

# James - Chapter 1, Part 4 - Conclusion

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, good morning. Yeah, use a little psychology, a little self-talk there. It's that white stuff that keeps visiting us, and we just got to love it, that's all.

Thank you all for being here this morning, and if the nearest could make it all the way from West Liberty, that leaves the rest of us without an excuse, doesn't it? That's true. Glad to have all you guys with us this morning.

Thank you, and I hope you appreciate the cheese in there. Avail yourself of it because you need a little protein with all of this snow and extra effort that is required out there.

And by the time you figure out how to get that package open to get the cheese out, you will need the protein that it provides. So anyway, thank you again.

Let's pray. We're grateful, Father, for this new day you've given us, and the snow reminds us of your faithfulness in the changing of the seasons. If there's anything about you that we could change, we wouldn't, because you are perfect just as you are.

[ 1 : 14 ] And we thank you for being the God that you are and for making us who and what we are in and through the Lord Jesus Christ. We shall be forever grateful.

For the content that is before us, we pray for an appreciation of it, the ability to understand it in its application. I ask that you give to Tad the wisdom and the direction that he needs from you to communicate it to us.

And we thank you for the day ahead in Christ's name. Amen. Tad, you guys got to be special to get up so early in the morning and get out in this stuff.

That's great. Appreciate it. Last week we talked a little bit about football. Anybody watch some football Sunday night? Oh, yeah. You didn't do that, huh?

I watched some of that, too. Oh, Brady knew how to do it, didn't he? He taught the youngster a few lessons. Yeah, I guess so. They just had a hard time.

[ 2 : 14 ] It was a long night for Kansas. Maybe it was the lady on the field. Oh, I didn't say that. Mrs. Mahomes, his mother said it was a fish game.

The quarterback's mother said it was a fish game. Okay. Did they butcher the Star-Spangled Banner? Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. Did they? Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. I knew they would. Oh, my.

They can't leave it alone. They have to improve it. Yeah. Yeah. Well, we talked a little bit about football last week and how we're like a football team in some respects in that we are the body of Christ, and we've got a coach, and our coach is Jesus, and he's the boss.

He's the CEO. And thankful that you've come out this morning, kind of a wintry day, cold day, to learn some things from his word and maybe just be reminded and have some good fellowship together.

I appreciate it so much, opportunity to share together. We're looking at the book of James, James, and James is one who was transformed by the newness that Christ, his half-brother, who became his Savior, who is alive, became his director and captain in life.

[ 3 : 39 ] We're looking at James 1, verse number 18, is where we pick it up today. And here's an expression of some power. You've got James 1, verse 18.

Some of you have some other scriptures we'll look at along the way if you want to take some notes and write those references down as we go. They might be helpful. Verse 18 says, Of his own will, who's that?

That'd be God. Yeah. Of his own will, he brought us forth by the word of truth that he might be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

Wow. There's an expression of power. I think he's speaking concerning the new birth, the new birth that James experienced and that you've experienced too. And that's something that God is the one

who initiated.

He's the one who called us and had a plan and he worked out that plan and we are the firstfruits. Does that kind of click something in your mind from the Old Testament?

[ 4 : 46 ] They were to bring, the children of Israel, were to bring the firstfruits, the best and the first. And God says, we are the firstfruits of his creation.

Wow. It's like... And yet, there's the idea with the firstfruit that there is more to come. Right. So what do you think with that? One day, there's going to be a new heaven and a new earth.

Not only are we made new, that's something that's real right now, but there's going to be a new heaven and a new earth. And so, I think this says something about God's intent, don't you?

He's got a plan. He's working his plan out. And James kind of clarifies some things for us. Just by way of a little bit of review, he's talked about, oh my, he's talked about tests and trials.

And since you don't go through any of that, we won't dwell on that very long. I'm jesting. We all do, don't we? We've got tests and we've got trials.

[ 5 : 50 ] And we also have temptations. The tests, the trials come from God. The temptations come from within us, the old nature, from the flesh, the source of evil.

