

JAMES

(The ANATOMY OF A TRIAL)

LIVING RIGHTEOUSLY AS GOD DESIRES

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JAMES

(The ANATOMY OF A TRIAL)

LIVING RIGHTEOUSLY AS GOD DESIRES (JAMES 1:19)

1:1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,
To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations: Greetings.

I. FACING A TRIAL – FROM GOD’S PERSPECTIVE

2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face **trials** of many kinds,

A. THERE IS A BIGGER PICTURE TO KEEP IN MIND – IT IS A TEST OF FAITH

3 because you know that the **testing** of your **faith** develops perseverance.

4 Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

B. GOD’S GENERAL PROMISE

– IF YOU WANT TO LIVE RIGHTEOUSLY, GOD WILL GIVE YOU WHAT YOU NEED TO DO IT

5 If any of you lacks wisdom,

he should ask God,

who gives generously to all without finding fault,
and it will be given to him.

ASK ONLY IF YOU ARE COMMITTED TO OBEY

6 But when he asks,

he must **believe** and **not doubt**,

because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. 7

That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-
minded man, unstable in all he does.

C. KNOW THAT TRIALS ARE COMMON TO EVERY MAN

9 The brother in **humble** circumstances ought to take pride in his high position.

10 But the one who is **rich** should take pride in his low position, because he will pass away like a wild flower. 11
For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant; its blossom falls and its beauty is destroyed. In the
same way, the rich man will fade away even while he goes about his business.

D. THE FUTURE HOPE HOLDS THE PROMISE OF BLESSING AT THE END OF THE PROCESS

12 Blessed is the man who perseveres under **trial**,
because when he has stood the **test**,
he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.

E. RECOGNIZE THE SOURCE OF THE TEMPTATION

13 When **tempted**,
no one should say, "God is **tempting** me."
For God cannot be **tempted** by evil, nor does he tempt anyone;

TEMPTATIONS STEM FROM OUR OWN THOUGHT PROCESS INTERNALLY

14 but each one is **tempted** when, by his own evil **desire**,
he is dragged away and enticed.
15 Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin;
and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

16 Don't be **deceived**, my dear brothers.

17 Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. 18 He chose to give us birth through the **word of truth**, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.

II. AFTER YOU NO LONGER LACK WISDOM -- HAVING RECEIVED WISDOM YOU ASKED FOR

A. GENERAL RULE: OUR RESPONSE OF FAITH
– ACTION IN ACCORDANCE WITH GOD’S SPECIFIC DIRECTION / PROMISES

ATTITUDE TO HAVE AFTER ASKING FOR WISDOM

19 My dear brothers, take note of this:

Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, 20 for man's anger does not **bring about the righteous life that God desires.**

21 Therefore,

get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent

and humbly **accept** the **word planted in you**, which can save you.

22 Do not merely listen to the word, and so **deceive** yourselves. **Do** what it says.

HEARERS, BUT NOT DOERS

23 Anyone who listens to the word but **does not do** what it says

is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror 24 and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.

HEARERS, THAT ARE DOERS

25 But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and **continues to do** this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it

-- he will be blessed in what he does.

B. SPECIFIC EXAMPLES: HOW OUR EXTERNAL ACTIONS REFLECT WHAT ACTUALLY IS INTERNAL

1. HEART/MIND

OUR EXTERNAL WORDS REFLECT INTERNAL CONDITION OF OUR HEART

26 If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he **deceives** himself and his religion is worthless.

27 Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this:

to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world. (NIV)

2. LOVE

OUR EXTERNAL TREATMENT OF PEOPLE REFLECTS OUR INTERNAL MOTIVES

2:1 My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favoritism.

2 Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in shabby clothes also comes in. 3 If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, "Here's a good seat for you," but say to the poor man, "You stand there" or "Sit on the floor by my feet," 4 have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?

5 Listen, my dear brothers: **Has not God chosen** those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in **faith** and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him? 6 But **you have insulted** the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court? 7 Are they not the ones who are slandering the noble name of him to whom you belong?

8 If

you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right.

9 But if

you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers.

10 For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.

11 For he who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker.

3. *HOPE*

OUR EXTERNAL WORDS/ACTIONS REFLECT HOW WE FEEL ABOUT OURSELVES

12 Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom,
13 because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment!

4. *FAITH*

WHAT WE DO EXTERNALLY IS THE TRUE INDICATOR OF WHAT WE BELIEVE

– IT IS NOT WHAT WE SAY WE BELIEVE

14 What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have **faith** but has no deeds? Can such **faith** save him?

15 Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food.

