

“Begotten by the Word of Truth”

1:1 - SALUTATION

James greets his readers

Verse 1: James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.

James: The Lord’s half-brother - see notes on “The Writer”.

Servant: *doulos* (1401) - slave.



What are the characteristics/qualities of a servant that we should have?

Luke 17:10

Matt 24:45-46

Gal 1:10

Eph 6:6

2 Tim 2:24-26

Phil 2:7-8

Matt 22:4

Matt 21:35

Like his brother Jude does later on (Jude 1), James does not claim authority or status in his human relationship with Christ, having learnt the principle of Matt 12:46-50; 2 Cor 5:16. Neither does he claim authority in being the recognised head of the Jerusalem ecclesia (Gal 1:18-20; Acts 12:17; 15:13-21; 21:18). He rather humbles himself as Christ did (Phil 2:7-8), and emphasises his servitude to God and to Christ.

God: Our ultimate head. The Jews had always worshipped God as the Father.



A slave has no rights of his own. We must choose between being servants to sin or servants to God (Rom 6:16-23). Once we appreciate God as our creator and the One who has provided us with the means of salvation, we will manifest the love He has shown to us in obeying His commands. Being a servant to God is primarily shown in being baptised, but it should also be shown every day of our lives. We can show our servitude to God and Christ by serving others (vs 27; Matt 25:34-40; Mark 9:35-37).

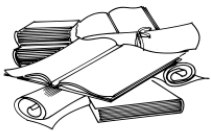


How can we show our servitude to each other in our daily lives?

And of the Lord Jesus Christ: A reminder that Christ is also our master (1 Cor 11:3; cp John 12:26). This was a new concept for the Jews. It also highlights the change in James' attitude towards his brother. The full title of Christ is used - a title made evident by his resurrection (Acts 2:36). "Jesus" is the salvation of God. "Christ" is the means of obtaining that salvation. "Lord" is the obedience that is demanded from it. James came to appreciate these principles in his life. (This is why our prayers should always acknowledge Christ's full title and not just the name "Jesus").

Twelve tribes: See notes on "Who was the Epistle Written to?".

Scattered abroad: *diaspora* (1290) - (cp John 7:35). This word is used for the Jews scattered all throughout the Roman Empire (cp Acts 2:5-11 with 1 Pet 1:1-2).



The Jews were so scattered, that by the first century of the Christian era Josephus could write:
 "There is no city, no tribe, whether Greek or barbarian, in which Jewish Law and Jewish custom have not taken root".

Likewise the Roman writer Strabo records:

"It is hard to find a spot in the whole world which is not occupied and dominated by Jews".

The Epistle was written during the early years of Christianity and so was written almost exclusively for the Jews (the Gentiles being at this time relatively small in number). Therefore, the Epistle has a markedly Hebraistic tone.

Maynard Smith - on the Hebraic qualities of the letter:

"The whole mental atmosphere is that of a devout Jew, who has not ceased to be a Jew by becoming a Christian".

Greeting: *chairō* (5463) - to wish joy, (cp vs 2 - same word). This is the usual word for rejoicing and being glad. This greeting would be as empty as those of the class described in Jam 2:16 if it stood on its own, but James continues to direct our minds to how it can be obtained.

1:2-12 - ENDURANCE OF TRIALS

1:2-4 - Rejoice! Faith tested gives patience and perfection

Because it is something that causes us to feel pressure from, James begins by addressing the trials that we face. He lifts our minds above the immediate sufferings and towards the effect of our trials - the development of patience.

This section is the start of James' message. It is the first thing he writes, therefore it is most likely to be something he wants us to understand before he deals with other issues. In fact the whole first chapter is the basis for the rest of the book. We will find that in the other chapters James expands on the principles he lays down in chapter one. Time spent understanding these principles will open up for us the exhortation of this letter.



Thought to think about and do

How can we count temptations a joy? How does the trying of our faith work patience? What is the perfect work of patience? (Questions like these will help us to understand James' message).

Verse 2: My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;

Brethren: *adelphos* (80) - from the same womb (applied literally, nationally, or in cases of other common bonds). The Ecclesia is united by the same birth (cp John 3:3,5; 1 Pet 1:23). 11 out of 15 times James prefaces the word "brethren" with "my". This shows his personal involvement and spiritual relationship with his people (cp Gal 6:1-10; Rom 15:1-2).



What is the chief characteristic of Christ's brethren? (cp Matt 12:46-50)

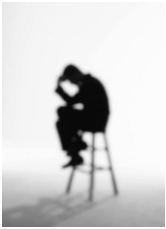
Count: *hegeomai* (2233) - esteem, bear in mind (cp Heb 11:26).

Joy: *chara* (5479) - from the same word as "greeting" (vs 1). Cheerfulness, gladness, delight.

Fall: *periptoto* (4045) - to fall into something that is all around (cp Luke 10:30).

Divers: *poikilos* (4164) - various. All manner of trials will beset us.

Temptations: *peirasmos* (3986) - putting to proof, trial. In general this word is used for God's means of testing our characters (e.g. Luke 22:28; Acts 20:19). The sense here is different from 1:13-14 where it is used in an extended sense to describe the succumbing to trial or temptation to sin. Verse 2 relates to the aspect of testing character (cp vs 3). It is no joy to succumb to the temptation to sin.



The brethren at the time were suffering severe persecution (Acts 8:1,3), mainly at the hands of their natural brethren (Luke 21:12,16). They needed, like we do, to realise that although trials themselves are not joyous, the result of trials can be (cp Heb 12:11; Psa 30:5). We must be like the apostles of old, who gloried and rejoiced in the fact that they were able to partake in the sufferings of Christ (cp 1 Pet 4:12-14; Acts 5:41; Rom 5:3-5; 2 Cor 11:18-31; 12:5-10; Gal 6:14-17; Phil 3:3,7-8; 2 Tim 2:9-12; 3:11-12; 1 Pet 3:12-15). The way to overcome trials is to focus our minds on the joy set before us from God (cp Heb 12:2). Christ had the same trials and was able to overcome them (cp Heb 4:15). He encourages his followers to look to the future (Matt 5:10-12; cp Rom 8:17-18,37-39). He is able to strengthen us in our trials (Heb 2:18; 2 Cor 12:7-10; Rev 3:10). God will not tempt us with more than we can bear (1 Cor 10:13). Trials will not only help to prepare us for life in the Kingdom; they will also help us in our life now (cp Heb 4:15-16; 2 Cor 1:3-7).

PURPOSE OF TRIALS



Trials can be expected (2 Tim 3:12; Acts 14:22) and will form a part of life for the true believer (Heb 11:36-38). God actually gives us suffering (Phil 1:29). Trials are designed to develop our characters (1 Pet 1:6-7; Heb 12:5-11). They:

Deut 8:2-3; 2 Cor 12:7-10

Deut 8:2-3

Deut 8:5

Heb 5:7-8; cp Phil 2:8-9

1 Pet 1:6-7; Rev 2:10; cp Jam 2:20-22

Jam 1:2-4

Phil 3:7-10; 1 Pet 4:13

2 Cor 1:3-7

1 Pet 4:14



What is the reward for overcoming trials? (Jam 1:12; Matt 10:22)



Do we suffer trial as a result of our commitment to the Truth, or are we such good friends with those in the world that there is no conflict?

Do we glory in our trials, or complain impatiently about them?



What trials do we face as young people? How can we help others to overcome their trials? (2 Cor 1:3-7)

Verse 3: Knowing *this*, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.



RSV: "For you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness".

Knowing: *ginosko* (1097) - to come to know, understand completely. The believers understood this process which would enable them to count trials a joy.

Trying: *dokimion* (1383) - a testing, (by implication) trustworthiness (cp 1 Pet 1:7).

Faith: *pistis* (4102) - persuasion, conviction (cp Heb 11:6; Rom 10:17).

Worketh: *katergazomai* (2716) - to work fully, effect by toil, accomplish, finish (cp 2 Cor 4:16-18). Implies the accomplishment of something by intense personal effort. James' comment therefore is that faith can activate a man to intense effort in patiently enduring trials by recognising the Divine purpose in such (cp Rom 5:3-4).

Patience: *hupomone* (5281) - cheerful endurance, steadfastness. "It is the quality that does not surrender to the circumstances or succumb under trial" (Vine). It implies tenacious doggedness (cp Jam 5:11; Heb 12:1).



Trials are overcome through patiently waiting for our Lord's return (Luke 21:12-19; Isa 48:10; Mal 3:23). It is necessary to have our faith tried to obtain righteousness (Heb 12:11), and enter into God's Kingdom (cp Acts 14:22; see 2 Tim 3:12). Faith requires purifying in the same way as newly mined gold must be purified from its baser elements (cp 1 Pet 1:7; Job 23:10; Prov 17:3; Zech 13:9). Persecution often requires us to make a clear choice between the world and God. Through it our faith is tested. If we overcome our trials by continually manifesting God's character, we will find it easier to overcome them in the future because we have made God manifestation the good habit of our lives.

Lack of faith is shown in impatience, causing us to fret under trial (cp Psa 37:1-3). Knowing that trials develop character and that they will not continue forever gives us encouragement to endure them while waiting for God's purpose to be fulfilled (cp Rom 8:18; 2 Cor 4:8-10,16-18).



James now emphasises the patience that is required and encourages us with the joy set before us.

Verse 4: But let patience have *her* perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.



Look up and write down the Rotherham and RSV translations.