But he also reminds us of something else that we saw last time. And that is, the source of good is that the Father of lights gives to us all good things.

And so, we are to seek him. And the way we seek him is in prayer. And we need to seek wisdom.

And when we seek God's wisdom in the time of temptation, he has promised that he will provide us a way of escape that we may be able to bear it.

Yeah, you remembered that, didn't you? All right? There's, so there's an active participation that we have by way of praying, but also some doing.

And James is going to emphasize that. James says it's part of God's will and he describes it kind of an analogy by way of referring to the childbirth process.

[ 6 : 59 ] He's the Father, we are the kids, we're born into his family, and that's a result of the gospel of Christ doing a work within us by way of his grace as we put our faith in him.

So God has an intent. He has a plan. Paul talks about that in Philippians chapter 1, verse number 6. Philippians 1, 6. Somebody's got that one.

Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. Didn't that just kind of thrill you?

That is something that's really powerful. And James' encouragement here is that we should trust the reality that what God started in us, he's going to work it out.

He's going to continue to the work. So that's an encouragement for us to keep in the wisdom. in the word. And in the time of temptation, God is going to see us through.

[ 8 : 02 ] There's a willful response that we need to have in all of this. Paul talks about this in another way in Romans chapter 8 and verse 30.

It's not quite 8:30, but you can read it, okay? Okay. And those whom he predestined, he also called. And those whom he called, he also justified. And those whom he justified, he also glorified. Does that sound like God's got a plan?

All right. Let me read it again see if you catch what I do wrong. Moreover, whom he predestinated, those he also called, whom he called, those he also justified, and whom he justified, those he also sanctified.

Is that what it said? He also, last word was glorified. Glorified. I said sanctified.

[ 9 : 10 ] Glorified is the finished product. Glorified is the finished product. And so God is pointing us to the final end. Maybe that's because he didn't say sanctified because, okay, God does a work of sanctifying in us, but we also, in the present, have some work to do by way of sanctifying.

We are to sanctify ourselves and maybe that's what James is getting at. Listen, guys, you've got some responsibility in all of this by way of the sanctification process.

So we need to yield and give up ourselves to God, yield our minds and be transformed, be renewed so that the spiritual maturity really takes place.

And I say, Father, I really need you to help me in this process. And I thank you that the finished product is going to come.

And the verse is right, the verse right before that, 828, tells us that all the things that we do are going to be for our good towards that end. Towards that end.

[ 10 : 20 ] He's going to make it good for us to do it. 828. So if we can keep that in mind, maybe that'll help us with what James says, count it all, joy.

Joy? God's got a process. He's working it out. He's not finished with us yet. He's going to work all this out. Okay. In James chapter 1, so there's an examination, there are trials, there are testings, there are temptations, trials have are reasons for joy.

I'm going back a little bit. And there are tests, and these tests, these trials come from where? Within. Okay.

In a sense, the test, the trials, the temptations, that way, they come from within. The test, the trials that come from the outside. And so James, I think he's dealing with two things.

The test, the trials, that come from without, those come from God. The test, the trials, the temptations, come from within. So he's using the same word in some different ways, and I think he's trying to get us to do some thinking about this whole process.

[ 11 : 37 ] And so in all of this, we are to seek his wisdom, so we need to ask him. And God gives to us an open book test.

Huh? Well, he's given to us the word, and we are to listen for his instruction, for his testing. And in the testing, he'll give us the answer.

He'll give us wisdom. In the temptations, he'll give us the way to escape. And he says to us as well that there is an eternal reward, the crown of life.

Okay, I'm just trying to stimulate your mind on some things we've talked about. Paul talks about this same thing as well in the book of Colossians chapter 1 and verses 9 through 12.

Listen carefully to Colossians 1, 9 through 12, and I think you'll see some parallels to what James is saying and what Paul says. Isn't it just fascinating how the word of God just, there isn't contradiction, it all meshes together.

