

The Book of James

1:1-18

We continue our study today in the book of James. Let me remind you that last time we looked at who the author was of this epistle, and I believe it was James, the half-brother of Jesus, if we compare Scripture with Scripture. The date this epistle was written seems to have been around A.D. 45, and the setting... this book was written to Jewish Christians who had been scattered from Palestine by persecution or other situations. And I believe the key verse found in chapter 1 is verse 22 where it says: *But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.*

We look at James 1:1 and it says, *James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.* James wanted to reach his fellow Jewish people with the Word of God, so he's also writing to them.

We see something in verse 2. It says, *My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations.* So we see he's not only writing to Jews, but he's writing also to Jewish believers who have trusted Jesus as Savior.

In verse 3, it says, *Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. ⁴But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.*

It's hard to believe, but good results come from temptation, and it seems that James is saying recognize the fruit of testing in verses 2-4. Joy, patience, making perfect and complete with nothing missing.

And then we also see how to make sound decisions in verses 5-8. Verse 5 says, *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. Ask God for help, James is saying here, in making sensible decisions. We can come to a lot of decisions, but we need to be able to make sensible decisions, and he says we can do that, according to verse 5.

Then we see in verse 6, *But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering.* In verse 6, it says ask in wisdom and don't doubt, without doubting. *Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.*

And we see in that verse also that the person who wavers is like the sea. They're unstable. They cannot make sound decisions.

And then in verse 7, the Bible says, *For let not that man [... the person who's wavering] ...let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.* James seems to be saying here that no faith means no blessing from the Lord. Faith brings blessings and we must have faith. This is, of course, talking about, first of all, we have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the risen Savior who can save us.

But it goes further than that. It talks about having faith after you're saved. Faith-believing that God's going to do over and above what He's already done, and that's save you. In order to be successful in the Christian life, we must have that faith continue on, not to remain saved, but in order to receive the blessings God wants to give us. We must have that faith. We must faith-believe.

Then in verse 8, it says, *A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.* Now, a person who cannot make sound decisions is not sure

of anything, and that carries through these verses that we just read, verses 5-8. That person who cannot make sound decisions is really not sure. And remember, the verse says that they are tossed to and fro like the wave of the sea.

Then we read in verses 9-11 here that humbleness produces the proper perspective about life. Verse 9 says, *Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted.* I believe that James is saying here, "Are you poor? Be happy. You are lifted high." We may not understand that, but he's actually talking about being lifted higher than what we anticipated. "You're lifted high," and this would be in the sight of God. And what better way and what better person to be lifted up to is God. There is no better person. There is no other blessing that can come of a higher degree than to be lifted up and be blessed by God.

In verses 10-11, *But the rich, in that he is made low...* Now, remember verse 9 says, *Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted....* or that person who is poor, and verse 10 says, *But the rich, in that he is made low, because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away.* ¹¹*For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways.*

I believe that James is saying here in verses 10-11 riches are only for a season like the grass and flowers. There's nothing wrong with being rich, but we should never place our trust in riches. And of course, when we get saved, we're placing our trust in the Lord, but after getting saved, there are some people who are actually rich. They have money after they get saved, and now they've placed their trust in the Lord. They've said, "I want Jesus Christ. I'm not trusting my riches to be saved."

But then it seems like they start trusting in their riches to get through this life, not to remain saved now, but in order to get through this life, they start trusting in riches. And James warns about that. He says just as you're not saved by riches or by trusting in those riches you are really not made happy through those riches, don't trust in riches, because they're going to be gone someday.

Then in James 1:12, we see a promised blessing there. It says, *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.* A promised blessing, a loving promise is seen here, the crown of life.

In Philippians 3:10-14, it says, *That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; ¹¹If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. ¹²Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. ¹³Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, ¹⁴I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*

Paul the apostle carried the thought of James 1:12 further. He said that he was complete in the Lord Jesus Christ. He is forgetting those things which are behind and pressing toward the mark. We have a guilty conscience sometimes as saved people. We worry about what has taken place in the past. When God says, "Forget that. It's over with. You need to reach forth. You need to go forward and serve Me in the fullness of the Spirit."

In Revelation 2:10, it says, *Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.*

It doesn't mean everybody is going to die. It doesn't mean we're all going to suffer alike or that even we will suffer, and he says, "You remain faithful and receive the crown of life."

Now, James 1:13-18: This is recognizing God as the source of all good things. Notice verse 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.* Verse 13 tells us that God is not the tempter. You remember how that Jesus Himself was tempted of the devil. Jesus was led into the wilderness and the devil came and tempted Him, but Jesus said, "Get thee behind me." He says, "Leave me alone." And we understand by reading once again, comparing Scripture with Scripture, that God is not the tempter. When temptation comes along, it is not God who is doing the tempting.

Notice verse 14: *But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.* Man is at fault when giving in to temptation according to verse 14. It's not God. It's really not the devil. It's our fault. It's man's fault. Man is at fault when he gives in to the temptation.

Verse 15: *Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.* Lust made alive, in other words, it produces something when lust is alive. When we allow lust to come into our lives, lust made alive produces sin, and of course, the result of sin is death, according to verse 15.

Verse 16 says this: *Do not err, my beloved brethren.* Now, that's pretty simple. In other words, don't do wrong.

Verse 17, the first part of the verse says: *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights....* Everything that is good comes from God. We sometimes think that we're the ones who bring the good into our own lives, but it's God who gives the good. All the good in this world, all the good in our lives, comes from God, and the rest of that verse 17 talks about the father of lights there in verse 17... *with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.* Well, this is simply saying that God makes no mistake. He does not change. There is no variableness with God. He's the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Now notice verse 18, speaking of God once again: *Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.* This is simply saying, "I believe God brought us into being by Jesus Christ."

In John 14:6 it talks about the truth. *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.* And of course, John 1:1 says, *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* John 1:14: *And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*

Do you know Him today as your Savior? You need to ask Him to come into your heart. The next time, we're going to pick up with James 1:19-20. That's where we'll start. But you need to start today by receiving Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. Ask Him to come into your heart.

And if you are saved, you need to live for Him. Tell Him: "Lord, I want to live for you." You need to let Him lead and guide your life.