Roth:

RSV:

Perfect: *teleios* (5046) - mature, complete, brought to an end. (Cp Jam 1:17,25; 2:22; 3:2). We must be no longer children, but mature adults, full of knowledge and understanding (1 Cor 14:20). This process of maturity is to be achieved through putting our faith in the Word of God (1 Cor 13:10-12; 2 Tim 3:15; Heb 5:12-14) which itself is perfect (Psa 19:7). Christ is the Word made flesh (John 1:14), and we know the mystery of the Word relates to the work of Christ (Col 1:25-28). Likewise then, knowledge and faith in Christ will turn us from being ignorant children to become mature adults (Eph 4:12-15; John 13:33; 17:23; Heb 11:40; 12:1-2,23). Christ was made perfect through suffering, death and resurrection to glory (Heb 2:10; 5:8-9) and we also have an example of the maturity to strive for in the Father Himself (Matt 5:48).

The word *teleios* is used especially to signify the perfecting of the mind and spirit, which should be outworked in our lives now (Phil 3:14-15), but will ultimately be accomplished at Christ's return (Phil 3:11-12; Heb 12:23) if we have been found worthy of eternal life.

Work: *ergon* (2041) - to toil, occupation (cp Jam 1:25; 2:14-26; 3:13).



Tit 1:16; 2 Tim 3:16-17; John 6:27-29; 10:37-38.

Entire: *holokleros* (3648) - complete in every part, i.e. perfectly sound (cp Acts 3:16). (Cp 1 Thess 5:23). The word is used for "whole" burnt offerings (Mark 12:33) and is used by Josephus for an animal sacrifice without blemish or spot.

The word is used to signify the perfecting of the physical body, which will be accomplished at Christ's return (Phil 3:21) if we have been found worthy of eternal life.

Wanting: *leipo* (3007) - to lack, be destitute of, to leave, to fail or be absent, to be left behind (Jam 2:15; cp Matt 19:20-22). The young man with all his possessions thought he lacked nothing. Jesus told him that to truly be perfect, he must give up all that he had. Therefore, to "want" nothing does not mean that we have all the material possessions we want (cp Luke 12:15), rather that we have the treasure of the Kingdom of God and the blessings that come with it (cp Luke 12:31-34).

James is bringing in his key concept - faith (vs 3) and works. Our patience must be shown in our actions for us to be whole. We must act in belief that the Kingdom will come. Our works will be judged (cp 1 Cor 3:12-15), and there are great rewards for those who endure trials through faith and patience (Jam 5:7-11; Heb 10:32-39; Rom 2:6-7; 1 Cor 15:51-58). We must also remember that patience is but one quality among others that we have to learn, in order to be perfect and entire, and to lack nothing (cp 2 Pet 3:12).



We may lack much materially but we have no excuse to lack things spiritually (cp Matt 4:4). Salvation will not be attained by a half formed and maimed spiritual person. As we grow older in the Truth we should be developing a mature faith and patience that will help us to endure to the end (cp Matt 24:13).

1:5-8 - Seek Godly wisdom in single-mindedness

To overcome trials we need to understand the purpose of them so it is necessary to look upon them from the Divine perspective and not the human (cp 1 Cor 2:11). Therefore James brings to our attention the need for Divine wisdom and the need to seek it at its source. God is willing to give it to those who have a single-minded faith. Those who doubt that God can help will not gain that wisdom.

Verse 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.

If any of you: Some of his readers obviously did lack this wisdom and as a result were despondent in trials. James writes diplomatically to encourage them (and us).

Wisdom: *sophia* (4678) - insight into the true nature of things, theoretical (as opposed to wise actions). This is God's wisdom - the "hidden wisdom", which is in opposition to man's wisdom, but God will willingly give it to us if we humble ourselves and seek His guidance (cp 1 Cor 1:17-2:16). God is the only source of true wisdom (cp Job 28:12-23; Prov 2:6-7; Dan 2:21; Exo 31:3,6). (Cp also Jam 3:13,17; contrast Jam 3:15).



See also Rom 11:33; Matt 12:42 (cp 1 Kings 3:9,12; 4:29-34); Luke 2:40,52; 21:15; 2 Tim 3:15.



Look up these references to see the requirements for obtaining God's wisdom. Why is that wisdom so important for us today?

Job 28:28; Prov 9:10

Exo 35:29-35; 36:1-2

Matt 7:7-11

Matt 17:19-20; 21:21-22; Jam 1:5-6

John 14:13-14; 15:16 (contrast with Jam 4:3)

John 15:7

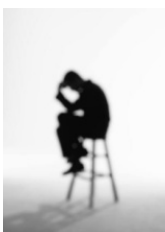
1 John 3:22

1 John 5:14-15

Liberally: *haplos* (574) - bountifully, openly, with singleness (of heart) (cp Eph 6:5; Col 3:22). This contrasts with the double-minded man of vs 8. It indicates "wholehearted", free from division of motive and loyalty - in this sense rendered "simplicity" (Rom 12:8) or "liberality" (2 Cor 8:2; 9:11,13).

Upbraideth: *oneidizo* (3679) - rail at, chide, taunt, reproach, "without reproaching" (RSV). (Contrast Matt 5:10-12). God will not taunt us for desiring righteousness (cp Eph 6:13-14).

Shall be given: If asked in faith (vs 6). This is the same as Christ's words (Matt 7:7-8; Luke 11:9-10).



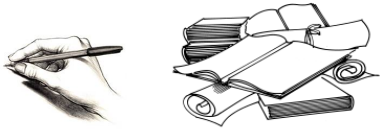
A person may have knowledge, but lack the ability to apply it. All things are from God (1 Chron 29:14), and as the giver of every good and perfect gift (vs 17) He is prepared to give to those who ask (Matt 5:45). How then do we ask guidance or wisdom of God? In prayer (Acts 1:14,23-26; 6:1-7). How do we know for sure that any answer we may get is truly a directive from God? Perhaps it is our personal frame of mind that follows (although this may be subjective). Perhaps it may be a remarkable series of events, or an intensely relevant Bible passage we come across.

The brethren in the early days were in some ways more fortunate, as they had the spirit of wisdom to guide them (1 Cor 12:8). God may guide us in a variety of ways. The question then for us is a question of faith and of honesty. Do we really believe that God can work in our lives, and when we receive an answer, do we accept it gratefully, difficult though it may be, or do we try to make it mean something more palatable (Matt 19:16-22; 21:28-29; Acts 4:36-37)?

Verse 6: But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering.

But: This verse confirms the last statement.

Ask in faith: We must have 100% commitment to what we have prayed for, as well as confidence that God will answer (1 John 5:14-15; Matt 21:22-22; cp Heb 11:1. See). Faith creates confidence. It gives substance to hope.



Bro Thomas gives two translations of Heb 11:1 in *Elpis Israel*. Find them using the "Index of Scripture Quoted" at the back of his book. How does Heb 11:1 help our understanding of James 1:6?

Wavering: *diakrino* (1252) - to separate thoroughly, oppose. "To be at variance with oneself, hesitate, doubt" (Grimm-Thayer). "This verb suggests not so much weakness of faith, as lack of it" (Vine) (cp Acts 10:20; Matt 14:23-33; 21:21-22; Rom 4:20; Jam 2:4; 1 Tim 2:8; Heb 10:23; Luke 12:29). The idea is that of schizophrenia (Mark 5:9). The double mind of vs 8 begets the doubting heart.



Thought to think about and do

How often do we pray to God about something and then continue to be anxious about it?

For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

Wave: *kludon* (2830) - a billow, a surge, violent agitation of the sea, raging (cp Luke 8:24-25). There is nothing steady in a surging billow. The wavering man is likewise. He is unstable, irresolute - now rising in hope like an advancing, surging billow, and then sinking in despair, and breaking down like the foaming waste of water on the shore (cp Gen 49:4).

Driven with the wind: *anemizo* (416) - to agitate or drive by the wind. Sometimes it is not the waves that have the power but the wind that moves them (cp Eph 4:14). So it is with a double-minded man.

Tossed: *rhypizo* (4494) - to breeze up, agitate (into waves). This shows the inward and outward disturbance that is so characteristic of those in the world (cp Isa 57:20-21).



James is emphasising the agitation of the double-minded man. Agitation means that the patience of vs 3-4 is not being achieved. Our lives will be similar if we are double-minded - agitated and without order or stability (vs 8). Trying to live in the world as well as in the Ecclesia means that we will be uncomfortable in either camp and our faith will waver. Single-minded belief in God can overcome this agitation, just as Christ's single-minded belief in God had the power to calm the troubled sea (cp Luke 8:23-25).

Verse 7: For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

Receive: *lambano* (2983) - to take, to get hold of (what is given).

Obviously, that man was not asking right (see Jam 1:6; 4:3; contrast Matt 7:8). God still offers His gifts (vs 17) but we must be in the right frame of mind to be able to accept it (cp Psa 33:22). Doubt implies that we don't believe that God can help us (cp Heb 11:6). A double-minded man can't expect help from a single-minded God (Jam 1:5,17).

Verse 8: A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.

Double minded: *dipsuchos* (1374) - two-spirited ("souled") - (swaying in opinion or purpose) - one for God, one for self (this word only appears in James). Being double-minded is like having two lives pulling us in different directions. The reason for wavering is given in vs 6. Inner debate is caused by conflicting purposes. A decision needs to be made.



What do these references say about being double-minded?

Jam 4:4

1 Kings 18:21

2 Kings 17:24-41

Matt 6:22-24

Josh 24:14-15

Psa 12:2

Psa 119:113

Unstable: *akatastatos* (182) - inconstant, restless (this word only appears in James - it is derived from the word "*kathistemi*" (2525) - to set in order; unruly (Jam 3:8); "tossed with tempest" (LXX) (cp Isa 54:11).

