

# October to December 2022

## “Practical Christian Living”

(based on the Epistle of James)

*by Rev Dr Jose Trinipil G. Lagapa*

---

### About the Author



Rev Dr Jose Trinipil G. Lagapa [DVM, PhD (Vet Science), MDiv, ThM, ThD] is serving as a preacher in True Life Bible-Presbyterian Church, Singapore and is a lecturer of the Far Eastern Bible College.

Married to Maria Celeste Ba-a Lagapa for the past twenty-five years, God has blessed them with three children: Theya, Thessa and Jose Trinipil II.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 1

JAMES 1:1a  
ACTS 12:1-2

*“And he killed James the brother  
of John with the sword.”*

---

### THE APOSTLE JAMES: FOLLOWER, WRITER AND MARTYR

James, the author of the Epistle of James, identifies himself as a servant or a bond slave of God and the Lord Jesus Christ. He declares his loyalty and submission to his Master, and would even die for his Lord.

James' identity is, however, a question that divides the views of most well-known Christian commentators. There are three possible candidates: James, the son of Zebedee; James, the son of Alphaeus; and James, the brother of our Lord. James, the Lord's brother, is favoured by most scholars today. He held a significant role during the church's infancy and was recognised as the head of the Jerusalem church (Acts 12:17; Gal 2:9). Calvin suggests James, the son of Alphaeus. However, it is more reasonable to believe that this James is the son of Zebedee, who is the brother of John and one of the Lord's twelve apostles (Matt 10:2; Mark 3:17; Luke 6:14; Acts 1:13). Being one of the three in Jesus' inner circle, he must have written many teachings based on what the Lord had taught them. Since Herod Agrippa killed him around AD 44 (Acts 12:1-2), this would have been the earliest epistle written during the diaspora that happened in Acts 8 after Stephen's death.

Follower: James (John's brother and son of Zebedee) left everything to obey Jesus' call and followed Him (Matt 4:21-22; Mark 1:19-20; Luke 5:10-11).

Writer: James' letter is full of the doctrines of Jesus. The letter strongly suggests his intimate relationship with the Master which he had for more than three years.

Martyr: He was executed by Herod. God made it possible for him first to write the letter to be sent to the churches before his death.

God chooses His instruments as perfectly as He sets the timing of the circumstances in their individual lives. This is why believers can truly entrust their lives to the Lord. He is worthy of our complete submission. Do you submit to Him? Do you consider yourself a bond slave of Christ?

**THOUGHT**: As I serve Christ, am I ready to give my life for Him?

**PRAYER**: Father, grant me the grace to obey and follow Thee, even unto death.

---

### SCATTERED WITH A MISSION

The term “*scattered abroad*” (James 1:1, Greek: “*diaspora*”) is also used by Luke, the author of the Book of Acts, in Acts 8:1. It is strictly a scattering, like seeds being broadcasted for sowing. It is used to describe how the Christians dispersed because of persecution. In this context, the word “*abroad*” refers to any place outside Jerusalem or Palestine. They probably moved in all directions as the Jewish authorities pursued them.

Identity: The “*twelve tribes*” (James 1:1) refer to the Jewish believers. It is a term commonly used in the New Testament to refer to the nation of Israel (Matt 19:28; Acts 26:7; Rev 21:12). The believers were then the Jews. It was only later that there were Gentile converts.

Felicity: The word “*greeting*” (James 1:1) means “rejoice” or “be glad.” It was a standard secular greeting in those days. It was a joyous salutation upon meeting or parting, especially brethren. Although this word appears in no other New Testament canonical epistle, it is a pattern in first-century letters. It does occur in two letters recorded in Acts (15:23; 23:26).

This Epistle was explicitly written to a group of people who were dissociated from their leaders, the Apostles, in the early days as believers of Christ. They needed encouragement and hope during a time of persecution. They also needed corrections amid a troublous situation. The Apostle wanted to remind them of the words of the Saviour so that they would not be found wanting in their Christian walk.

The Lord reaches out to His children through this Epistle to let them know that whatever happens in their lives is for a reason (Acts 8:4).

Dear reader, see the Lord's hand leading you. He may put you in a place you never wanted, not because you do not deserve the “best” (in your opinion), but because He has a higher purpose for your life! You have a mission to fulfil, and your reward will be far greater than you can ever imagine – eternal joy!

**THOUGHT**: Do I complain when I do not get what I want?

**PRAYER**: Father, help me to accept where Thou hast put me and cause me to do the work Thou wantest me to do there.

---

MONDAY, OCTOBER 3

JAMES 1:2

MATTHEW 5:10-12

*“Rejoice, and be exceeding glad:  
for great is your reward in heaven...”*

---

### REJOICING IN TRIALS?

James exhorts the brethren that in all things they must count it a delight. In James 1:2, “*temptation*” means testing or trial. An elaboration of the temptation is found in the following verse that talks of “*the trying of your faith*.” Therefore, the temptation here applies only to believers, for what is there to test if one does not have faith? Unbelievers who face difficulties and challenges in life are experiencing the consequences of sins.

Call for all Christians: This Epistle for practical Christian living was written to meet the needs of believers who were in distress because of persecution. The call is for brethren, fellow children of God by faith in Jesus. Some argue that James referred to the Jewish race in this particular address. However, taking the context of Acts 8, the recipients are the Jews scattered abroad because of their newfound faith in Jesus. Thus, James’ primary audience are true believers, his brothers and sisters-in-Christ.

Count it all joy: James exhorts the believers that in all temptations or testings at all times they must rejoice in the Lord. To “*count*” (James 1:2) is a command to make a decision after weighing the facts or circumstances. It is to consider or have an opinion about the sad and tragic experiences. And to do it with joy! To “*fall into*” (James 1:2) is to be encompassed or surrounded by trying circumstances and all kinds of trials.

Everyone endures some measure of trouble. Man’s fall resulted in a world that is under God’s curse (Gen 3:17-24). The children of God are not exempt. God permits trials and troubles for Christians to test their faith or chastise them for their waywardness. In the context of James’ letter, this trial was the persecution that would test their obedience to Jesus.

How about you? Are you facing troubles because of your unbelief? Repent and believe in the Lord Jesus. Or are you facing trials that test your faith in Him? You will know by the Spirit’s prompting through the reading of God’s Word. Rejoice, for these shall strengthen your confidence in the Lord and cause you to know His truth and His love deeper.

**THOUGHT:** What troubles am I facing: chastening or testing?

**PRAYER:** Father in heaven, Thou knowest my heart. Grant me the discernment to comprehend these troubles that I am facing.

---

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 4

JAMES 1:3

ROMANS 5:1-11

“...but we glory in  
tribulations also...”

---

## KNOW THE PURPOSE OF YOUR TRIALS

We must not presume to know God. We can, however, know how He is dealing with us. But if we think or consider without seeking His Word, we may end up explaining away the purpose God has for us in trials and testing.

The certainty: “*Knowing*” (James 1:3) does not only mean intelligent comprehension. Neither is it just the understanding of the expected outcome. Rather, it implies certainty according to the Word of God. We cannot rationalise the troubles we are facing based on our perceptions. It must be from the Spirit’s illumination (as we read God’s Word) making us sure of what His will is for us. The word “*trying*” (James 1:3) is from the Greek word “*dokimion*.” It is not the same Greek word used for “*temptations*” in verse 2. But these two words carry similar meanings. It has the basic idea of testing something to prove or disprove whether it is genuine or valid. Thus, “*knowing*” here implies knowing that there is an expected, guaranteed outcome to the “*trying*” of one’s faith.