[ 12 : 47 ] Colossians 1, 9 and following. For this cause, we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray to you and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will and all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God, strengthened with all might according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness, giving thanks unto the Father which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in life.

Thank you. You see how Paul's praying for these Colossians? I wish you'd pray for me like that.

We should pray for our wives, our families this way. That's what James is talking about as well.

Whoa. James said repeatedly that if we're going to make it through the tests, through the temptations, we've got to pray for wisdom.

Seek God in the Word and in prayer and in this text now in James 1.19 he's going to emphasize the Word. Okay?

And he says, James 1.19 So then, my beloved brethren, don't you just love that? The endearment and the family? I like the term brethren.

[ 14 : 32 ] I don't know about you. So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to what?

Hear, slow to speak, slow to anger. Verse 20. For the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. Therefore, lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness and what? Receive with meekness meekness, the Word implanted which is able to save your souls. Alright, I'm reading from the New King James. Some of you got some different versions that maybe doesn't follow, but the ideas are the same.

In verse 19, you'll find the idea here. In verse 21, it's related to the word receive, receiving.

So he says, what have I told you? What have you heard? And so, he's trying to do for us what we've just done.

[ 15 : 41 ] A little bit of review of some of the things he's already said. These things you know. Okay, what has James been teaching them? What's he been teaching us?

We know that the Father is the Father of all lights. And that we are the first fruits among creatures. But the problem was back then in James' day, they were not living according to what he had just said. They were reacting with, in the time of trials, and the temptations with anger.

And there was doubt. This is what they were experiencing. And rather than listening and hearing, they were speaking. Isn't it interesting?

God's given us two ears and one mouth. And he's saying to us that I want you to hear. Quick to hear.

[16:50] And in this day, when James is writing, they didn't have a Bible on the table in front of them or in their hand. They didn't have several copies of it at home.

Yeah? in mind, it says, implanted word.

Implanted to me means it's already there. Yeah. Okay. We're going to get to that idea, but don't forget that. Okay. God has given it to us. But in this day, they needed to hear it, so where did they go?

They went to the synagogue. They went to the temple. They didn't carry around their Bible. They had to hear it and really listen to what was being said.

Quick to hear the word. And yet, they weren't doing that.

[17:53] Instead, they were getting angry. They were getting frustrated. And they knew, okay, he said, you're going through tests and trials, but through the tests and trials, they weren't facing those in a godly way.

Whoa. So, we go through tests and trials, huh? You may have a spouse or a child or a grandchild that has something physical that's really difficult.

My wife has had cancer. She heard from an endocrinologist, I want you to have an ultrasound of your thyroid.

Oh, boy, some things go off in her mind. She's diabetic and she needs to prick her finger.

Medicare has said, no, we're not going to pay for your test strips anymore. What's this? And so, we kind of deal with that.

[19:06] That kind of plays on your mind. yesterday, yesterday, I heard a sister-in-law talking to my wife. We've done all of this by way of fixing up our kitchen and the counters, they're a mess.

They're not holding up. And then finally, after she went on, you know how ladies do, she kind of said, I know it's just stuff. It's material.

And I need to get my mind in a better place. We go through tests, don't we? With the tests we're going through, I thought to myself, I'm going to call that doctor up and I'm going to give him a piece of my mind and say, wait, get on the stick.

You know, there's some other things that we're just not getting answers. It's been weeks. Come on. I just thought, okay, do what this says. It doesn't mean I don't do anything, but first of all, I need to pray.

Okay. You may lose a job. You may lose a business. Millions of different circumstances come up, don't they?

[20:20] Heavy weights, trials we go through, you can think of them. And the potential for stress and worry and frustration and fear, boy, they can just weigh us down.

Remember, that test is to produce maturity within us.

And remember, we're going to be graded by how we are doing. And so, we are supposed to seek God's wisdom in prayer and seek God's wisdom in the word of God.

So, we need to start telling ourselves the truth. But I think in James' day, and sometimes we do the same thing, we say, God, this is not fair.

