. *Hosts*

^j Lit., *nourished*

^k Or *put to death*

^l Or *presence (Gr parousia)*, which denotes both an “arrival” and a consequent “presence with.”

^m Or *he*



patient. Establish your hearts,^a for the coming^b of the Lord is at hand. ⁹ Do not grumble^c against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at^d the door.^e ¹⁰ As an example, brothers, of suffering and patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. ¹¹ We count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the endurance^f of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord,^g that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful.

Truthful Speech

¹² But above all, my brothers, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but let your “yes” be yes and your “no” be no,^h so that you may not fall under judgment.

The Effective Prayer of Faith

¹³ Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise.ⁱ ¹⁴ Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the congregation,^j and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵ And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick,^k and

the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. ¹⁶ Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The supplication^l of a righteous man can accomplish much. ¹⁷ Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. ¹⁸ Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.

¹⁹ My brothers, if any among you strays from the truth and one turns him back, ²⁰ let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

direction concerning their prayer accompanying unction with oil; 3. and especially the confident promise that the prayer of faith shall restore the sick apart from his restoration being connected with the forgiveness of his sins. Was the Apostle warranted to promise bodily recovery in every case in which a sick individual complied with his directions? This misgiving urges us to adopt the symbolical construction of the passage, which would be as follows: if any man as a Christian has been hurt or become sick in his Christianity, let him seek healing from the presbyters, the kernel of the congregation. Let these pray with and for him and anoint him with the oil of the Spirit; such a course wherever taken, will surely restore him and his transgressions will be forgiven him. - John Peter Lange, Philip Schaff, et al., *A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: James* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2008), 138.

^a Or *strengthen your hearts*

^b Or *presence* (Gr *parousia*), which denotes both an “arrival” and a consequent “presence with.”

^c Lit *groan*

^d Lit *before*

^e Lit *doors*

^f Or *steadfastness*

^g Lit., *end of the Lord*

^h Lit., *yours is to be yes, yes, and no, no*

ⁱ Lit., *sing psalms*

^j Gr *ekklesia* (“assembly;” “congregation, i.e., of Christians”)

^k The “sickness” here is a reference to spiritual weakness or sickness, not some physical sickness. The J. P. Lang Commentary says, 1. The calling for the presbyters of the congregation in the Plural; 2. the general

^l I.e., *prayer*