The efficiency: In James 1:3, “*worketh*” refers to achieving an effect in the good sense. The trials we experience result in an effect that is prepared and carefully fashioned. This speaks of God’s omnipotent and sovereign Hand behind our trials. He is the perfect Designer of these incidents.

What is produced is “*patience*” (James 1:3), the capacity to continue to bear even under challenging circumstances. This reminded James’ readers that even though the Lord put them in a harsh situation, His purpose was to give them more spiritual virtues, especially endurance. We must be thankful for trials. It energises us to press on amid the vile assaults of the enemy. It sustains our faith to hold on to God’s promises. Indeed, patience is what every sinner saved by God’s grace needs.

How about you? Do you fret because of trials? Only by knowing these things according to the Scriptures will you appreciate and rejoice over your present tribulations.

**THOUGHT**: There will be good outcomes from God’s dealings in my life.

**PRAYER**: Father, may I know more of who Thou art and how good Thy plans for me are, so that my life may shine forth for Thy glory.

---

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 5

JAMES 1:4

JOHN 17:20-26

*“I in them,  
and thou in me...”*

---

### MORE FRUITS OF TRIALS

James encourages the believers to let “*patience*” (James 1:4), i.e. endurance, to bring out a perfect work so that they will be complete and entire, lacking nothing. Patience is not the ultimate aim of the trial. Patience is to make the saints “*perfect*” (James 1:4; Matt 5:48). Through trials, the Lord moulds and hammers us to be conformed to His image. His trials will surely bear the fruit of maturity, manifesting a life more and more like the Lord Jesus’. It is a fruit most sweet before God and man.

Excellent: The Greek word translated as “*perfect*” has the idea of spiritual maturity (1 Cor 2:6; James 1:4; 1 John 4:18). It does not, however, connote moral or spiritual perfection or sinlessness. It instead refers to that which is fully developed. This depicts a result in the believer who is being fully prepared or ready for the Lord’s work (Col 1:28; James 3:2). It is God’s grace granted to His children. Thus, it is excellent, for it produces a more profitable product: perfection.

Entire: The word “*entire*” (James 1:4) carries the idea of being whole in all its parts. The result is a complete package, where nothing is missing. The Greek word for “*entire*” has the prefix “*holo*,” where we get the term “*holograph*,” a 360-degree, three-dimensional depiction of an object. This helps us to understand that trials lead to outcomes that are complete or full. Such a fruit of trials may not be sweet to the taste, but it is full of nutrients, which are the best for the spiritual life of the believer.

Thus, this must be the Lord’s work. The believer’s hardships do not happen by chance. God has laid out everything according to His gracious and merciful nature. Therefore, no Christian facing problems should doubt and question God for allowing them to happen.

Dear reader, look beyond your trial, see the good hand of our loving Father, and see the fruit that you can bear. It will be a great blessing for you and the people around you who will see your God working beautiful things in your life!

**THOUGHT:** Can I see beyond the sufferings of my trial now?

**PRAYER:** Father in heaven, open my eyes that I may see Thy hand arranging and preparing the best in my life for Thy glory.

---

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 6

JAMES 1:5  
JOHN 16:19-29

“...ask, and ye shall receive,  
that your joy may be full.”

---

### PROVISION IN TRIAL

In times of trials, the enemy sows doubts and questions. James tells us that while God allows us to go through a trial, He does not leave us without a provision. James commands the believers (that if they lack an understanding of what they are going through) to ask God for wisdom. A child of God can certainly ask this from his heavenly Father who will continually give. He is an all-generous God and dispenses without insulting or scolding. He is ready to give wisdom to anyone who asks.

God's Wisdom: Troubles in life may rob the believers of their spiritual discernment. Worries and anxieties deprive Christians of seeing the hand of God showing them the way. The lack of sound judgment makes the situation more unexplainable. The absence of spiritual understanding can complicate their conditions. Worldly wisdom does not have enough explanations to allow them to see why these life-threatening experiences come into their lives. They need the wisdom of God the most. This is the only way they can comprehend their seemingly incomprehensible state.

God's Word: James is sure that God will answer. This answer, however, will not come through dreams and visions, nor experience and circumstances. The wisdom of God comes from His Word (Heb 4:12).

In Greek, “*let him ask*” (James 1:5) is an imperative verb. It is a divine command, not an option. It is mandatory for believers. James instructs the believers to seek wisdom from the Lord, not the world's wisdom.

God is a generous Giver of wisdom. He gives abundantly for the benefit of Christians struggling through the hardships in life. It can only be found when you prayerfully seek wisdom from His Word with the Holy Spirit's illumination. As you search the Scriptures, you may also ask for guidance and counsel from mature Christians. Those older in the faith, especially your pastor, will surely be ready to help by pointing you in God's direction. Do not carry the burden yourself. Pray for God's wisdom! He will give it as He promised.

**THOUGHT:** Do I seek God's wisdom to discern His dealings with me?

**PRAYER:** Father, help me to seek wisdom from Thy Word through the Holy Spirit and with the help of my fellow believers.

---

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 7

JAMES 1:6

MARK 11:12-24

“...and shall not doubt in his heart,  
but shall believe...”

---

### ASK IN FAITH

James commands the Christians to ask for wisdom from God “*in faith*” (James 1:6). What is “*faith*”? This refers to the objective faith which embodies the whole counsel of God. It is the entire perfect Scripture that can be fully trusted and believed. Therefore, this is a prayer for knowledge and understanding of God’s Word to discern and apply the will of God in the believers’ lives. In other words, it is asking God for wisdom to appreciate that whatever hardships they are experiencing, they are still under the sphere of the compassionate and merciful care of the Father.

Do not doubt: There should be no “*wavering*” (James 1:6). To waver is to question the truthfulness of God’s promises and faithfulness. It is distrusting His wise decrees and omniscience. A common cry amid sufferings is: “You do not know what I’m going through now, God!” Are these the words of a believer who has wisdom? Surely not! It is full of doubt, and even if this person asks for wisdom, he will never appreciate the counsel and comfort of God’s Word for him. Bible-believing Christians must therefore ask with full assurance that God is in control, that God knows what they are going through, and God knows their end.

Do not discriminate: Another idea of “*wavering*” is discriminating. When counselled by mature believers (especially their pastor), the Christian chooses what to accept and reject, depending on his own biasness. To him, the best is to be pragmatic. Only what are favourable (based on his preconceived ideas) are to be followed. He does not trust God fully. He asks for God’s wisdom by sight, not by faith.

Doubters and discriminators are unstable because they are not anchored on the truth of God’s Word. They are driven by every opinion and suggestion of the world. They do not have God as their Anchor.

Dear reader, you can ask God for wisdom “*in faith*” only if you truly have put your trust in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour (1 Cor 2:16).