I mean, you're, I don't like being treated like this. And we say unkind things to people because we're going through the crunch, you know.

[21:31] And we strike out at others in frustration. And we tell ourselves, God doesn't have anything to say to me in this situation where I am.

the Bible just doesn't address that. And we can have a self-pity party.

And we can get worked up with anxiety. And that does not produce the righteousness of God that He has designed that should be a part of our process.

And we get angry and we get frustrated. And then we look for ways where we can get out of this trial ourselves and we look for the world's wisdom.

We look for counsel from somebody else and just anybody, whoever. James says this anger does not produce the righteousness of God.

[22:38] and the producing of the righteousness of God is the whole point of why we're going through what we're going through.

God wants to grow us. He wants to mature us. And He doesn't bring trials to frustrate us. Unless maybe that frustration will bring maturity.

And I haven't quite figured out how that would be but maybe you can help me with that. Alright. We can stubbornly persist in going the way of the flesh or we can pursue the godly way.

He says be quick to hear. For them it meant they just needed to hear. We can hear by way of reading. He said be quick to hear and slow to speak.

okay. In the examples I've given maybe it's we get quick to speak our own frustrations and what we're going through and our circumstances and we begin to rationalize.

[ 23 : 50 ] Okay. I can figure this out. And we talk to ourselves about why this is happening and we talk to other people about why this is happening, and we talk so much that we don't listen to God.

Winston Churchill said something interesting one day. He said courage is what it takes to stand up and speak and courage is what it takes to sit down and listen.

Interesting. We need to sometimes just shut up and listen to God.

That's what Psalm 46 and verse 10 says. Let's listen to what God says. Psalm 46 and verse 10 that first part of it maybe you put it to memory.

Be still and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the heathen. I will be exalted in the earth. That's what James is getting at.

[ 25 : 06 ] And he found that in the Old Testament. Verse 21 receive God's word with meekness. That's power under control.

That's the idea of humility. Maybe you've heard the phrase let go and let God. All right. Receive the word of God with humility not pride.

We've got to deal with pride and humble ourselves and eliminate pride and humbly receive the truth of God. We don't deserve anything from God do we?

Not at all. We don't have anything good within ourselves except Jesus. Jesus. And he Christ is in us and he's the hope of glory.

And our trials are for our good. God says it. George Stulloch said we pray for safety and that instead of purity.

[ 26 : 16 ] We pray for safety instead of purity because we do not see impurity as dangerous. We pray for health and wealth and we think oh boy these would be blessings I'd really love to have these.

And the father sometimes says I'm going to send you a trial and that is something that is good. And that is hard to say sometimes hard to accept but these are the truths of life because everything that we need to face in the trial has been made available to us from God.

And in 2nd Peter chapter 1 Peter talks about that. Very same thing as well. Let's be reminded of this. 2nd Peter 1 and verse 2 and 3.

I'm not sure that you've got 2nd Peter chapter 1.

Oh chapter 1. I'm in 2. Yeah. Okay. Those are good wise words he's saying there and James would agree with that. grace and peace be multiplied to you through the knowledge of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ according as his divine power has given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness through the knowledge of him that has called us to glory and virtue.

[ 28 : 14 ] Okay. Thank you. Thank you. All right. God gives us the power. James says as was mentioned here God has already implanted this word within us.

What's he getting at there? Implanted means it's in you and you have it all the time every day and it's there to use to know to follow.

It's not something you use today and then maybe next week I'll decide I need it. It's there all the time implanted in you. Okay. So you can go to it all the time and it's there.

You can change. I think he's emphasizing a couple of different things. One would be the implanted word, the written word is in us but wait a minute.

There's certain things that are implanted in us if we're believers. Okay, we know the reality of salvation but there's a reality too that if we're going to get God's word in our mind we've got to work at it.

[ 29 : 25 ] We've got to let our minds be transformed, renewed. But there is somebody, the living word, who is implanted within us and he will never leave us or forsake us.