16 If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it?

17 In the same way, **faith** by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

18 But someone will say, "You have **faith**; I have deeds."

Show me your **faith** without deeds, and I will show you my **faith** by what I do. 19 You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that-- and shudder.

20 You foolish man, do you want evidence that **faith** without deeds is useless?

21 Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar?

22 You see that his **faith** and his actions were working together, and his **faith** was made complete by what he did.

23 And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend.

24 You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by **faith** alone.

25 In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction?

26 As the body without the spirit is dead, so **faith** without deeds is dead. (NIV)

C. **CONCLUSION: OUR ACTIONS REFLECT OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE WISDOM WE RECEIVED**

1. **GOD'S WISDOM IS NOT A MATTER OF WHAT WE ARE ABLE TO SOMETIMES SAY**

3:1 Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. **2** We all stumble in many ways.

If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check.

3 When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal.

4 Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go.

5 Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark.

6 The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.

7 All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man, **8** but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

9 With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. **10** Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be. **11** Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? **12** My brothers, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.

2. **THE TRUE MEASURE OF WISDOM – WISDOM IS PROVED RIGHT BY HER ACTIONS**

13 Who is wise and understanding among you?

Let him show it by his good life, by **deeds** done in the **humility** that **comes from wisdom**.

3. **DISTINGUISH BETWEEN CLEAN AND UNCLEAN WISDOM**

14 But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your **hearts**, do not boast about it or deny the truth. **15** **Such "wisdom"** does not come down from heaven but **is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil**.

16 For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.

17 But the **wisdom that comes from heaven** is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. **18** Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness. (NIV)

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III. *DEALING WITH THE SOURCE OF OUR TEMPTATION IN THE FIRST PLACE -- WHAT WE ARE THINKING*

4:1 What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your **desires** that battle within you?

A. *PURIFY THE MOTIVES OF YOUR DESIRES (SELF v. GOD)*

2 You want something but don't get it.

You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight.

You do not have, because you do not ask God.

3 When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

4 You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.

5 Or do you think Scripture says without reason that the spirit he caused to live in us envies intensely?

6 But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

B. *SUBMIT YOUR THOUGHT PROCESS TO THE WISDOM OF THE LORD YOUR GOD*

1. *GENERAL RULE – REPENT*

TURN TOWARDS GOD

7 Submit yourselves, then, to God.

TURN FROM DEVIL

Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

RENEW YOUR HEART/MIND

8 Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9 Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

2. *ONLY THEN ARE WE ABLE TO WALK ALONG SIDE THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD GOD IN US*

a. *DO NOT JUDGE ANOTHER;*

HUMBLE YOURSELF TO THE LORD AS YOUR OWN JUDGE

11 Brothers, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it. 12 There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you-- who are you to judge your neighbor?

b. *DO NOT BE SO SELF-ASSURED;*

HUMBLE YOURSELF TO THE LORD'S WILL

13 Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money."

14 Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.

15 Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that."

16 As it is, you boast and brag. All such boasting is evil. 17 Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins. (NIV)

c. *DO NOT USE RICHES TO SERVE YOURSELF;*

HUMBLE YOURSELF TO TREAT OTHERS DIFFERENTLY

5:1 Now listen, you rich people,

weep and wail because of the misery that is coming upon you. 2 Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes. 3 Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth in the last days. 4 Look! The wages you failed to pay the workmen who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty. 5 You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter. 6 You have condemned and murdered innocent men, who were not opposing you.

*d. PATIENTLY WAIT THROUGH SUFFERING
FOR THE COMING OF THE LORD'S COMFORT*

7 Be patient, then, brothers, until the Lord's coming.

See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains. 8 You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near.

9 Don't grumble against each other, brothers, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!

10 Brothers, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. 11 As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about.

The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.

e. BE CONSISTENT IN WHAT YOU SAY... AND WHAT YOU DO

12 Above all, my brothers, do not swear-- not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. Let your "Yes" be yes, and your "No," no, or you will be condemned.

f. INCLUDE THE LORD IN ALL YOUR SITUATIONS

13 Is any one of you in trouble?

He should **pray**.

Is anyone happy?

Let him sing songs of **praise**.

14 Is any one of you sick?

He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. 15 And the **prayer** offered in **faith** will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up.

If he has sinned, he will be forgiven.

16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and **pray** for each other so that you may be healed.

The **prayer** of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

17 Elijah was a man just like us. He **prayed** earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. 18 Again he **prayed**, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.

IV. THEN, ONLY IN THE END, YOU MAY BE ABLE TO HELP OTHERS IN THEIR TRIALS

19 My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, 20 remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins. (NIV)