**THOUGHT**: Am I stable because I trust fully in God’s perfect wisdom?

**PRAYER**: Father, may I not give place to doubt and discrimination of Thy Person and actions.

---



SATURDAY, OCTOBER 8

JAMES 1:7

MATTHEW 7:7-12

*“For every one that asketh receiveth;  
and he that seeketh findeth...”*

---

### RECEIVE IN FAITH

We are taught not to doubt and not to discriminate when we pray in faith. Hence, when we receive the Lord’s wisdom, there must be a wholehearted belief and receiving of His answer. But how do we know which is the right solution to believe and to receive? These are pertinent questions that must be answered for Christians to do right amidst disordered and puzzling situations.

Believe: Christians must have minds undivided over the Lord’s Preceptive and Directive Will in their lives. The Preceptive Will refers to God’s laws and commands. These are the non-negotiables. What is truth is truth. It is not to be relative to the situation. For example, a Christian student must not cheat. He must not use his dire need to pass the examination as an excuse. He may have gone through a debilitating sickness that prevented him from preparing well for that examination, but cheating is not part of God’s wisdom. Believers know the certainty of God’s truth. To know this, they must understand the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith. The Directive Will refers to God’s answer according to the believer’s prayers. When believers pray for the Lord’s direction, God opens and closes the doors of opportunities in His perfect timing. Believers must not force open what God has closed, and vice versa. Otherwise, a greater disaster is to be expected!

Receive: When Christians see that the answer is according to God’s Word, they are then to receive it as from God. The Lord is mindful of their situation, and He will provide as they need. They must be sure of God’s answer, for He provides them with the wisdom that they need. There must be a thankful reception of His answer from His Word, even though the way ahead may still seem bleak and gloomy. They must not wait to see and then believe, but they are to believe and receive the answers while it is not yet seen (2 Cor 5:7).

Dear reader, do you believe that the words of God are faithful and true to His children? Read Matthew 7:7-11. Do you believe His words?

**THOUGHT**: Do I receive the wisdom of God’s answer in faith?

**PRAYER**: Father, grant me the grace to believe and receive every word Thou has given to me, even to its jot and tittle.

---

LORD'S DAY, OCTOBER 9

JAMES 1:8

MATTHEW 6:19-24

*"...if therefore thine eye be single,  
thy whole body shall be full of light."*

---

### BE NOT DOUBLE-MINDED

Who is a *"double minded man"* (James 1:8)? He is a person who often changes his mind, is restless and fickle-minded. He does not know the immutability of God. He is not sure of God's Word, which causes him to vary his opinion to trust and distrust the Lord. Immature believers may act like this, but they must not remain in such a state. It can lead unbelievers not to trust such believers.

Be secured: It is said that a double-minded man has two minds. He hesitates to entrust everything to the Lord. He is uncertain about the truth. He is always indecisive about what to do. He does not feel secure in what God has said. Every child of God must have the full assurance that God's promises will be established. God's inspired and preserved Word must be his security. It is infallible and inerrant. In other words, it is not capable of making mistakes, and there is no error in it.

Be stable: Double-mindedness is the reason that believers are unstable. He is always changing his mind, and is restless or unsteady. Such instability brings more troubles into one's life. In times of trial, being unstable complicates the situation. The more the mind is baffled, the more he is rendered useless for the work of the Lord as he knows not what to do next. This causes many ministries to be stalled. Christians must have stable minds in the Lord. (Read Romans 8:28.)

Unbelievers can be expected to be double-minded. They are unstable. They are never firm or fixed and are not sure of God. They will have full confidence in the flesh at one time, but at another time, they sink into the depths of despair, not knowing what to do next. Are you like these double-minded men? Be secure and stable in the Lord Jesus Christ! You can have the blessed assurance of a steady mind only in the Saviour. Do not live your life without knowing what to do with your life, especially in times of trials. Be not double-minded, but instead be Christ-minded. You can have this only when you repent of your sins and believe in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour (Heb 4:7).

**THOUGHT:** Have I believed in Jesus Christ as my Lord and Saviour?

**PRAYER:** Almighty God in heaven, have mercy upon me and grant me the grace to repent of my sins and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

---

MONDAY, OCTOBER 10

JAMES 1:9-10

MATTHEW 5:1-9

*“Blessed are the poor in spirit:  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”*

---

### TRUE EXALTATION

James understands the struggles of the dispersed Christians, who had difficulty providing for their basic needs. Around them are thriving Jews who continue to live according to the Old Testament laws and seem to be doing well. Most of them are even living comfortably in their abundance.

Not based on social status: A brother who may be looked down on as having a low social status by the world must understand what the true standard is. Even though he is lowly and persecuted, his actual state in God’s eyes may be the opposite. God has already destined him to live in His kingdom forever. Nonetheless, in His good plan, the Lord chooses to let him remain on this earth to be the salt and light of this world.

Not based on economic status: The lowly brother must not envy the rich unbelievers around him. Their riches will not abide with them forever. As the flower of the grass, their wealth shall pass away. To “*pass away*” (James 1:10) refers to coming to an end. Their riches will perish and disappear. The boastings of the rich are foolish and preposterous. They will only last for a moment, and soon will be gone.

James encourages the discouraged believers that they must remember their high position in the Lord. They must keep on looking at life from God’s perspective, and see with their spiritual eyes the truth of their status. They must understand that the trial allowed by God has a purpose. They have a special mission to accomplish for God. Their reward is not on this earth, but beyond the heavens and skies in the New Jerusalem!

Material riches are not the accurate measure of exaltation. A believer has the right to glory in God who grants him eternal riches that will not fade away. Which one would you prefer: a temporal exaltation, or an eternal one?

Dear reader, if God is testing your faith today, praise the Lord! Your loving Father in heaven wants to remind you that, even though cast down, you already have the most glorious position in His Kingdom!

**THOUGHT:** Am I envious of the materially rich?

**PRAYER:** Father, help me to understand the truth that Thou hast already secured me an exalted position in the Kingdom.

---

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 11

JAMES 1:11

LUKE 12:16-21

*“...he that layeth up  
treasure for himself,  
and is not rich toward God.”*

---

## THE RICH WITHOUT GOD

Once, a university student claimed that his school does not talk in dollars and cents but in thousands and millions. This reflects the heartbeat of the educational system today. It aims to shape the students to go and get more wealth than the billionaires of this present age. This is an illusion to fix the eyes of men on the glitters of gold and silver. What about you, dear reader? How do you see the riches of this world?

The rich shall fail: James likens the rich man to the withered grass (James 1:11). When the sun rises, it will not take long for the grass to wilt because of the burning heat, and soon it will fail. Similarly, the rich man may have all the resources in this world, but when sickness and death come, his money cannot restore his life. He cannot extend his life even for one second. He will fail, sooner or later.

The rich shall fall: James further illustrates the flower that dies because of the fervent heat. The flower's beauty will be gone as it drops to the ground. This is equated with the rich man who prospers in the flower of his age, but he too will fall and perish. He will not last long!

The rich shall fade: These unavoidable examples prove the vanity of riches. In many cases, a man's riches become the cause of his decay and destruction. He will not regard the spiritual things but is entangled with the love of money, which is the root of all evil (1 Tim 6:10). His life is invested in gaining more wealth. To him, religion and things about God hinder his greed for more riches. He has no regard for spiritual things as what matters to him is the material abundance of this life on earth.

The problem, however, is that he will not live longer than this earth which will perish. The life of all men, whether rich or poor, is transitory. Some may rise, but soon they will fall. Their riches may increase, but they will be gone not long after. Material treasures are perishables. Read what Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes 5:13-16.