He's a shepherd who will guide us if we yield to him and let him do that work.

This just comes to mind. I was reading this morning in Psalm 91 and how we need guidance.

Psalms, that's back here in the Old Testament. Psalm 91, we need guidance in our lives and the implanted word. Jesus is within us. Psalm 23 says, the Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

He makes me to lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul.

[ 30 : 32 ] He leads me in the path of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil for thou art with me.

Your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemy. My cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

forever. That idea of the shadow of death in Psalm 91 he says, He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

Between you and I and the evil, the temptations, the trials is God.

And we are in the, He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide in the shadow of the Almighty. Normally maybe we think of shadows as not being such a good thing, but if we're in His shadow, if we're in His presence, that's a good thing, isn't it?

[ 32 : 04 ] Anyway, on the journey of life we're going through the wilderness. The children of Israel went through the wilderness, and they had a cloud by day, pillar of fire by night.

Jesus went into the wilderness and there He was tempted. The Father was with Him. the Spirit drove Him, led Him into the wilderness.

The Spirit was with Him. We have the implanted Word, Christ, the indwelling Shepherd, lives within us. He is our Savior.

Jesus said that this Word of God is implanted within our soul. That's what James says. Well, what's your soul? I'm not going to get real theological here because I'm just not that way in all things, but your soul is your real inner person, who you are, your heart, your mind.

And He's saying He is with us. This person lives within us. We receive the Word when we turn to His counsel and listen to it.

[ 33 : 32 ] We listen to God's voice rather than our own voice or the voices of others and or even our emotions.

When we understand our circumstances are part of His perspective, God's love. Wow. Our suffering, our illness, our weaknesses, in those times we can be reminded, I'm going to get a new body someday.

And there's the glorification. We look forward to that new body. When the business fails, maybe we need to ask ourselves, am I really seeking first His kingdom and about His business?

Is that the priority of my heart and life? You see, these words that James is giving to us, they're the words of life.

Receiving the implanted word means yielding to the instruction that the Spirit of God gives to us, yielding to that which is written down, walking according to His promptings.

[ 34 : 52 ] It's not enough to hear. We need to then act upon what we have heard. And Christ lives within us today, right?

We've got a relationship with Him. A relationship with Him, and this book is more than just a resource. We've got a relationship with the one who wrote it.

And so He says, be quick to hear, listen to the shepherd, get wisdom. This is not some Pollyannish sort of, you know, little fairy tale.

James 1 and verse 22 says this, follow along, verse 22. But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror. For he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.

[ 36 : 06 ] But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

Paul, it looks like there's a contradiction when you read Paul, I think it's relationship with this.

Paul says, no works are necessary. You are saved without works. You don't have to do works to be saved. It looks like a contradiction.

But if you understand, this, again, is the gospel of the kingdom here, and under the gospel of the kingdom, you did have to do good works under the law to satisfy God.

There were blessings for that, doing those. If you didn't do those, you didn't get the blessings. You didn't follow the commands. But under Paul, under grace, salvation by grace, you didn't do works.

[ 37 : 14 ] What happens is the works come after you're saved, after you accept. Christ, what he did on the cross for you. Then you will do works, just like any human will do things for somebody that does something good for them.

Christ saved you. So now, yes, you want to repay, so to speak, do good works for what he has done for you, the love he has given you. So it's almost automatic that the works come. If you're a believer now, under grace, it's almost automatic that you're going to do good works, that you're going to live according to what he would have you to do. But we don't have to do good works like James.

That's the little difference here. Under that gospel, you did have to do good works, but not under grace as we do now. But they will be there. They'll come automatically.

They'll follow. You'll have good works. Just, you know, that's my understanding to this conflict. It looks like there's a conflict, but there is no conflict about it.

[ 38 : 19 ] There will be good works one way, but before you, he says do them. Do you agree with that? There are, there's the truth that we are saved by grace and by grace alone, faith in God's grace.