Peter warns against being enticed from the Truth by those who are unstable and have no mind for Godly things (2 Pet 2:14). We need to be fixed in our understanding of the Word or we also will be perverted from the Truth (2 Pet 3:16).

All his ways: *hodos* (3598) - a road, progress, course (cp Matt 7:13-14; Jam 5:20).

This man is unstable even when doing what is right. He needs to cleanse his ways (Jam 4:8-10).



In our generation today, our biggest problem is one that has always plagued each generation of believers – a lack of separation from the world. To be called God’s sons and daughters we need to be clear in our mind where the line is and not to encourage blurring it (cp 2 Cor 6:14-18). There are many who condone serving both. If we serve God with a single mind, we will prosper in the Truth. If we serve God half-heartedly, God will pronounce us unstable, and will not hear our prayers (vs 7).

Are we unstable?

Are there things in our lives that prevent us from being single-minded?



What can we remove from or add to our lives in order to be of one accord with other true believers and with God? (cp Acts 2:44-47).

1:9-11 - Be not influenced by temporary riches

Poverty and riches are a common cause of double-mindedness (cp Prov 30:7-9; 1 Tim 6:6-10). The love of money affects both the rich and the poor. The rich become consumed by greed and fail to acknowledge God in their lives, while the poor are easily distracted from single-minded service by anxious seeking after money, or envy of those possessing it. It was a problem in the Ecclesia and weakened their faith. James puts worldly riches into perspective before continuing with the greater riches promised to those who endure trials (vs 12).

Verse 9: Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted:

Low degree: *tapeinos* (5011) - depressed, humiliated, humble (cp Jam 4:6). This is a characteristic of Christ (cp Matt 11:29).

Rejoice: *kauchaomai* (2744) - to boast, glory.



Exalted: *hupsos* (5311) - elevation, high station. This brother can boast because of his future blessing - he has been invited to take a higher position (see Luke 14:7-11) and rule the world with Christ! (Cp Psa 113:7-8; Luke 6:20; Jam 2:5; 1 Sam 2:7-8). The low brother shouldn't be anxious about seeking money, but should occupy his mind with his high exaltation in Christ (cp Col 3:1-4; Luke 1:52). This lifts his mind above his present problems (cp Rom 8:18).

Verse 10: But the rich, in that he is made low:

Rich: *plousios* (4145) - wealthy (abounding in material resources). The rich man can boast because the knowledge of the Truth has revealed the true worth of man's riches.

Made low: *tapeinosis* (5014) - to humiliate, depress, humble (from a root word "tapeinos" - see vs 9). This is an attitude that God is pleased with (cp Isa 57:15; 66:2).

By realising that all he has is from God (vs 17; 1 Chron 29:10-16; Ecc 5:18-20), and by seeing the real value of this world's wealth, the rich man gets a better appreciation of the treasures in heaven that will last beyond his life (Matt 6:19-21). The rich should focus their minds on humbling themselves in recognition of the fact that in being called to the Truth, they are "made low" in the eyes of the world, yet exalted in God's eyes. Thus they are exhorted to glorify God and not their wealth (1 Cor 1:26-31; Jer 9:23-24; 1 Tim 6:17-19), otherwise they will end up as part of those in Jam 5:1-6.

Both classes can glory in the things of God and both are brought together in the Ecclesia. Regardless of our physical wealth we need to remember that God has given us exactly what we require to develop our characters, that we might enter into His Kingdom (cp Isa 40:3-5).

because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away.

Because: If the rich are not humbled they will not enter into the Kingdom (cp Mark 10:23-25).

Flower: *anthos* (438) - blossom. This is the glory of the grass (compare the rich being the "glory" of mankind (flesh)).

Grass: *chartos* (5528) - court or garden, pasture (including the wild flowers as well as grass itself, cp Matt 6:28,30).

Being rich will not exempt a person from death. Earthly riches are as temporary as the grass of the field (cp Isa 40:6-8; Psa 90:5-6,12; Psa 103:15-16). Spiritual riches as provided in the Word of God, are forever (cp 1 Pet 1:23-25).

Verse 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.



This verse is in the past tense (see Diag, Roth). It was a well known event experienced by all of James' readers. It gives a vivid description - the rich will also soon become a past event.



Give the Diaglott's or Rotherham's translation for this verse:

Sun: *helios* (2246) - ray, sun, light. When Christ returns, all who trust in the flesh shall wither under the heat of judgement (cp Mal 4:1-2), but God's people will be spared (Isa 49:10-11).

Burning heat: *kauson* (2742) from a root word (2741) - to set on fire. "Scorching wind" (RV). (Cp Job 27:19-21; cp Psa 103:15-16; Isa 40:7; Jer 18:17; Eze 17:10; Hos 12:1; 13:15; Jon 4:8 - East wind).

Withereth: *xeraino* (3583) to desiccate, shrivel, dry up. What little water there is in the flower is taken away (cp Luke 19:24-26).

Perisheth: *apollumi* (622) - to destroy fully.

Fade away: *maraino* (3133) - to extinguish (as fire), to pass away, cause to wither (Job 15:20,29-30). (Cp Psa 49:6-20; Psa 37:1-2,35-36; 1 Cor 7:31; 1 John 2:14-17). Our reward for enduring is one that doesn't fade away, but lasts for eternity (cp vs 12; 1 Pet 1:3-4; 5:4).

Ways: *poreia* (4197) - travel, proceedings, career, pursuit. "Amid their pursuits" (Moff). Judgement will overcome the rich while they are preoccupied with their own thoughts.



What do these references say about how judgement will overcome the rich?

- Luke 12:15-21 _____
- Jer 17:9-11 _____
- Jam 4:13-16 _____
- Rev 3:17-18 _____
- Eccl 5:18 _____
- Psa 73:1-20 _____



The sun, which is so necessary to bring the flower to maturity, also limits its glory. The same is true for God. All life is subject to Him. We may be spared if we hunger after the treasure of the Kingdom (cp Luke 12:27-34).



See Matt 13:3-8,19-23. The rich man who regards not God may be likened to the three unfruitful soils in the Parable of the Sower, though particularly that of the stony place. He doesn't truly understand the depth of the riches that are contained in the Word (way side), he falls away from the Truth in times of trial because he finds the Truth easier to give up than his riches (stony places) and he has no time for the things of the Truth because his riches and worldly activities take priority (thorns).

Unlike the seeds in the other three grounds, the seed in the good ground is not devoured by the ways of the world, it is not scorched or devoured by the sun in time of trial, and the cares and riches of this life do not choke it. The reason why it is able to overcome these things is because the ground that it is in has a suitable composition (a willingness to hear the Word of God) that enables the seed's roots to firmly sink in. The good ground takes the time to read God's word and because it does this consistently, it understands the things that are therein, and thus it is able to help the seed flourish and give it the ability to overcome.



Thought to think about and do

We live in a rich society. Do we struggle with any of the symptoms of being one of the unfruitful soils? Are we consistent in our daily readings and Bible study?

1:12 - The blessing for enduring trials

Having considered the need for Divine wisdom to understand trials, the single-minded approach to God that is needed to obtain that wisdom, and the distracting nature of this world's riches to single-mindedness, James now brings our minds back to his opening thought - the blessing for enduring trials (vs 2,4).

Verse 12: Blessed is the man that endureth temptation:

Blessed: *makarios* (3107) - extremely blessed, fortunate, well off (cp Jam 5:11; Matt 5:10-12). (See also Psa 94:12; Prov 3:7-18; Heb 12:5-12).

Endureth: *hupomeno* (5278) - root word of "patience" (vs 3-4), to bear up courageously (cp Matt 10:22; 2 Tim 2:10-12). This word is used in the LXX in Dan 12:12 for "waiteth".

Temptation: *peirasmos* (3986). (See notes on vs 2 (trial) - not quite the same as vs 13).

Worldliness is a great temptation for most. The blessing is for those who do not succumb but who look beyond this life to the future. The true believer has a unique privilege in that he is able to extract happiness from situations that normally might be considered tragic (cp 1 Pet 4:12-14; notes on vs 2).

for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

Tried: *dokimos* (1384) – acceptable, to stand the test, “hath been approved” (RV). The Greek construction of this statement implies the completion of the process (cp vs 3). The word is used to describe coins and metal approved through fire (cp Zech 13:9; Prov 17:3; 1 Pet 1:6-7; Mal 3:2-3).



Look up the word “crown” in Strong's and then Vine's. What sort of crown is James referring to? What does it signify? Where else is the word used in Scripture? What do we need to do to receive this crown?

Promised: *epaggello* (1861) - to announce, promise (cp 1 John 2:25; Tit 1:2).



This promise could be taken from several possible places:

- (1) Matt 19:21 (but no mention of “crown”).
- (2) Prov 4:7-9 (cp Jam 1:2-5).
- (3) Zech 6:14 - “the crown shall be for them that endure” (LXX).
- (4) Unrecorded words of Christ (cp John 21:25 with Acts 20:35).

Love: *agapao* (25) (cp Jam 2:5; Matt 22:36-40; Exo 20:4-6). Our love for Christ shows that we are children of God (cp John 8:42). It is a reaction to the love that God shows to us (1 John 4:19) and a hatred of those things of the world (1 John 2:15). Part of that love is to love our brethren (cp 1 John 4:20-21). Love involves keeping God's commandments (1 John 5:1-3).