**THOUGHT:** Do I desire riches on this earth or the riches in heaven?

**PRAYER:** O Father, keep me away from a covetous desire to be enriched by the material things of this world.

---

## BLESSEDNESS IN TRIALS

What does it mean to be “*blessed*” (James 1:12)? Jesus used the same word in His beatitudes (Matt 5:3-11). It refers to a state of life experienced by the believer as he becomes a child of God by faith in Jesus. It is not just mere happiness and laughter, but an inner joy and contentment. It cannot be taken away from the believer, for it is a joy that the Lord Jesus bestows on those who are truly His. This is proof of a person having received Jesus Christ as his Lord and Saviour. Indeed, this blessedness is not from the transitory riches of this world.

Endurance: There is a blessedness in him who endures trials in life. The trials met are manifestations of God’s approval of him as His child. He overcomes the obstacles and hardships by the grace of God. He receives from the Lord a “*crown of life*” (James 1:12). A crown is a symbol of victory in ancient games. A believer’s perseverance attests to his being approved of God, and the crown of life is the evidence of his having everlasting life. When he endures the trials in life, he is “*blessed*” indeed.

Assurance: Eternal life is possessed by a believer when he repents of his sins and receives the Lord Jesus Christ. The trials in the life of God’s children (allowed by Him) is an expression of His genuine love. Remember, trials are not given merely to make a Christian suffer, but that he may be strengthened in his faith, that he may be “*perfect and entire, wanting nothing*” (James 1:4). Endurance in trials is the most excellent assurance that we have become partakers of the divine strength to persevere and conquer. Without trials, there is no blessedness of knowing God’s presence and no fulfilment of His promises in our lives.

Blessedness comes with the knowledge that God loves His saints. Trials are endured by those whom God has promised life eternal because they love Him. Yet we know 1 John 4:19.

Dear reader, are you enduring your trials? Or are you complaining and planning to give up? Remember the words of Peter in 1 Peter 4:12-13.

**THOUGHT**: I am truly blessed because of trials in my life.

**PRAYER**: Father, I thank Thee for the endurance Thou hast granted me and the blessedness that keeps me near my Lord Jesus Christ.

---

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 13

JAMES 1:13

LEVITICUS 11:25

*“...ye shall therefore be holy,  
for I am holy.”*

---

## GOD IS HOLY

In James 1:13, James uses the word “*tempted*” in the context of the incitement of man to sin. As believers are still subject to the allurements of sin, they are commanded not to think that temptation to sin is from God. “*Let no man say...*” (James 1:13) is a command of prohibition. The believer is not to say or even harbour a thought that God can tempt him to sin. He must not even imagine that God can be responsible for it somehow. God does not entice anyone to do evil.

Our God is holy, without sin in Him (Lev 20:7). He is infinite, eternal and unchangeable! He is always pure, just and never involved with sin.

God cannot be tempted with evil: The temptation that was posed to the Lord Jesus Christ when He was on earth was Satan’s attempt to get Him to sin. But being the God-man, He cannot be tempted to sin, meaning he cannot be enticed to sin. He is like firewood soaked in cold water – He will never be lighted! There are no weak points for Him to be tempted. No temptation can gain a foothold of Him. On the other hand, man is like wood soaked in gasoline. We are highly flammable!

God does not tempt man: Being holy, pure and perfect, God does not tempt anyone to sin. God cannot be the source of man’s temptation to sin because God is holy. He cannot sin, and He cannot make people sin. Any temptation that will lead to sin should never be attributed to God. Sin is of the devil. God will never seduce anyone to do evil. God may test people by trials but He will never tempt them to sin. Thus, when allurements of this world pull a man to sin, God cannot be blamed for it. Let us be careful not to entertain the thought that we can get entangled with sin because of God. That is falsely accusing God.

When the devil lures man to transgress God’s laws, he wants God to hate the man who disobeys God. His tactics are the same from the beginning (1 John 2:16-17). However, the believer whom the Spirit indwells will be led to confess his sins before God. And the Lord will forgive his sin.

**THOUGHT:** (Read Psalm 51:5.)

**PRAYER:** Father, keep me in the hollow of Thy hands that Satan may not tempt me to sin against Thee.

---

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 14

JAMES 1:14  
PROVERBS 4:23

*“Keep thy heart with all diligence;  
for out of it are the issues of life.”*

---

### WHEN IS MAN TEMPTED?

From yesterday’s devotion, we know that the temptation to sin is not of God, but of the Devil. This is the true and proper understanding of the cause of sin. Although we acknowledge God’s decrees over all the events in this universe, God’s Permissive Will does not suggest that He is the origin of sin (Job 1:12; 2:6).

When he is drawn away by his own lust: James points to man’s lust which draws him away from God. It is man’s sinful flesh that is particularly inclined towards sin. Man’s lust is like a magnet – it is always attracted to sin. The devil also cannot do anything without man’s participation and cooperation. There is no more significant influence to sin than man’s nature, as David admits, *“Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me”* (Ps 51:5). Man is bent on sinning because of the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and the pride of life, which are part of man’s nature.

When he is enticed to sin: To entice is to allure or beguile by using bait to seize or arrest. Immoral pleasures entice man’s sinful nature. So will the glitter of material, and the praises of man. These evil desires are like hungry fishes ready to devour the bait, not noticing the hook. As quickly as a dry twig catches fire, so will man’s sinful flesh also burn when subjected to the flames of sinful seductions.

Dear reader, if you have not received Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour, the above truths describe you. Christians, however, should still be mindful of this truth as we are given the mind of Christ to think and ponder on the dangers of sin. Although we are regenerated, and the Spirit of God indwells us, we are still enveloped by this body that is vulnerable to falling into sin. Let us not be caught by Satan’s hook. We have been delivered out of it, so let us be careful not to be entangled again. Read the wisdom of Solomon in Proverbs 1:10-19.

**THOUGHT:** Am I sensitive to the wiles of the devil that cause me to sin?  
**PRAYER:** Father, may Thy word be hidden in my heart that I might not sin against Thee (Ps 119:11).

---

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 15

JAMES 1:15

2 TIMOTHY 2:22

*“Flee also youthful lusts:  
but follow righteousness...”*

---

### AVOID LUST

Lust in James 1:15 is used in a bad sense of unrestrained desire for something forbidden, craving or desire towards evil. The Apostle James uses “*lust*” to refer to any evil affection that becomes the fountain of all sinful desires. From this lust are conceived the wicked yearnings of man’s flesh, resulting in vices worthy of eternal condemnation.

When lust is conceived in man’s mind, man is already guilty of sin. The Lord Jesus warns us that the conception stages before the outward visible and physical sins are equally punishable by God. Just as a fetus conceived inside a woman’s womb is already as human as an adult man, so is lust conceived. Read Matthew 5:21-22, 27-28.

Brings forth sin: Lust once conceived, soon gives birth to open sin. This visible, harmful and destructive sin is an actualisation of what has been formed inside the heart of man. The womb that nurtures sin is the heart. Read Jeremiah 17:9 and Mark 7:21-23.