Without works. Without works. There is the truth that when we believe upon Christ, we need his grace in order, his strengthening, his enablement, in order to live according to this.

So it's the truth of God's grace that saves, it's the truth of God's grace that enables us to so live.

There is the emphasis in various places in scripture of different aspects of this great truth that God gives.

Ephesians chapter 2 verse 10 says, we are his workmanship. created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in.

Yeah. Yeah. I was. Yeah. Amen. You go on right on James on 2 14.

[ 39 : 33 ] What does it profit? My brethren, if a man says he has faith, but has not works. And it goes on from there. Yeah. And he's going to hammer that throughout this book. Yeah.

I was blessed last week as one of the brothers who's not here this morning, so I'll talk about him without a name. but he was sharing how when he was leaving, he was picking up some of these.

And I said, that's a good thing. He had to stack them. I said, he said, I take them and I give them to people like at Kroger's. And I think that's part of good works that James is saying.

Things that are put out like this little thing. Don't let them sit on the table. Pick them up. Pass them out. Share a word.

This past week we went to the doctor's office. Surprise. Surprise. The lady's checking us in. Well, okay, she's working in Dayton.

[ 40 : 47 ] She lives in Centerville. She goes to school in Springfield. I said, you live in Centerville. Have you heard of the Grace Brethren Church on Social Road?

She gets in her phone. Well, that's in my zip code. I said, that's a good church. She said, finally after we talked a while, she said, thank you for telling me that. And I gave her one of those little pamphlets.

This is part of what we're to do. And I'm not trying to hold myself up. I'm just saying, let's be encouraged. Let's do this. I think one of the things that James would be getting at here for us today too, is if there is an indictment against the evangelical church today, it is that we are hearers, but we're not doing as we should be doing to the extent.

And a classic critic of Bible teaching churches is we come and we sit in our pews. We sit in our chairs. We sit and we soak and we sour.

We don't do all that we should do. And James emphasized that. And we love to read the Word of God. We love to study the Word of God.

[ 42 : 05 ] And he's emphasizing, don't just put it on a sign out front. Be that billboard. Live it. Show it.

Do we allow our thoughts and our actions to be changed? changed. And James says, prove what you believe by your doing.

Be doers of the Word means we're demonstrating this through action. And the emphasis in chapter 1 is that in the midst of trials and temptations, get this and do it.

And they were living it back then. doing can be as simple as what my wife does. She is a listener to people's troubles and their problems.

She just sits there and listens to their troubles and their problems and just tries to become a sympathetic ear. She does that very well.

[ 43 : 15 ] I can't do that. She does that very well. And that is a great work. she has brought some people out of depression and not liking themselves and so forth.

You can just see it in some people because of her friendship with that person or people. She's just so good at that. But that is a work of passive work if you want to say it.

But it is a work, a great work to people. And because of that people are attracted to her. They are attracted to her. That's what attracted me to her originally, to marry her.

Her family was like that. There was something different about that family. It was the way they were living their lives, how they showed love and compassion and patience. And that's what brought me to my wife.

It was fantastic. And I loved that. Great. so it doesn't have to be overt things that you do physically and you can see.

[ 44 : 23 ] That's what I'm getting about my works. They don't have to be things you can see other people do or that you have to do, do, do, do, do. They're not those kinds of things necessarily. They're overt things.

I think Francis Schaeffer was the gentleman who said what I do primarily is I listen about 90% of the time to people and what they're saying and then I have a foundation whereby I can speak some truth into their life.

Anyway, we have two choices that we can make when it comes to trial and when it comes to what we know.

We can hear the truth and think, I'm okay. I sure hope so and so is hearing this.

You know, they really need to get this, God. And I remember a guy who, I'm not picking on anybody, who sat in the back of the church in Dayton for 29 years and he listened to me and he was a great guy.

[ 45 : 35 ] Earl, he's with the Lord. Forgive me, brother. I'll talk about you a little. he would say, Pastor, I sit on the back row because I don't want it going over my head. Don't want anything going over my head.