Those who have withstood temptation and walked in integrity will have no fear in the day of trial by fire (Psa 26:1-3; cp Jer 17:10).

Abraham's faith and obedience was tried under pressure (Gen 22:1-2). He was able to see that there must be a blessing of life behind the trial he had to suffer (cp Heb 11:17-19), and so there was (cp Gen 22:11-18).

**Thought to think about and do**

Is the crown of life in the forefront of our minds each day, so that when trials or difficulties arise, we see the hidden blessings behind them?

We are but clay in the hands of the mighty potter (Isa 64:8). See Isa 43:1,7 - He has created us for His glory, but in order for this to be outworked, He has to form or press us into shape through trials. Finally, in the last trial of all, He tries us with fire in the kiln and (if we have overcome the previous trials) approves of us as a fit image of Himself. He can then appoint (as the verb "made" in vs 7 denotes) us a position in the Age to come, and give us that crown of life and righteousness.

**Thought to think about and do**

Do we allow ourselves to be mouldable unto God through trial, or do we resist God and give way to the world?

1:13-27 - THE WORD AND ACTION NEEDED TO OVERCOME TEMPTATIONS

1:13-16 - The source of temptation

James now looks at the extended meaning of "temptation" to show us that there is a difference between being subject to temptations and succumbing to them. God provides the trial but our internal lusts cause us to be tempted to sin and to succumb. The opening verses showed temptation in the sense of trial and the strength of faith that can result. But temptation succumbed to can lead us to blame someone else for our failing. This can result in the wrong conclusion that since God allowed the trial to arise, God is responsible for the sin which followed. James refutes this reasoning.

Whether we view a situation as a trial or a temptation depends on our perspective. A trial is positive - it moulds our characters; a temptation is negative - it is seen as a hardship.

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:



See Prov 19:3 (LXX) - "The folly of a man spoils his ways: and he blames God in his heart". It is typical of human nature to blame others for our weakness (cp Gen 3:12-13).

When he is tempted: *peirazo* (3985) - to endeavour, scrutinise, entice, discipline. This is the root word of "temptations" (vs 2,12). James is now referring to the temptation which is succumbed to (cp vs 14). We should seek God's help to avoid being tempted (cp Matt 6:13).

Cannot be tempted: *apeirastos* (551). "God is incapable of being tempted" (Diag). There is nothing in God's nature to respond to temptation. The temptations that are in the world, and God, are mutually exclusive (cp 1 John 2:15-16).

Here is a good quotation disproving the false doctrine of the Trinity. Because Christ was tempted (cp Heb 4:15; 2:18) he cannot be God. Christ was the Son of Man who is the mediator between God and mankind (cp 1 Tim 2:5).

With evil: *kakos* (2556) - of a bad nature, evil in character. This comes from the nature of man (cp Mark 7:14-23; Rom 7:13-25), which Christ overcame (cp Mark 15:14).

Neither tempteth He any man: "He" is emphasised by Roth. Because of what God's character is, He will not tempt man. God does not fill our hearts with evil thoughts; they are already there (vs 14). But He can help ensure that others don't place us in a situation where we are tempted to sin (cp John 17:15; 2 Thess 3:2-3; Psa 34:7) and make a way for us to overcome if we truly seek to flee from sin (cp 1 Cor 10:13-14).

We must carefully discriminate between trials that come from God and are designed to purify our characters, and those incitements to sin that come from within and can destroy godliness.



Verse 14: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.



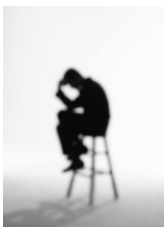
Wey: "But when a man is tempted, it is his own passions that carry him away and serve as a bait".

But: James now shows the true source of temptation. Note: If there was a supernatural devil leading people to sin, here would be a logical place for James to warn us about him (but he doesn't because he doesn't exist).

Drawn away: *exelko* (1828) - to drag forth, see "enticed".

"The metaphor is taken from hunting and fishing: as game is lured from its covert, so man by lust is allured from the safety of self-restraint to sin" (Grimm-Thayer).

Of his own lust: *epithumia* (1939) - a longing (especially for what is forbidden), desire, craving. This word is emphasised in the Greek - it is our own selves who do the tempting - not God. It is our lusts that are the problem - not the object being lusted after. Circumstances are not tempting in themselves; rather it is our response to our lusts which leads us to sin (cp Rom 7:13-25; Mark 7:14-23; Eph 2:3; Tit 3:3; cp Jam 4:1-3; Gen 6:5; 8:21. For examples see Gen 3:6; Josh 7:21). This is not to say that circumstances are not dangerous. A true understanding of our nature will show us how dangerous they can be. We must endeavour to avoid those situations that will lead us to succumb to our lusts due to the weakness of our nature (prevention is better than cure).



Good things come from above (vs 17), not from within. Our own nature is in opposition to God (cp Gal 5:17-21; John 8:44; Rom 8:5-8; 1 John 2:16). Unfortunately this tendency can be encouraged by others (cp 2 Pet 2:18; 1 Cor 15:33). We need to overcome it with good (cp Rom 12:21; 6:12-13; 13:12-14; Heb 3:12-13; 1 Cor 13:5). This is done by removing from our life the things of the world that hold us back, focusing on the holiness of Yahweh and creating a vision of being perfected in the future - a state which we strive to reach now (cp Gal 5:16,22-24; Eph 4:22-24; Phil 3:13-14; 2 Tim 2:22; Tit 2:11-14; 1 Pet 1:13-15).

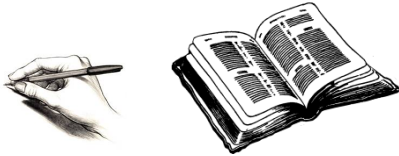


Look at Christ's example. How did he overcome temptation in the following instances?

The temptation (Matt 4:4,10): _____

Opposition to Peter (Matt 16:22-23): _____

The Garden of Gethsemane (Matt 26:39,42): _____



Find some examples of other people in the Scriptures who went through this same process of temptation (vs 14-15) and succumbed to it. What lessons can we learn from their mistakes?

Scriptural Reference:	Who:	Lesson:

Find some examples of other people in the Scriptures who were faced with temptation and yet did not succumb to it. What lessons can we learn from the way they overcame?

Scriptural Reference:	Who:	Lesson:



Think of situations that are temptations to us. How can they be overcome? List practical steps rather than just principles (For example "Attend CYC every week" rather than "Keep separate from the world").

Situation:	How to overcome:



Using Vine's, find out where "*epithumia*" is used in a positive sense. What are the things we should long for? When can these be fulfilled?

However, the word "*epithumia*" is used so predominantly in the New Testament in a negative sense that if we should find ourselves "wanting" anything, that desire should immediately be put under suspicion and the motive behind it subjected to rigorous scrutiny.

Enticed: *deleazo* (1185) - to entrap, to catch by bait, delude, allure (cp 2 Pet 2:18); see "drawn away". The bait looks attractive, but within it is the hook of death. Here is another metaphor - that of an impure, seductive woman named "Lust", leading a simpleton along the road to folly and unfaithfulness (cp Prov 7:6-27).

Verse 15: Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.



NIV: "Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death".

Then: James is describing a natural progression of events. Temptation is not sin if it is resisted, but if it is submitted to, it produces sin.

Conceived: *sullambano* (4815) - to clasp, seize, conceive. The seed has been planted. See Job 15:35; Psa 7:14; Isa 59:4 - conceiving mischief brings forth iniquity.

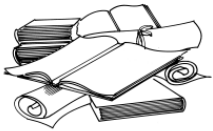
Bringeth forth: *tikto* (5088) - to produce, bear, give birth (cp Gal 6:7-8).

Sin: *hamartia* (266) - state of sin. This state is a transgression of God's Law (1 John 3:4). Each time we sin it becomes harder and harder not to submit to the temptation of our lusts in the future, until sinning becomes a habit (cp John 8:34). The intent of our lusts do not necessarily need to be achieved (cp Matt 5:27-28; 1 John 3:15).

Sin appears in many an attractive garb. It is very often camouflaged and excused as "relaxation" and the like, but its true description is SIN and the result is death. The seductive woman of Proverbs 7 is shown in the imagery here in vs 15 of a woman called LUST conceiving. A child is born called SIN, who when it is grown up, also produces a child. Inevitably, this child's name is DEATH!

When it is finished: *apoteleo* (658) - to complete entirely, bring to maturity. This is when the state of sin becomes complete - when we wittingly sin with a total disregard of God and a complete lack of faith that He can work in our lives. There is no way to reverse this (cp 1 John 5:16 - Judas; Matt 12:24,31-32 - Pharisees; Heb 10:26 - us?). We obviously need to avoid this state (cp Gal 5:16-17).

Bringeth forth: *apokueo* (616) - to breed forth, to generate (from "*kueo*" - to be pregnant). This phrase is used in a very unusual sense - in unusual births, multiple births or where the children are deformed in one way or another. The unwise action of vs 14 therefore produces the hideous family of children called "sin" and "death". This word only occurs elsewhere in vs 18 which shows that God is working for exactly the opposite result - a family whole and perfect (vs 4), unusual to the world but who reflect His glory and despise the flesh (vs 19-21). An impending birth is obvious for all to see. Like the process of birth, the process of sin causes much pain. This is brought about by the enmity created in Gen 3:15.



Using doctrinal books (e.g. *Christendom Astray*, *1st Principles Bible Marking Course*) find at least five other quotations that show that sin leads to death:



Find some examples of this happening to characters in the Bible. What lessons can we learn from their mistakes and how does this doctrine impact the way we should live our lives?