Brings forth death: James rightly observed that when it is completed entirely, it is like a mother carrying the baby for nine months and giving birth when ready. Lust, however, does not bring life but sure death: “*For the wages of sin is death...*” (Rom 6:23). We thank the Lord that Paul continues in the same verse, “*but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*”

Take heed, dear reader, that if you have received Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour, you must not take pleasure in lust. If you do so without feeling conviction and guilt, it will prove that you are spiritually dull or dead! Let us be prayerful not to engage with evil desires in life. Believers will sense that this is not of the Spirit. Read Galatians 5:17.

**THOUGHT:** Do I find pleasure in thinking lustful things in life?

**PRAYER:** Father, as Thou hast saved me, keep me sensitive to the Spirit of God’s conviction when I begin to entertain lusts in my heart and mind.

---



### STOP DECEIVING YOURSELVES!

In this internet age where almost every transaction is done electronically, a tsunami of scammers in different forms has ravaged many individuals and even financial institutions. There are many deceivers preying on the naïve, careless and greedy; and if we are not careful, we might also become victims. This has been Satan's technique. He is a scammer, a liar and the father of all these. Beware, and be not deceived.

The Prohibition: In James 1:16, the Apostle lovingly addresses the recipients as his “*beloved brethren*” and commands them: “*Do not err*,” i.e. stop being led astray. And this is written in the present tense which means they must continually be conscious of the command. It is also a strong prohibition to stop an ongoing action. This is a warning not to become a victim of the ploy of Satan with his many disguises.

The Prohibited: The believers under persecution might have been tempted by offers of respite. Satan would offer shortcuts, fleshly pleasures, convenience, riches and fame. The believers may be greatly tempted to take the bait during a very trying time. However, they are warned not to be gullible and to recognise God's hand of providence. They must always measure everything according to the standard of His Word.

As many deceivers are in the world today, let us heed the Apostle James' warning. Satan will introduce new doctrines and ideas into Christianity. These are attractive to the worldly and ignorant. Let us keep on studying the Scriptures so that we will not “*err*” and be deceived.

When the wiles of the devil deceive us, we become useless in the work of the ministry. Worse, we become stumbling blocks to others from coming to Jesus. Dear reader, if you are assured of your eternal destiny in heaven, make sure you are labouring for the treasures in heaven. Do not be deceived by the pleasures of this world and the praises of men. They will not last long but will just lead you to eternal torment in the Lake of Fire! “*Do not err*”!

**THOUGHT:** Am I checking from the Scriptures to discern all things?

**PRAYER:** Father, help me to be watchful and prayerful in examining teachings introduced to me or to my church.

---

MONDAY, OCTOBER 17

JAMES 1:17

HEBREWS 13:8

*“Jesus Christ the same  
yesterday, and to day, and for ever.”*

---

### OUR FATHER OF LIGHTS

The “*Father of lights*” (James 1:17) was an ancient Jewish title of God, referring to Him as Creator, as the great Giver of light, in the form of the sun, moon and stars (MacArthur). God is the source of light even before He created all these heavenly bodies of light (Gen 1:14-18).

He always gives: Light is a constant giver of brightness. Every good and perfect gift comes from the Father of lights. He is a good Giver. “*Good*” (James 1:17) is the quality of things advantageous, like fertile soil to the plants or a useful deed to needy individuals. Here, the action of giving is emphasised, showing us the value of the gift to the recipients. The word “*perfect*” describes completeness with its chief component of totality instead of partial or limited. It tells us the nature of the gift which is entire and lacks nothing. This gift from above is appropriately suited to the person and to the occasion.

He does not change: As light is constant, it does not change. Nevertheless, lights may change as they have various phases and movements. The sun and the moon are sometimes clear and sometimes eclipsed. Yet, the Father of lights gives without variableness. This reflects His attribute of being the unchangeable God. God is always the same. He is constantly discharging His goodness without any hint of a shadow of evil. He is immutable as the perfect “*I AM*” yesterday, today and forever.

The Jehovah God of the Bible, the same as our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, changes not. His promises are true and faithful. Believers in great distress or under persecution can trust in His never-changing love and care for them. This dark and evil world may sometimes attempt to drown us with its filth, but our Father of lights will never fail to supply us with His beneficial gifts that are appropriate for His beloved children. Are you one of His children?

Dear reader, you can only be assured of God’s unfailing and unchanging gifts when you become His child (John 1:12).

**THOUGHT:** Am I fully trusting the unchangeable God of the Bible?

**PRAYER:** Father, please grant me the grace to be confident in Thy unfailing and unchangeable promises.

---

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 18

JAMES 1:18  
ROMANS 9:16

*“...it is not of him that willeth,  
nor of him that runneth...”*

---

### THE FIRSTFRUITS

The firstfruit is the first portion set aside and offered to God before the rest of the substance can be used by man. It is the first portion or the first offering (Lev 23:10). Farmers usually take the best portion of the harvest early to store it away for a stock of seeds to sow for the subsequent cropping. Yet the Lord requires that the first and best be offered to Him.

He begets us: It is by God’s decree of creation that we exist on this earth, and it is by His decree of election that we are saved. The word “*begat*” (James 1:18) is used literally of a mother who gives birth. James uses the same Greek word in verse 15 (translated there as “*bringeth*”). James 1:15 describes how sin, when it becomes fully mature, begets death. God causes the believer to be born of God by grace through faith in Jesus by the Word of Truth. It is man’s sin that brings him death. God alone brings man life.

He bears us: In the Mosaic ceremonial law, the firstfruit is a technical term for the first portion of the grain, fruit harvests and flocks offered to God (2 Chron 31:5). As He has begotten us, God has separated us for Himself to be dedicated to Him. This abundant grace we receive from God grants us life everlasting and endows us with the favour of giving glory to His name as He makes us His first and best.

Have you ever wondered how in the world God chose you and me from before the foundation of the world? Not only that, He has graciously adopted us as His children. He grants us the privilege to become servants of the King of kings and Lord of lords. Do you consider it a great blessing?

Dear reader, are you serving the Lord as a firstfruit? Are you prioritising the best part of your day for the Lord? Should you allow adversities in life to hold you back from giving your best for Him? Remember, we have done nothing to be chosen, and what a great privilege it is to be called unto salvation and even unto service. Give of your best to the Master!

**THOUGHT:** Is my life a reflection of the firstfruit of God’s creation where I am giving my best to offer unto Him?

**PRAYER:** Father, let my life be wholly given unto Thee in service and devotion that I may genuinely glorify and honour Thee.

---

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 19

JAMES 1:19-20

ECCLESIASTES 5:2

*“Be not rash with thy mouth,  
and let not thine heart be hasty...”*

---

### BE SWIFT BUT SLOW

In a rat race, no one can slow down. Everyone competes to have an edge over the other. Some even step on others in order to elevate themselves. This is sadly the world that we are in. It is even sadder that many Christians are found in this arena. Are you one of them?

As God’s children, we have to heed what has been told to us by the Apostle James. God is the Father of lights, and there is no darkness in Him. This means that our sufferings are not meant by God to tempt us to do evil, but they are meant for our good. For us to be able to face trials and keep ourselves from sinning against God, we have to *“be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath”* (James 1:19).

Be swift to hear: The command is to hear swiftly. It must be quick, which means it must be done fast and immediately. One must listen to God, be it in reading God’s Word or hearing the message from a preacher. It must be prompt, as indicating a time without delay. There must also be the spirit of readiness with a prepared heart, not haphazardly but diligently.