Okay, all right. I've heard that one before. Okay, Earl. And I appreciate him. Anyway, people can just say, this is for somebody else.

God, or we can assume, okay, I've heard this, I know this, I'm already living like this, I'm doing all of this, and we can become very fairsake, we can become very proud.

I got this down, God. But we need to have a humble spirit. God is wanting to teach us, and we've got to have a teachable spirit with humility.

And there's a beautiful analogy here that James gives in that he talks about a man who looks at himself in the mirror. And when we do, we are to be examining and honest with what we see.

[ 46 : 56 ] When God speaks to us in his word, he speaks with authority. And he wants us to respond when he's pointing out things, all right, this is conviction, now do something with it.

Change. The word of God is like a mirror. I don't know about you, but I don't like looking in the mirror too much anymore. look in the mirror and you think, I don't like what I see.

And the longer you stand there you think, boy, I could fix that, I should do something about that.

And we don't like doing that. So we can look at the mirror and we can just go away, but God is saying when we look into the mirror of his word, we shouldn't just go away, we should stoop down, look into the word, and go and do it.

God wants us to change, primarily in what we're doing, but really our doing is a reflection of our being.

there was a pastor who had three college graduates who came to him and they were looking for some guidance what they should do in their graduation.

[ 48 : 30 ] And the pastor, wanting to help them, said, alright, you come to my office and in my office I have a mirror. And that if you look into this magical mirror in my office and you tell the truth of how you want to serve God, he will respond instantly by answering your prayer.

But if you look into the mirror and you lie, you will instantly disappear and go to hell. The UT, University of Texas graduate, walks in and looks into the mirror and he says, I want to be a successful businessman and I want to give the proceeds to help missionaries so that they can share the word of God around the world.

And immediately that man saw himself seated in an office building in New York City in a high towering building in a corner office, doing well.

Texas Tech grad walks in and he looks into the mirror and he says, I would like to be an author of Christian literature and help people come to know Jesus as their Savior and then believers grow in

the ways of God.

And he immediately sees himself with a stack of books books that are on the best-selling list.

Finally, the Texas A&M; grad walks in.

[ 50 : 12 ] He looks in the mirror and he says, I think, and immediately disappears. Okay, that's just a story.

This guy, the last one, he thought probably some good things about himself. Anyway, I heard a story about a father who I think was very wise when he told his son, you're going to school, I will pay and support you in school.

I will give you a check every month for your expenses. And he paused and he said, but I want you to come home every month and get that check.

And the son did. The father was wanting fellowship with his son. Our father wants fellowship with us.

He wants us to listen to what he has to say to us. He wants us to be close with him. And James is saying here, okay, you got problems, look into the perfect law of liberty and be transformed.

[ 51 : 42 ] Don't be like the guy who walks in the mirror, in the bathroom and he looks at himself and just, it's hopeless. Okay, it might be, but just don't walk away. Do something about the problem.

James says, verse 25, it's God's word that is the perfect law of liberty. Look at it. Stoop down, the idea is, and look into it.

Get a better look. Look intently. Stare at it. Gaze at it. Look closely. And the law of liberty is not the law of Moses. Moses. Okay, James is a Jew.

He's been brought up with this stuff. And in his day, that's all, you know, these Jewish people knew. They're kind of wondering, well, okay, what are we supposed to do now?

It's not the ceremonial law. It's not that we do all of that. So what are they supposed to do? It's not the Mosaic law that they're supposed to dig into.

[ 52 : 47 ] It would be a tendency just to go in an aimless sort of way. And he's saying, stoop down, look intently into the law of liberty, learn it, study it, abide in it, and you will be blessed if you do.

Wow. maybe we tend to get to the place where we want to be active and doing, doing, doing, doing, doing all of this stuff.

And yes, that's important, but being has to be first. Being one who hungers and thirsts, then we consider God's truth.