The source of temptation is common to all of us. The method to avoid the outcome of lusts is also the same for all of us - crucify the flesh and do the works of the spirit (cp Gal 5:16-24; 6:7-8). It is dangerous to have anything to do with the enticements of the world.



Verse 16: Do not err, my beloved brethren.

Err: *planao* (4105) - to be deceived, to roam, to go astray, to wander (cp Jude 11,13). James gives a warning against a deception which is natural to us. Because our nature is so deceptive, we can even deceive ourselves into thinking that it isn't. This happens by not understanding God's Word (cp Prov 6:20-24; 7:1-5; Mark 12:24; 2 Tim 2:15-19). It can also be corrected (cp Jam 5:19).



This phrase is used 3 times. How is it used?

Heb 3:7-13:

Gal 6:7:

Col 2:4-8:

Beloved: *agapetos* (27).



Where else in James does he specifically say "beloved brethren"? What is it used in relation to?

James is showing his devotion to the brethren. Even when he is rebuking them, James tempers his warnings with tender affection. It is a reminder to us that when baptised we are all brethren in Christ and all subject to the same temptations (Rom 3:23).

1:17-18 - The unchangeable Father has called us for His purpose

God has singleness of mind and only gives what is beneficial for us. Therefore to accuse God of causing us to sin is blasphemous against His character. In fact, His desire is for us to be regenerated through His Word, that we might manifest His character as children of light and be able to resist temptation when it comes.

Verse 17: Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above,

Good: *agathos* (18) - "describes that which being good in its character or constitution, is beneficial in its effect" (Vine).

Gift: *dosis* (1394) - a giving (the act of giving); endowment.

Perfect: *teleios* (5046) - complete, mature. When God's gifts have attained their purpose they certainly do not bring forth death (cp Rom 6:23; contrast Jam 1:15).

Gift: *dorema* (1434) - a bestowment (the thing given); e.g. wisdom (vs 5).



Using 2 Pet 1:3-4 also, what do you think these good and perfect gifts are in our lives? How has our Heavenly Father blessed us in this life?

Good Gifts (Life):

Perfect Gifts (Godliness):

Above: *anothen* (509). This word is used of things which come from heaven, or from God in heaven, and also in the sense of "again", or "anew". It is used in Jam 3:15,17 to show that God's wisdom is from above; in John 3:31 to show that the heaven is far above the earth; in Col 3:1-2 to show that we should seek the things from above; and in John 3:3,7 (mg) to show that man must be born again (from above) in baptism.

There is only one who is truly good (Matt 19:16-17). We can only expect good things from one who is good (cp Matt 12:35; 7:11), and indeed He has given us all good things (1 Chron 29:10-16).



and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

Cometh down: *katabaino* (2597) - to descend.

Lights: *phos* (5457) - (source of light) to shine, make manifest.



Using Strong's and Vine's and any other helpful resources, what can you find out about light in relation to God? What key biblical principle does this point to? What does this mean for those who desire to be children of light?(Hint: Follow the theme of light making manifest).

Variableness: *parallage* (3883) - transmission from one condition to another. This word is used to describe the sun's apparent change of position in the sky. God does not change (cp Num 23:19; 1 Sam 15:29; Mal 3:6; Rom 11:29; Tit 1:2-3, contrast Jam 1:6-8).



Shadow: *aposkiasma* (644) - shade cast by one object onto another. "Shadow that is cast by turning" (RV). "Who casts no shadow on the earth" (Moff). This word describes the eclipses of the heavenly bodies caused by their rotation around the sun. God cannot cause darkness to fall on the earth because He is the source of light and He is everywhere.

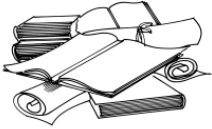


The natural sun seems to move about the sky and cause moving shadows to be cast. But we know that the sun does not move. It is our position in relation to it that does. God likewise does not change, but our relation to Him can change depending on our endurance in trials. Sometimes we may feel that God has withdrawn from us when we are experiencing trials. But God is always there. If we are in the shade it means that something has come between God's light and us (cp Psa 10:1). God does not place those obstacles in our way (vs 13; cp Isa 59:1-2). If we draw close to Him, and dwell in His light, we will not be in the shadow of temptation and sin (cp Jam 4:8).

Verse 18: Of His own will begat He us with the Word of Truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.

Of His own will: *boulomai* (1014) - be willing, deliberately, have a purpose (cp 2 Pet 3:9). We have been called and begotten because God wants us. God's "will" is related to God's "foreknowledge" (cp Acts 2:22-24). By God's own will and foreknowledge, we have been begotten into a lively hope by the resurrection of Christ from the dead (1 Pet 1:1-3). God did it - it was not of ourselves (cp John 1:12-13; 6:44). Contrast this with man - "of his own lust" (Jam 1:14). God's will is to fill the earth with His glory (Num 14:21).

Begat: *apokueo* (616) - to breed forth, to generate. This word only occurs elsewhere in vs 15. The impending birth of the spirit is just as obvious as that which is born of sin. This birth is part of a process (cp vs 21-22).



See *Elpis Israel*, Pg 144-146 for an excellent description of this process. (If you have a different edition, look up Jam 1:18 in the index and find the closest page numbers). Summarise the key points:

Word: *logos* (3056). (Cp Matt 13:18-23; 1 Pet 1:23-2:2). The logos is needed to overcome the flesh.

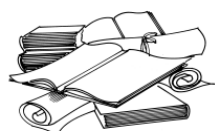
Truth: *aletheia* (225) - (cp John 17:17; Eph 4:24). God is true in all He does. He does not lie (cp vs 13; Num 23:19; 1 John 2:21). The Word of Truth is the Gospel of salvation (Eph 1:13). It declares the hope laid up for us in heaven which is bringing forth fruit (Col 1:5-6). There is a need to rightly divide it (2 Tim 2:15). The Word of Truth is able to help us in time of need (2 Cor 6:7).

Kind: *tis* (5100) - some, certain. "This word indicates that the thing with which it is connected belongs to a certain class and resembles it" (Grimm-Thayer). Our actions will show who our father is.

Firstfruits: *aparche* (536) - an offering of firstfruits. Note that the Greek word is always singular.



See 1 Cor 15:20-24 - The "firstfruits" is Christ who is typified in the Feast of Firstfruits (cp Lev 23:9-14; Deut 26:1-11). We are called to be firstfruits unto Him (Rev 14:4; cp Rom 16:5). The Saints are typified in the Feast of Pentecost (cp Lev 23:15-21) and are firstfruits in comparison to those who will be included in the Father's purpose at the end of the 1000 years, who are typified in the Feast of Tabernacles/Ingathering (Lev 23:34,39-43), of which process Zech 14:16-19 will be a part. The firstfruits were dedicated to God. The good and perfect gifts from above are not to be used for our own lusts but for God's purpose. The Word that is implanted needs to grow.



See "*Delight in God's Law*" Chapter 24 by John Carter for an excellent background resource on this theme of "firstfruits".

Creatures: *ktisma* (2938) - an original formation, created thing, the product of the creative act. God is a creator (Gen 1:1). All things are being created for His pleasure (Rev 4:11). Through Christ the firstfruits we become part of His new creation (2 Cor 5:17). Our trials, joys and suffering form part of the creative process (Rom 8:18-23).



See Matt 5:45-48 (cp also vs 17) - the lesson of these two verses is that God - the Father of Lights - has provided us with all good and perfect gifts in this life now, so that we may learn from His word how to glorify Him by walking perfectly before Him (vs 4). Only then will we be part of that multitude of firstborns or firstfruits in the Age to come (Heb 12:23).

1:19-21 - Word received, not flesh, accomplishes righteousness

It is not natural for us to manifest God's character (Rom 7:14-23; 8:5-7). The way to learn of God's character is to hear His Word, to avoid saying what we think He wants us to do before we have heard it, and to accept what He says without being resentful. This will also help us to overcome trials.

Verse 19: Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:



Wherefore: *hoste* (5620) - so that. "Ye know" (RV, Roth). As a result of knowing God's goodness towards us, and having His word for daily guidance, we should not manifest the fruits of the flesh but manifest righteousness as the sons of God (cp Gal 5:19-24; Eph 5:1-11).

Swift to hear: If we want to know the Truth, we actually have to listen! (vs 5). We need to remember our position before God (cp Eccl 5:1). Faith comes from hearing (Rom 10:17). God has given us all the gifts we need to understand His word (Prov 20:12), therefore we need to hear God's Word (Prov 8:32-35), obey it (cp 1 Thess 2:13), and bring forth fruit from it (Matt 13:23) both new and old (Matt 13:52). Only then will we be blessed (Exo 15:26; cp 1 Sam 15:1,19-22; Neh 8:2-3,8,12).



Thought to think about and do

The idea of running swiftly to eagerly learn from God's word is commonly used in Scripture (cp Psa 119:32,60; Dan 12:4; Amos 8:11-12; Hab 2:2; 2 Thess 3:1). Are we swift to want to learn more? Do we rejoice to open our Bibles? Does our heart burn when we understand the Truth better (Luke 24:32)? Or are we so apathetic that the Word is merely a chore to us, and we rush through the readings (if we even do them at all) or don't even bother to turn up the references during a study?

Slow to speak: It is important not to speak too rashly (cp Eccl 5:2-7). First we need to fully understand the situation (Prov 18:13), otherwise we stand in danger of accusing God (and brethren) falsely (cp Jam 1:13). (Cp Prov 10:19; 13:3; 15:2,18; 17:27-28; 21:23). The tongue is a major problem which James deals with later (cp Jam 3:1-12). We need to guard against its abuse.