Be slow to speak: The command to be *“slow”* is exactly opposite to *“swift.”* To be slow also means to give space and time before you react and speak. Read Ecclesiastes 5:2 and Proverbs 21:23.

Be slow to wrath: The slowness is also applied to wrath. What is wrath? It is a vigorous upsurge of one’s nature against someone. It is an emotion of anger and resentment, a natural impulse or propensity to express one’s temper. In other words, Christians must be able to control themselves from quick conclusions and reaction (Prov 14:29; Eccles 7:9).

It is better to stop, look, and listen before shouting and cursing. Dear reader, are you slow to hear, swift to speak and swift to wrath? May the Lord have mercy upon you that you may take heed to this warning!

**THOUGHT:** Am I *“swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath”*?

**PRAYER:** Father, create in me a discerning spirit to listen and a compassionate heart to speak and love others.

---

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 20

JAMES 1:21  
PSALM 25:9

*“The meek will he guide  
in judgment...”*

---

### HUMILITY, HUMILITY, HUMILITY!

Man’s anger and fiery temperament do not bring good results to the glory and honour of God. The suffering Christians in the time of James may have been easily provoked and quick to lose their temper because of their hardships. They were possibly tempted to complain against God because of the hard times. They might have manifested dissatisfaction with God’s sovereignty over their lives. These are not responses that please God and must therefore be changed. James concludes that they must put away all vulgarity and surplus of evil. Instead, in humility, they must receive the implanted Word, which is powerful to deliver their souls out of their dismal situation.

Lay apart all filthiness: James exhorts Christians that they must happily and willingly put aside all forms of filthy and moral impurity. These are all the evil and unclean behaviours that result from their rebellion against God. There are great temptations that Christians might redress their grievances by doing what is wicked instead of doing what is right.

Lay apart superfluity of naughtiness: This is a command against evil which is harmful and damaging. We must not sin thereby creating more problems, resulting in shaming the name of Christ. There must not be any malignity, malice, ill-will or desire to injure others. These must be put off from every Christian’s heart and mind.

James instead commands that in humility the Christian must gladly and eagerly receive the perfect Word of God. Calvin’s rule for the study of God’s Word applies here: “Humility, humility, humility.” The implanted Word of God is described as that which is able to actively save our souls. The Word has been implanted in us at the time of our salvation. It has been growing and bearing fruits in our lives. James particularly refers to the continuous use of God’s Word as a guide and light in the context of their deliverance from the adversities they were facing. Christians must be able to accomplish and complete their missions through the diligent reception of the Scriptures (2 Tim 3:14-15).

**THOUGHT:** Do I humble myself as I study God’s holy, perfect Word?

**PRAYER:** Father, make me a willing recipient of Thy Word, without criticisms and complaints.

---

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 21

JAMES 1:22

LUKE 11:28

“...blessed are they  
that hear the word of God,  
and keep it.”

---

## RECEIVING GOD'S WORD

James continues to encourage the believers to be “doers of the word” (James 1:22). They must not be hearers only. Those who profess to be believers, but do not apply into their lives what they hear from God's Word, are just deceiving themselves. If they do not use the words of God in their lives, then perhaps they do not have God's Word genuinely implanted in their hearts. They are merely parrots that memorise God's words without understanding and without doing them. This is the litmus test for those who claim to be believers of Christ.

Be ye doers: The Apostle James commands that we must do what God's Word says. He leaves no other option. A doer is one who embraces God's Word from the heart. His life testifies that he believes, according to the Scriptures. It must be borne in mind that no one can perfectly live out everything that he hears. This is precisely the purpose of the command. It is to remind believers that they are still trapped in this sinful flesh, which does not desire to obey the words of God. The spirit desires to apply, but the flesh opposes. Constant reminders are therefore essential. Listen to the words of the Lord Jesus Christ: “*But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it*” (Luke 11:28).

Be not just hearers: A Christian cannot live his life as a hearer only. It would be evidence of an unregenerated life. A true, born-again believer may at times struggle in obeying God's Word, but the Spirit of God will soon cause him to obey. Eventually, he will even be dragged to obey if he is still reluctant. Remember Lot! The grave warning is that if a person continues to live such a “hearer-only” kind of life, he is deceiving himself to think he is a Christian when he is not. To deceive oneself is the greatest tragedy in a man's life. Imagine fooling yourself that you are going to heaven, when you are actually on your way to hell.

Thus, the Lord Jesus gives us Luke 6:46-49 about the importance of doing rather than hearing only. Read Luke 6:46-49. Dear reader, do not deceive yourself. Receive the Word not by hearing only!

**THOUGHT:** Am I deceiving myself by being a hearer only?

**PRAYER:** Father, open my eyes that I may see whether I am really just a hearer only or a doer of God's Word too.

---

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 22

JAMES 1:23-24

PSALM 119:15-16

“...I will not forget thy word.”

---

### WHO IS A HEARER-ONLY?

Here is an analogy of who a hearer-only person is. If a person hears the Word and does not do it, he is like a man who regularly looks at his own face in the mirror, and when he turns away from the mirror, he immediately forgets “*what manner of man*” (James 1:24) he is.

As one beholding his face in a glass: The Greek word translated “*beholdeth*” (James 1:24) means to endeavour by careful and patient observation to discover what he looks like. He stares at the mirror and considers his appearance, turning his face from side to side. This is the attitude a believer must have in searching the Scriptures. He must be a diligent student (2 Tim 2:15), and study the Word carefully.

As one forgetting what manner he was: For whatever reason, when this man stops observing himself in the mirror and goes away, he immediately forgets what he has just seen. Does this happen to you? The Spirit of God reveals to the believer how to apply the words of God that he has read if he reads diligently. But the problem is that after reading or hearing the Word, the hearer-only person does not do anything to apply what he has heard. He immediately brushes off what he has heard when he leaves. Thus, he is a person who claims to be a Christian but continues to live his old sinful life even after knowing what is right and what is wrong. He does not apply what he has learned from God’s Word into his life.

Let us pray that we will not be hearers only. Although we cannot remember everything we hear and certainly cannot apply everything, we must not forget what we hear. And we have to ask the Lord to help us live out the words He allowed to remain in us. Let us cry with the Psalmist as he cried in Psalm 119:4-6. Dear reader, do you have the desire to correct your sins and transgressions according to what you have heard or read from God’s Word? Seek the help of the Holy Spirit to prick you and cause you to be a doer of God’s Word.

**THOUGHT:** Do I have the Spirit’s conviction to be a doer?

**PRAYER:** Father, let me be sensitive to the prompting of the Holy Spirit so that I will not remain a hearer only, but instead be a doer of Thy Word.

---

### WHO IS THE MAN BLESSED IN HIS DEED?

James reminds the believers about the perfect Word of God. God preserved these people to continue in the faith. They are described as doers of the Word. James calls their attention to remember how God had saved them and set them free from condemnation through this perfect law. James causes them to remember that it was the Word they heard, which they believed. *“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”* (Rom 10:17). They must not forget the precious words of God, which brought light to them.