We're not a forgetful hearer, we're a doer of the truth. And James then gives to us an exhortation. I'm going to try and finish up this chapter. It seems like we've been a long time in it.

But to me it's been really helpful. Really helpful. Verse 26, If anyone among you thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless.

[ 54 : 13 ] Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this, to visit orphans and widows in their trouble and to keep yourself unspotted from the world.

A guy who thinks he's religious, he's going through all the motions, you know. Remember, he's talking about believers here.

But here's a guy who's just going through the motions. James is talking about someone who looks into the mirror, the perfect law of liberty, and does something about it.

This religious change in a life does something from within. But if you're just going through the motions, okay, here's the test.

What is it? what about your tongue? Do you lie? Do you gossip? Are you saying nasty things about other people?

[ 55 : 18 ] Maybe even about God, hurtful things? Wow. Can you control your tongue? If you can't control your tongue, how in the world are you going to control the rest of your body? I know tongue's a hard member to train, but God is wanting to help us with that.

Could we say, okay, I'm going to study my Bible and I'm going to mark my Bible. Maybe we could say Christians today may have marked Bibles, but are they marked by the Bible?

Yeah. Whoa. Big difference. Yeah, a lot of difference. we might say, well, I am spiritual. I hear the word of God and I don't need to change anything.

Who are you kidding? I need to change. And in the trials of life, he's saying we need God's help.

It's not God who loses when we don't do it right. We're the ones who lose out. We lose the blessing. And we're just living in self-denial.

[ 56 : 30 ] So, the picture that I think James is giving to us is one that is external and internal by way of the change. External, we need to be involved in ministering to others in a selfless way.

And maybe just consider the power of, okay, you go through trials and you accept God and his help in that time of trial and then you look out and you see somebody else going through a trial and you listen to them and you seek to encourage and help them, minister to them.

Ones who are vulnerable. And who does he label that are the vulnerable ones here? Oh, believers who are orphans and widows.

They can't do anything and really help you pay back. That's the sacrificial love, isn't it? And finally there's the inward change where you're untainted by the world, dealing with sin, then getting things right, being a hearer and a doer of the word.

Living in a Christ-like manner, I think, is what he's calling for as he's describing this with self-sacrifice. Outward change and inward change.

[ 58 : 02 ] Inward change, there's some fruit. What kind of fruit? We got some verses about fruit. Real quick, as we wrap up, let's do it on a positive note. Galatians chapter 5 verses 22 and 23.

But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Thank you. Spiritual character. There it is spelled out for us. Romans 1 16. I am not ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes, first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

All right. Winning souls, that's a fruit. Romans 6 22. Okay. He says, Paul says, but now, and that means after you receive Christ as your Savior, but now, having been freed from sin, because our sin has released, we don't longer have sin in the sight of God, and enslaved to God, we're a servant, we're children of God now.

You derive your benefit, and the benefit is resounding in sanctification. We are righteous according to God's sight. We are full into Him. We are holy now.

[ 59 : 28 ] And the outcome, eternal life. Amen. We have eternal life now. We're to let it show, growing in holiness. Romans 6 22. Romans 15 28.

Therefore, I have performed this. I have sealed it. To them this fruit. I will come to you by the way of pain. Okay.

They're sharing their material blessings, material possessions. That's fruit. Colossians 1.10 So that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all things, bearing fruit in every good work and steadily growing in the knowledge of God.

Good works of fruit. Thank you. Hebrews 13, 15. Through Him, then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God.

That is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. Amen. Amen. Father, thank You that You have called us as men to receive Your Word.

[ 60 : 49 ] Help us to do that. You have called us to practice Your Word. We need You.

Thank You for being present in us. You've called us to share Your Word. Help us, Lord, to do that in the way we live and the way we speak.

These things, Lord, this morning bring conviction to us. And we're thankful that You speak to us by Your Spirit.

Live through us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank You, Ted. By the way, Dave Jeremiah's book is available for circulating.

Anybody wants it? People are asking, is this the end? Dr. Jeremiah.