Wrath: *orge* (3709) - desire, violent passion (translated anger, indignation, vengeance, wrath). "Originally this word meant any natural impulse or desire. It came to signify anger as the strongest of all passions. "Orge" suggests a more settled or abiding condition of mind, frequently with a view to taking revenge" (Vine).



See Ecc 7:8-9; Matt 5:22. It is a natural part of our nature to get angry when we are shown to be wrong. This is what the brethren were doing in blaming God for their temptations (vs 13). Being slow to wrath is a quality of God (Neh 9:17; Psa 103:8; 145:8). Note that anger is not totally condemned in the Scriptures. There is such a quality as righteous anger (cp Exo 34:14; Num 25:1-13; Psa 7:11; Matt 21:12-13; Mark 3:5; John 2:13-17; Rom 1:18; 2:8-9; Col 3:6; Rev 2:6; 19:15), but care still needs to be exercised so that we don't offend needlessly (Eph 4:24-26).



What is significant about the order of the phrases in this verse? Is this sequence natural to us?



Anger is the subject of many proverbs. Starting from the marginal references in Jam 1:19, find as many quotations in the book of Proverbs as you can which deal with anger. Can you think of situations where any of the proverbs apply to you?

Verse 20: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.



Moff: "Human anger does not promote Divine righteousness".

Worketh: *katergazomai* (2716) - to work fully, accomplish, finish, effect by trial (cp vs 3).

Righteousness: *dikaiousune* (1343) - a characteristic of equity or justice. It is a process of growth - carnal wrath impedes the development of God's righteousness. It is planted here in Jam 1:20 (produceth); Jam 3:18 (sown), by the Word of God (Jam 1:21; Rom 10:17) and is aided in its growth by faith in Christ (Rom 3:22; 10:3-6; Phil 3:9; cp Heb 11:33) and trial (Heb 12:11, cp Jam 1:3-4) and results in the fruit of righteousness (Phil 1:11; 2 Cor 9:10).

Man's wrath is the result of his natural thinking and needs to be put away (cp Eph 4:31; Col 3:8; 1 Tim 2:8). It is self-centred and seeks its own vengeance (cp Num 20:11-12; Acts 9:1; 2 Tim 2:24-25). In contrast, God's righteousness is shown in being just to all parties. If we show carnal wrath, we are, by our actions, denying that we are born of God. God's righteousness requires reverence coupled with a working righteousness (cp Acts 10:35). Doing righteousness is a sign that we are born of God (cp 1 John 2:29). If we truly desire His righteous character we shall obtain it (cp Matt 5:6). We cannot accomplish God's righteousness if we manifest human anger.



Verse 21: Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness,



Diag: "Therefore, discarding all impurity and overflowing of malice".

Wherefore: *dio* (1352) - consequently, on which account. Because the works of the flesh do not accomplish God's righteousness, we should cast them away (cp Matt 5:29-30).

Lay apart: *apotithemi* (659) - to cast off, to put away (e.g. clothing Acts 7:58; cp Isa 64:6). "It is used of those things one gives up or renounces" (Grimm-Thayer). "This word always appears in the middle voice in the New Testament" (Vine). This means that the action is done for ourselves (the saving of our souls).



What filthiness are we told to lay aside or crucify?

1 Pet 2:1-3,11; 3:21

Col 3:5-10

Gal 5:19-26

Eph 4:20-27,31-32

Rom 13:11-14

Heb 12:1-2

All filthiness: *rhuparia* (4507) - moral dirtiness. This is a related word to "vile" (Jam 2:2). (Cp Zech 3:3-4; Jude 23; Rev 3:4). Anything that does not further God's righteousness is morally defiling. "All" highlights more than just ceremonial defilement (cp Matt 23:25-28; cp 2 Cor 7:1) and must also include all inward uncleanness (cp vs 14). As we put aside filthy clothing, so let us do likewise with actions and habits (cp Jam 4:8; Eph 5:3-5).

Superfluity: *perisseia* (4050) - superabundance (cp Matt 12:34; 2 Cor 10:5); suggests "excessive fat" (cp Heb 12:1). We should seek to abound in other areas (e.g. 2 Cor 8:2).

Naughtiness: *kakia* (2549) - malice, ill will, desire to injure others (cp Rom 1:28-31). This attitude spreads (cp 1 Cor 5:8). We need to replace it with the attitude of the Spirit as little children (cp 1 Cor 14:20; 1 Pet 1:14-17; 2:1-3). It is the Word which can cleanse us (cp John 15:3; Tit 3:3-7).

and receive with meekness the engrafted Word, which is able to save your souls.



Receive: *dechomai* (1209) - to have offered to one (subjective or passive). "Embrace" (Diag). (Contrast Jam 1:7). Rotherham shows that laying apart (negative) and receiving (positive) are part of the same action - "Wherefore putting away all filthiness and overflowing of baseness, in meekness welcome ye the Word".



See Mark 10:15; Acts 17:11; 1 Thess 1:5-7; 2:13; 2 Thess 2:10.

Meekness: *prautes* (4240) - mildness, gentleness. A condition of mind and heart. "That temper of Spirit in which we accept (God's) dealings with us as good, and therefore without disputing or resisting" (Vine).

Matt 21:5; 23:12; 1 Pet 3:4; Matt 5:5; Jam 3:13.



Engrafted: *emphutos* (1721) - "implanted" (RV), "fitted for inward growth" (Roth). This word is used of implanting in nature (see vs 18). The seed that is sown is an incorruptible one (1 Pet 1:23). Compare the Parable of the Sower (Matt 13:23).

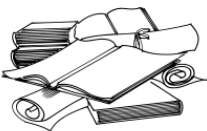
Word: *logos* (3056)- purpose, reasoning. The knowledge of God's purpose is not enough. We need to accept it and submit to its power for it to have effect (cp Rom 6:17-23). It is a basic principle that seed will reproduce after its kind (Gen 1:11). Our fruits will show whether we are engrafted with the Word (cp Matt 7:16-21).

Able: *dunamai* (1410) - able, possible (cp the English word "dynamo"). Power resides with God's Word to overcome the flesh and its desires.

Save your souls:



Acts 2:40-41; 13:26; Rom 1:16; 2 Tim 3:14-17; 1 Cor 15:1-2 (RV); Heb 2:3; 1 Pet 2:2; 1:9; Eze 18:21.



Islip Collyer: "The living of a good life without a foundation of good doctrine is impossible. In every case of intelligent action, the thought must precede the deed and thus sound doctrine is the foundation of sound morality".

1:22-27 - Word must be enacted in our lives

Although the Word has been implanted into our hearts and we have received it, it is still necessary that it brings forth the fruit pleasing to God (cp Matt 7:17-20). This involves continually looking into God's Word and applying the lessons practically in our lives.

Verse 22: But be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.



Moff: "Act on the Word, instead of merely listening to it"

But be ye: *ginomai* (1096) - to cause to be, to become. A change is needed (it is not natural to outwork the Word). Being doers of the Word must replace the emptiness caused by casting off the flesh (or else something worse will - cp Matt 12:43-45).



Doers: *poietes* (4163) - a performer. From a root word "*poieo*" - "to adopt a way of expressing by act the thoughts and feelings" (Vine) (cp vs 23,25; 4:11; Rom 2:13). The firstfruits bear the character of the tree that produced them. Likewise we must outwork our Father's character as begotten children (cp 1 Pet 2:9; John 1:14).



What does it mean to be a "doer of the Word"? What are the things that we as "doers" can do?



Hearers only: It is no use enjoying the teaching if we don't respond. Study is necessary (cp Rom 10:17) but it is not an end in itself. The real purpose is that it might convert us into doers of the Truth - see the references below:

Exo 15:26

Deut 7:12-15

Eze 33:30-32

Matt 28:19-20

Mark 3:35

Luke 11:27-28

Luke 12:47-48

Luke 19:12-26

John 13:17

Rom 2:17-23

1 John 2:3

Rev 1:3

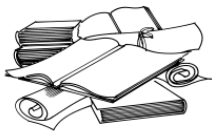
James is leading up to his theme "Faith without works is dead" (Jam 2:14-26). The Word must be the motivation for our actions. The works though need to be built on the proper foundation (cp Matt 7:24-27).

Deceiving: *paralogizomai* (3884) - to misreckon, delude, reason falsely. "Reasoning yourselves astray" (Roth) (cp vs 13,16,26). This word only appears elsewhere in Col 2:4. See also 1 Cor 6:9; Gal 6:3,7.

The Ecclesia had the same problem here as with their reasoning on the source of temptation. They were not clear as to the character of God and His desire for us to manifest it. The end result of not doing the Word once it is heard is sin (cp Jam 4:17). We must not deceive ourselves into thinking that we shall be saved just because we know God's purpose. We must adopt that same purpose for ourselves and express it in our actions for us to partake in that purpose (cp Matt 7:21).



What are some of the things we might do which are not right but we convince ourselves that it is OK to do them? (E.g. driving over the speed limit to get to CYC on time).



In Neville Smart's book *"The Epistle of James"*, pages 65-67, read Dale's passage on the verse and examine yourself as to whether this applies to you.

James illustrates the deception by presenting two men looking in a mirror (representing the Word of Truth).

The First Man (vs 23-24)	The Second Man (vs 25)
Sees himself as he is.	Looks intently into the Word.
Leaves the Word.	Continues with the Word.
Forgets what he is like.	Acts upon the knowledge he gains.
No change.	Is blessed (his image is ultimately changed from earthly to spiritual).