He looks into the perfect law: The law is described as perfect (James 1:25) because the Scripture is the God-inspired and preserved, infallible and inerrant revelation of His commands. The Greek word for *“looketh”* has the idea that a man has to stoop down. This is a figurative word to describe a clear understanding of the words. To look into it is very emphatic. This act signifies a deep and attentive consideration given to something. It illustrates a man who cannot see clearly with his eyes and therefore must stoop down, that he may see with a clearer view. James refers to the *“law of liberty”* to mean the Gospel. It gives liberty from sin's guilt, power, dominion, and influence. It sets man free from eternal hell and the condemnation in the eternal Lake of Fire (Rom 1:16).

He continues in the perfect law: The looking into the law is not transient or sporadic. It is continuous, and this means the believer is abiding by that law with the desire to abide by it entirely. He does not depart from it, but diligently studies God's Word. He continues to desire obedience to God's will. Read what Paul urges Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:14-17. Do you want to leave the Word which sustains and keeps you? Remember, it is His will that we study His Word until the time when all of us will be perfected in the glorified state when the Lord Jesus Christ returns.

Dear reader, you will be blessed in your deeds only when you live according to God's Word. It is a man's compass to live to glorify and honour God.

**THOUGHT:** Am I diligently and continuously pursuing God's Word?

**PRAYER:** Father, let my heart burn with zeal to study Thy Word and to abide by it every day of my life.

---



MONDAY, OCTOBER 24

JAMES 1:26

PROVERBS 13:3

*“He that keepeth his mouth  
keepeth his life...”*

---

### A VAIN RELIGION

A believer who lives a godly life is expressed as one who lives as God would have him to live. James reminds the dispersed believers to maintain a life manifesting godliness. This example is learned from what Jesus Christ said in Matthew 5:13-16. However, your religion is “*vain*” (James 1:26) when you:

(a) Bridle not your tongue: To bridle is to exercise close control over a certain function. It specifically means to exercise self-control. A person who does not bridle his tongue cannot control what he says. It is as if he cannot tie his tongue down or, simply, he cannot stop talking. The Book of Proverbs repeatedly warns against an unguarded tongue (Prov 10:19-21, 31; 13:2-3; 15:2; 16:10; 19:1; 21:23 and Ps 32:9). Peter declares, *“For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it”* (1 Pet 3:10-11).

(b) Deceive your own heart: He is a Christian who deludes himself to believe that he is right when he is wrong. He flatters himself, saying the right thing according to his own assessment, not according to God’s Word. He is a great pretender and thinks he is holier than others. This causes him to slander others while he assures his own heart that he is well and right. This is self-deception.

The word “*vain*” pertains to a useless thing or life characterised as futile and lacking in content: futile and empty. Not bridling his tongue and deceiving his own heart, this man’s testimony and witness towards others would be fruitless. His claims as a follower of Christ are negated by his untamed tongue. The Apostle Paul encourages in Colossians 4:6: *“Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.”*

**THOUGHT:** Is my religion vain? Am I a useless and futile Christian?

**PRAYER:** Father, please help me truly live out a life that keeps my tongue glorifying and honouring Thee.

---

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 25

JAMES 1:27

PSALM 68:5

*“A father of the fatherless,  
and a judge of the widows...”*

---

## PURE AND UNDEFILED

Webster’s Dictionary defines religion as a belief in God, in the revelation of His will to man, in man’s obligation to obey His commands, in a state of reward and punishment, and man’s accountability to God; and also true godliness or purity of life, with the practice of all moral duties.

“*Pure religion and undefiled*” (James 1:27) refers to a clean and sober way of the believer’s life. This life is the evidence of one who is genuinely born again. The outward display of piety is vain without the inward working of charity. Although Christianity is considered a religion, believers understand that it is more than a set of dos and don’ts. Two aspects of a “*pure religion and undefiled*” are as follows:

(a) Visit the fatherless and widows: The word “*visit*” means much more than to drop by for a chat. It carries the idea of caring for others, exercising oversight on their behalf, and helping them in any needed way. Generally, the neediest people in the early church were the orphans and widows. They are without parents and husbands, and are unable to reciprocate the kindness shown to them by others. The believer’s care for the fatherless and widows thus would show his true sacrificial love.

(b) Keep unspotted from the world: To be “*unspotted*” is to have no stain, and thus faultless. Thus to exemplify true religion, there is personal holiness and avoidance of spiritual contamination from the sinful world. Here, “*world*” is a reference to the world system with its values and practices, which are under the sway of Satan (John 14:30; 1 John 5:19). Careful attention to God’s Word, followed by a conscious effort to obey its precepts, enables the believer to remain uncontaminated by the evil surrounding him. This testimony reveals true religion, not just religiosity.

The Christian church today is filled with cold and apathetic people who are oblivious to the needs of those around them. Are you one of them? Read 1 Corinthians 13:1. Dear reader, look around and pray for open doors so that you can be a blessing to others around you!

**THOUGHT:** Am I applying the Word of God in purity and sincerity?

**PRAYER:** Father, grant me a heart that genuinely and sacrificially helps those who cannot repay my service for them.

---

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 26

JAMES 2:1

1 TIMOTHY 5:21

“...without preferring one  
before another,  
doing nothing by partiality.”

---

### ARE YOU PARTIAL?

We live in a world where people are classified according to colour, social status, profession, economic standing, academic achievements etc. However, being partial against the poor is one of the tremendous social tensions of our times. This evil was also the same in the time of Apostle James. Thus, he commands the believers in the Lord Jesus Christ not to be partial against the poor.

To have “*respect of persons*” (James 2:1) is to receive the face of persons. It was a growing evil among Christians in those early days. This favouritism has sadly corrupted and divided churches. James calls the attention of his brethren. They must not hold any partiality in treating their people. The Lord of glory, Jesus Christ, is not partial in His dealings with men. Why should we?

It is not the faith of our Lord: A preferential treatment of the rich is a stark contrast to the attitude of God. God’s election of His people is unconditional. The “*faith*” (James 2:1) carries the whole body of teachings of our Lord. This faith is the basis of how a believer is to live. Being partial towards a group of people is not just a disorder of society, it is contrary to the will of God. It is not according to “*the faith*.” The Bible teaches us not to have special treatment. God is without prejudice, for He created us all without any favour towards any.

It is not of the Lord of glory: Favouritism is not of the Lord and does not give glory to the Lord, our God. It does not reflect His character as a faithful and just God. People will despise the Lord if Christians show partiality towards a minority group in the church. The Lord is pleased with those who love the brethren and their neighbours with the pure love of Christ.

Read Deuteronomy 15:7-11.

**THOUGHT:** Am I partial towards a group of brethren in my church?

**PRAYER:** Father, Thou art without respect of persons in every way. Help me to be like Thee.

---

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 27

JAMES 2:2-4

JOHN 7:24

“Judge not  
according to the appearance...”

---

## NO TO DISCRIMINATION

James describes brethren who were lowly and afflicted because of their lack of provisions. They wear old, soiled garments which appear dirty. Here comes another group but with bright clothing. Their brilliant apparel appears gorgeous, which quickly gets the attention of others. These men are “gold-fingered” because of their gold rings. The number of rings marks their wealth and social status. Their external appearances quickly show the stark contrast between the rich and the poor brethren.

Evil eye: When a man comes into their assembly with a gold ring and bright clothing, believers give him special treatment. But when a poor man comes with soiled clothing, their attitude is one of hostility.

Evil actions: The brethren’s high regard for those who appear rich results in their evil acts, i.e. accommodating them in the best place. As for the poor man, he is asked to stand, or to sit under the footstool. This demeaning attitude in the assembly is unacceptable.