Verse 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:



For: "Because" (Roth, Diag, Young). James explains how we can deceive ourselves.

Beholding: *katanoeo* (2657) - to observe fully (from a root word "*noieo*" - to exercise the mind), "denotes the action of the mind in apprehending certain facts about a thing" (Vine).

James does not condemn his readers for being guilty of a mere careless hearing of the Word, for they had been properly instructed therein. Rather he condemns those who carefully listen to its instruction, and yet neglect to carry into practice what was heard - an attitude of mind notoriously evident in some Jewish believers.

Natural: *genesis* (1078) - native, that of birth (what you are by nature).

Face: *prosopon* (4383) - the front, appearance, presence.



Glass: *esoptron* (2072) - mirror ("eis" - into, "optomai" - to gaze). The mirrors of James' time were made of polished metal (brass or steel). The user needed to concentrate on the reflection to be able to make out the finer details, as it gave an imperfect image. Likewise, a mirror was used by Paul as an illustration of our imperfect knowledge of the Divine will and Word (1 Cor 13:10-12), but Paul's words imply that the mirror is the only means of our knowledge of God and of our own standing before Him (vs 25; 2 Cor 3:18). The more then we look into the mirror, or have the Word in us, the more we recognise the degree to which we have sinned, and the greater incentive there is to overcome (cp 1 John 1:6 - 2:5).

Verse 24: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

Beholdeth: This is the same word as vs 23. The Greek is in the past tense - "he viewed himself and went away" (only a momentary act).

Goeth his way: *aperchomai* (565) - to depart. He goes HIS own way - not God's. In many cases this is because we don't like what we see.

Forgetteth: *epilanthanomai* (1950) - to lose out of mind, neglect (from a root word - to escape notice). A lack of looking is associated with a lack of remembrance (2 Pet 1:8-9).

What manner: *hopoios* (3697) - of what kind, sort or quality. He is deceiving himself that he is acceptable to God (cp 2 Pet 3:11).

This man sees his natural self for what it is, but with a deceitful heart (cp Jer 17:9), and poor logic, he deceives himself into thinking that nothing else is required (vs 22). He is double-minded (vs 8), and reasons himself astray.

This man's religion might have been intellectual to a point but he does not truly appreciate his real self. He is not progressing in the Truth (cp the Pharisees - Matt 23:3; Rom 2:17-23). Through not being constantly reminded of his blemishes, he forgets they exist (however, others can see them and his folly is clear to all) and continues to manifest the character of his father - the devil. There is no point in studying about the wrath of man (cp vs 19) if we continue to be wrathful. We must meditate upon the principles and do something about them.

The problem this man has is his attitude to the Word. It has not been given to us just to stimulate us intellectually but to show us what we are, what we can become, and how we can get there. It is a Law of Liberty that frees us from our nature to do God's work.



Thought to think about and do

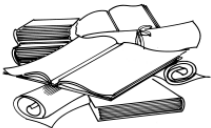
How do we view God's Word? What is our attitude to study? Do we study because it is expected of us, or because we want to learn of God's character so that we can bring glory to Him by manifesting it in our lives?

Verse 25: But whoso looketh into the perfect Law of Liberty,

Looketh: *parakupto* (3879) - to bend beside, lean over (so as to peer within - cp John 20:5,11), to look carefully into. "Looks intently" (Diag), (cp Prov 14:15; Heb 12:15); "obtained a nearer view" (Roth). (See 1 Pet 1:12). To see our full nature we need to continually look at the Word. Note that stooping down is not an exalted position. It is one of humility. Looking into the Word will also show us Christ - the Word made flesh, begotten of the Father - who is the example for us to follow.

Perfect: *teleios* (5046) - complete, mature. The perfect Word (1 Cor 13:10; Psa 19:7) is able to show us our blemishes (vs 23), and if we acknowledge these and fix them, we also, like Christ, will become perfect (see notes on vs 4).

Law: *nomos* (3551). Law implies a rule of life. James later contrasts it with the Law of Moses (Jam 2:8-13). The Mosaic Law showed up man's moral deficiencies (cp Rom 3:20; 5:20; 7:13) and was a shadow image (Heb 10:1; 2 Cor 3:13-15) but did not provide the perfect image to copy and could not save. Christ shows us that perfect image of the purpose of God in human flesh (cp John 1:14). Looking at his image will transform us into the same image (cp 2 Cor 3:16-18) and this, through faith in the cleansing process, leads to salvation. Sometimes little children watch their parents and copy them. Likewise we should learn from the one who begat us - God.



"When the mental disposition, called "the heart", is renewed, it becomes a mirror, as it were, in which one skilled in the Word of the Kingdom, can discern the spirit, or behold a reflection of the Divine Nature. This image of God in a man's character can only be created by the Word of the Truth of the gospel of the Kingdom." (*Elpis Israel*, Pg 54-55. See from "Ye are clean").

Liberty: *eleutheria* (1657) - freedom (not restrained or under bondage). "The phraseology is that of manumission (freedom) from slavery, which among the Greeks was effected by legal fiction, according to which the manumitted slave was purchased by a god; as the slave could not provide the money, the master paid it into the temple Treasury in the presence of the slave, a document being drawn up containing the words "for freedom". No one could enslave him again, as he was the property of the god" (Vine).

The liberty given is freedom from the bonds of sin so that we can take on the bonds of Christ (cp Rom 6:16-18; Deut 15:16-17).



Look up these references and write down what the perfect Law of Liberty for us is:

Jam 2:12-13

John 8:32,36

Rom 6: 14-22

Rom 8:15,21

2 Cor 3:17

Gal 5:1,13

1 Pet 2:16

Look up Deut 15:16-17. Why is this appropriate given the context?

and continueth *therein*,

And: Just looking is not enough.



Continueth: *parameno* (3887) - to stay near, remain, permanent, persevere. (Contrast vs 24 "goeth his way"). It is important to maintain our gaze on the Word (cp 2 Tim 2:15; Col 3:10). This includes attending CYC, memorial meetings, Bible classes, lectures and discussing it with others. The Word must be with us, in us, and in all that we do (Cp John 8:31; 15:3-10; 1 John 2:24; 1 Tim 4:16; Rom 11:22; see Deut 11:18-21). If we do this we are remaining in the light of our Father (cp vs 17).

he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.



RSV: "being no hearer that forgets but a doer that acts, he shall be blessed in his doing".

Doer: *poietes* (4163) - (same word as vs 22).

Work: See vs 4.

Blessed: See vs 12.



Psa 1:1-2; 19:7-11; 106:3; 119:1-3; Matt 7:24-25; Luke 11:28; John 13:17; Rev 1:3.

Deed: *poiesis* (4162) - action, performance, (related word to "doers" - vs 22). "Doing" (Roth). The doing is an ongoing process.



By "doing the Word", we are constantly reminded of our weakness because it is a battle for the flesh to keep Christ's commandments. By putting into practice what we hear, we are reminded of the necessity of God's help to overcome the flesh. When we concentrate on developing our minds by the Word we will keep it before us. Doing the works of faith shows that we have adopted God's purpose and are manifesting His characteristics as His children. We shall be blessed because we develop a trust in God (Jer 17:5-8). The blessings are experienced now as well as in the future (cp Mark 10:29-30; 1 Tim 4:8; 6:6-8).

The next two verses explain what James means when he says "doers of the Word". James does not want us to think that he was merely endorsing ritualistic observances (cp the legalistic background of the Jewish readers). James shows that the external aspect of our worship should be morally motivated (cp Matt 23:23). This is not a summary of Christian religion but an illustration of it. James gives the basis for us to determine if we are religious.

Verse 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.

Seem: *dokeo* (1380) - to think, suppose, to seem. James anticipates that we might say that we are doers of the Word.



1 Cor 3:18; 8:2; 10:12; Luke 8:18; John 5:39; Gal 6:3; Prov 14:12; Matt 3:9; 6:7; 23:28.

Religious: *threskos* (2357) - ceremonious worship (demonstrative). This relates to the external aspect of religion in which the Jews and most modern religions delight in (Matt 23; cp Acts 26:5; Col 2:18). This man has a distorted view of himself in the mirror and sees what he wants to see, i.e. himself as religious (cp 1 Sam 16:7; Luke 16:15). We must be careful that our religion is not focused on what others see us do (cp Matt 6:1,5,16; 23:5), but is rather a practical outworking of inner conviction.

Bridleth: *chalinagoge* (5468) - to lead by a bridle, to guide, restrain (cp Psa 39:1; 32:8-9; Jam 3:2-12).



What is the lesson of vs 26 when compared to 2 Cor 10:10, 11:6?

Tongue: *glossa* (1100). Speech is a reflection of our thoughts (cp Matt 15:18; 12:34-37). An unbridled tongue shows that our thoughts are not motivated by a Godly character (cp vs 19-20). (See Eph 4:29; 5:4; Col 4:6; 1 Pet 3:10; 4:11 for the proper use of the tongue).

Deceiveth: *apatao* (538) - to cheat, to delude, give a false impression. "Deceiveth" especially signifies to deceive with empty words whilst ignoring the true character of sin (e.g. 1 Tim 2:14; Eph 5:6). The unbridled tongue will philosophise to convince a person that sin is not sin, but relaxation. James refers to "deceit" three times in this chapter (cp vs 16,22), and all are related to those who hear the word, but do not do it.

Heart: *kardia* (2588) - used to represent the thoughts or feelings (Matt 12:34). An ordinary mirror will show our outward appearance, but the Law of Liberty enables us to see a reflection of our inner selves. This man thinks that what he is doing and saying is manifesting God (see Matt 7:21-23). A deceived heart causes a gradual decline back to the ways of the flesh (cp Col 2:8; Heb 3:12-13; 2 Thess 2:10; 2 Pet 2:13; cp Jer 17:9). We need to compare our thoughts and intents with the Word, so that our weaknesses may be revealed (cp Heb 4:12).

Vain: *mataios* (3152) - useless, of no purpose, void of result.



How is this word used?

Acts 14:15

1 Cor 3:19-20

Eph 4:17

1 Pet 1:18

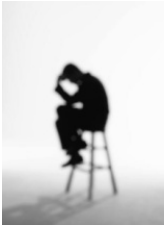
2 Pet 2:1,18

Tit 3:9

It can also be used in relation to a Godly practice such as offerings when offered to God in the wrong spirit (Isa 1:13; cp 1 Sam 15:22; Mic 6:6-8).

Our works in the Truth should have a solid foundation. They should be governed by our knowledge and understanding of the Word of God, and not by our heart - where our thoughts and feelings can be deceived by the flesh. Here, this man allows his emotions to overrule his better

judgement, and having failed to listen properly, he doesn't bridle his tongue and fails to avert a wrathful conflict. The result is clear - this man has failed to manifest the righteousness of God and so his religion is vain (cp vs 19-20). Mere theoretical knowledge of the Truth is useless if we don't outwork it in our lives. We must learn meekness, and realise that our actions must not be to the glory of self, but to God (cp 1 Cor 3:18-23).



Though to think about and do

Examine yourself. Is your life in the Truth merely a vain show, a façade, an image which you present to everyone else, but which you don't really fulfil to the glory of God? Or is your life a living manifestation and a practical outworking of the Father's purpose?

Verse 27: Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this,

Pure: *katharos* (2513) - clean (not mixed with any other element). Our works must be totally motivated by Godliness, not fleshly desires. External worship in its true form will find expression in moral virtue in works of love and mercy, and not merely a trust in ceremonials. This purifying religion is contrasted to the ceremonial form of the purifying of the Jews (John 2:6). This quality is obtained from the Word (cp John 15:3; 17:17; Eph 5:26) and a belief in the cleansing principle of Christ's blood (cp Heb 9:14; 1 John 1:7). A pure heart is needed to manifest a pure religion (cp 2 Tim 2:22; 1 Pet 1:22; cp Jam 4:8; Matt 5:8).

Undefiled: *amiantos* (283) - unsoiled, free from contamination. To be really undefiled before God is to be free from the moral defilement which comes from within man (Mark 7:7-23). Our High Priest had this quality (Heb 7:26). Contrast our High Priest with the Jews and their High Priest (John 18:28). They were careful to avoid ceremonial defilement by not entering into a Gentile court of law, but suffered the severest form of moral defilement possible by staining their hands with the blood of the Son of God.



Though to think about and do

Examine yourself. In your way of thinking and in your type of actions, are you a follower of Caiaphas or of Christ? Do you live the Truth only really when others are watching? Or has it affected your heart, and the way you reason morally?

Before: *para* (3844) - in the vicinity of. God is everywhere (cp Psa 139:7-12). All our actions must reflect His character. The principles declared in His Word must be continually outworked in our lives.

Father: *pater* (3962) - nourisher, protector, upholder. Greek - "our God and Father". See the way this same phrase is used in Jam 3:9. Again we are reminded of our relationship to the one who has begotten us with His Word (vs 17-18).



Is this: James now highlights two aspects - visit (positive) and keep (negative). Pure religion is aligned with visiting the fatherless and widows; undefiled religion is aligned with keeping ourselves unspotted.

To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction,

Visit: *episkeptomai* (1980) - to inspect (in order to - (a) visit, (b) help, or (c) select) (cp Matt 25:36,43). It means more than merely visiting someone, but expresses concern and readiness to help (cp Luke 1:68; 7:16). It supplies the New Testament word for "overseer, bishop".

Fatherless: *orphanos* (3737) bereaved, parentless, comfortless. This word only occurs elsewhere in John 14:18.

Widows: *chera* (5503) - widow (from a root word "chasm" - "to lack"). See the work of the ecclesia in 1 Tim 5:3-16; Acts 6:1-7 and contrast the actions of the scribes and Pharisees (Matt 23:14) and the spirit of Babylon the Great (Rev 17:5-6; 18:7).



What was/is the ultimate outcome for these respective groups?

Who are the "fatherless" and "widows" around us?

List some practical ways in which from now on you can "visit" them:

FATHERLESS AND WIDOWS	
Exo 22:22-24; Deut 24:17; 27:19; Isa 10:1-2; Jer 22:3; Zech 7:8-10; cp Job 6:27; 24:3,9,21:	Not to be afflicted
Deut 10:18; Psa 10:14-18	God executes judgement for them
Deut 24:19-21	Provided for from crops
Deut 14:28-29; 26:12-13	Provided for from tithes
Deut 16:11-14	Included in Gods feasts

Job was charged by his friends with maltreating them (Job 22:9); see Job's reply (Job 29:12-13; 31:16-21).

The same principles also apply to those who come into the Truth from outside. They may be without a natural family and will need support (cp Mark 10:29-30).

Affliction: *thlipsis* (2347) - pressure. Pressure was to come upon all the Ecclesia (cp Matt 24:21; John 16:33; Acts 14:22). God has helped us through our tribulations, therefore we should outwork the same characteristics to those in need (cp 2 Cor 1:3-4).

James is showing the attitude that is necessary to be a true doer of the Word. Provision for the needy is an unseen act. Under the Law of Moses the giver didn't even know exactly who was to benefit (e.g. Deut 24:19; cp Matt 6:1-4). The little things of ecclesial life have the greatest significance (cp Matt 25:34-46). Compare this with the unbridled tongue, which is a very public characteristic with devastating effects (cp 3:1-12).



What are the things we can do in our families and Ecclesia that James would classify as "pure religion"?

God was a father (cp Exo 4:22; Deut 32:6; Isa 64:8) and a husband (cp Isa 54:5-6; Jer 3:14; 31:32) for Israel. He promised that He would be with Israel if (among other things) they looked after the fatherless and the widows (Jer 7:6-7), but if they didn't, He would withdraw His overshadowing hand and punish them (Jer 5:28-29; 22:3-5; Eze 22:7,19-22; Zech 7:8-14). Finally, AD 70 was prophesied in order to purify the nation in part because of their failure to do this (Mal 3:1-5). He has now also visited us (cp Luke 1:68, 7:16; Acts 15:14) who were without hope (cp Eph 2:12) to become our Father (cp Eph 2:18; Rom 8:15-16; 2 Cor 6:17-18), and who were without a husband to provide us with one (cp Eph 5:22; Rev 19:7). God watches over the fatherless and widows (cp Psa 146:9; Psa 68:5; Jer 49:11), therefore if we are to manifest His character (and learn from Israel's error) this should also be a part of our life (cp Isa 1:16-17; Jer 7:6-7 with 1 John 3:17-19; Matt 5:44-48).



and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

Keep: *tereo* (5083) - to watch over, to guard from loss or injury by keeping an eye on (idea of observation) (cp 1 Tim 5:22; 1 John 5:18; Rev 16:15).

Unspotted: *aspilos* (784) - not morally blemished, unstained.



2 Pet 2:13; 3:14; Eph 5:26-27; Jude 23; Rev 3:4; Jam 3:6.



List some ways in which, upon reflection, you are spotted by the world. With each way include a practical solution, which will help you to overcome.

World: *kosmos* (2889) - arrangement. Real defilement does not result from the non-observance of ceremonials, but from moral contamination from the "world that lieth in wickedness" (1 John 5:18-19; cp 1 John 2:15-17; Jam 4:4). We cannot entirely avoid contact with the world (cp 1 Cor 5:9-10) but we need to ensure that we are not stained by its ways (cp John 17:14-17; Rom 12:2).

As God's children we can have no fellowship with the world (cp 2 Cor 6:17-18; 1 John 4:4-6; 5:4-5,18-19). As Christ's bride we need to remain unstained from the world. This is done through the Word (Eph 5:26-27).

The last "and" in this verse is in italics. If it were omitted, then the flow of the verse would indicate that visiting the fatherless and the widows in their affliction would be one way to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

Life in the Truth is not only about abstaining from evil, but equally filling our life with those things and activities of which God would approve. So then, perhaps James is saying here that by actively filling our lives with good things, the evil things are automatically excluded and conquered.



Thought to think about and do

How do we use our spare time? Are our spare hours filled with learning more about the Bible and serving others, or are they dedicated to our own pleasures and self-centred activities, innocent in themselves though some of these might be?



Draw up a timetable for two days of an average school/uni/work day, and a normal Saturday or holiday. Fill in the activities you would typically do each hour:

	Day 1	Day 2	Saturday/Holiday
8 am			
9 am			
10 am			
11 am			
12 noon			
1 pm			
2 pm			
3 pm			
4 pm			
5 pm			
6 pm			
7 pm			
8 pm			
9 pm			
10 pm			



What are some of the ways in which you "sow to the flesh" each day (Gal 6:7-8)?
 What are some of the ways in which you "sow to the spirit" each day (Gal 6:8-10)?



List some ways in which you could serve others or grow spiritually:

Find some spare time in your timetable where these could be slotted in, cross off the old activities and write in the new activities.

Now live your timetable, and realise that you're one big step towards having a pure and undefiled religion before God!!