Evil judgment: In discriminating among themselves, they become corrupt judges. They apply this cruel world’s method of treating others. This judgment, of course, is Satan’s attempt to destroy the harmony and unity in the believers’ assemblies. The poor are offended, and the rich become puffed up. These cause factions and divisions within the church.

The discrimination that makes distinctions among believers as described here is not according to God’s Word, but is a sin. They treat the poor people based on the superficial, their self-interests and worldly motives. Their special favour to the well-dressed men and showing of discourtesy, if not contempt, towards the poor brethren undermine the character of our loving and gracious God. These are grave sins, and those who do these “*become judges of evil thoughts*” (James 2:4).

Such discrimination is still present in our churches today. The eye of favouritism is evil and does not see as God sees. Dear reader, are you one of those who discriminate?

**THOUGHT**: Do I have an evil eye that discriminates against others?

**PRAYER**: Father, forgive me for my favouring some and discriminating against others. Grant me a heart like Thine, fair and just.

---

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 28

JAMES 2:5

PROVERBS 14:31

*“He that oppresseth the poor  
reproacheth his Maker...”*

---

## THE POOR IS RICH

Has not God chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith, and they are heirs of the Kingdom of God? James argues that discrimination against the poor is contrary to how God sees and treats them. They have unaccountable riches and immeasurable inheritance. Those who are partial towards them have not seen beyond the temporal. They should first put on a pair of spiritual spectacles to view this truth.

Rich in faith: When the poor are despised, it suggests people treat them shamefully (Mark 12:4). It is unbecoming for people to cast down those whom God has chosen. James underscores that it is God who chooses. Treating the poor reproachfully is to go against those whom the Lord honours. The heart toward the poor must be one of obedience to the Lord who wills it.

Heirs of the kingdom: The poor Christians are heirs of the kingdom. They have a promise from the Scriptures. Being heirs, they have equal privilege with any other believer. If this is what the Bible teaches, why is there discrimination against the poor? This discrimination will surely invite the wrath of God. Jesus implies this in the story of Lazarus and the rich man in Luke 16:25.

The promise to them that love Him shows God’s faithfulness and this must cause them to love their brethren always. James 2:5 expresses the promise of the kingdom to those who love God. It is not that the guarantee depends on the believer’s love, but James reminds us that it is God who called us into the hope of eternal life. Therefore, believers must love Him. So, James is pointing to the consequence, rather than the condition.

The Book of Proverbs has many lessons for us to learn regarding this issue. One is Proverbs 19:17. Dear reader, do not ever judge a man based on his financial status. Some may be poor, but they are true believers also. They are more prosperous than billionaires.

**THOUGHT**: Do I have a loving heart towards the poor?

**PRAYER**: Father, teach me to judge righteously and not depend on external appearances as my standard of judging.

---

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 29

JAMES 2:6-7

PROVERBS 22:7

*“The rich ruleth over the poor,  
and the borrower  
is servant to the lender.”*

---

### HOW ABOUT THE RICH?

James argues that there is a problem when so-called Christians who have known the impartiality of God are so partial towards others. These people injure the hearts of the poor through verbal abuse. To despise (James 2:6) is to render infamous or to treat shamefully. Their prejudice is based on the wealthy appearance of some in the assembly. James exposes the rich people whom they favoured as those who give trouble to the brethren. The Apostle's object is to show that it is irrational for them to honour those who bully them.

They oppress the poor: Having more wealth somehow gave the rich authority and power over others. Luke used the same word to describe the devil's oppressive work (Acts 10:38). They exercise harsh control over the poor and use their power against them. As it is said, “big fish eats small fish.” They even take the poor to court, probably over petty loans or minor misconduct. They exploit the poor for their own advantage.

They blaspheme God: Similarly, it is written, “*Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker: and he that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished*” (Prov 17:5). To “blaspheme” (James 2:7) is to speak against someone in such a way as to harm or injure his reputation. This sin happens concerning persons as well as divine beings. They revile or defame the name of God who saved them, including the poor brethren. The “*worthy name*” (James 2:7) refers to the name of the Lord Jesus. They slander the name of Jesus.

The evil of partiality is a practice within Christianity that must be avoided. History repeats itself, and the disparity in the distribution of wealth in many societies may be the background of this sin. Let us first examine ourselves in prayer how we treat others. This sin is not just against man, but it is blasphemy against God (Prov 14:31).

Dear reader, be mindful of whom you revere and honour. Be not like the world that exalts the rich because of their material wealth. Do not be overwhelmed by their influence. The spiritual aspect is far more critical.

**THOUGHT:** Do I favour the rich because of their riches and influence?

**PRAYER:** Father, grant me a loving spirit towards all.

---

LORD'S DAY, OCTOBER 30

JAMES 2:8-9

MATTHEW 22:39

“...*Thou shalt love  
thy neighbour as thyself.*”

---

### FULFIL THE LAW OF THE KING

What is this “*royal law*” (James 2:8)? This law is God’s law for His people. This law is kingly because it is issued by the King of kings and the Lord of lords. Read Matthew 22:36-40.

Thou shalt love: James refers to the reproof against despising the poor, brought forth in the law of God, the “*royal law*,” before them. They are not fulfilling the law of the King of kings that states, love thy neighbour as thyself. Have they forgotten the law, or are they driven by their covetous hearts to render favour to the rich so as to partake of their wealth? Yet, this is not from their love for their neighbours anymore. This act is out of their lust for profit. If they repent of their discrimination and obey the law of God, they do well, which is morally good and spiritually beneficial.

Thou shalt not transgress: If they continue with their respect to persons in judgment, they have sinned against God and their brethren. They are openly convicted and guilty of breaking the royal law, “*Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*” They are proven transgressors of God’s law because they practise the sinful discriminatory act against their poor brethren and uphold the rich in their oppressive ways (1 John 3:4).

Read what John the Apostle says in 1 John 3:7-10.

Dear reader, are you guilty of the same sin? Have you favoured those who appear rich, and do you look down on and oppress the poor in your church? You cannot escape the judgment of the all-knowing and all-present King of kings. “*Be sure your sin will find you out*” (Num 32:23).

**THOUGHT:** Do I love my neighbours as myself?

**PRAYER:** Father, make my heart like the Lord Jesus Christ who loves everyone, both the poor and the rich.

---

MONDAY, OCTOBER 31

JAMES 2:10-11

DEUTERONOMY 6:25

*“And it shall be our righteousness,  
if we observe to do all...”*

---

### GUILTY OF ALL

How can a man be guilty? If a man is found to have committed a crime, he is guilty. The Word of God tells us that if we disobey God’s law, even that which is least in our assessment, we become guilty of disobeying the whole law, even if we are obeying other parts of the law. God’s law is one, and a violation of a part of it violates the whole law. Thus, he is guilty of all!

Transgression in one: No part of the law is insignificant (Matt 5:18-19). Read what Paul says in Galatians 3:10.

Transgression of all: This means that the authority who gives one commandment is the authority that issues the rest. So he who breaks one resists the authority who gives all. The breach of any one commandment is a breach of the whole law. The believers in James’ time were openly negligent of the second half of the law. They thought that when they had obeyed one part of the law, it would cover up for their failures elsewhere. It is made clear that their disobedience to one part of the law brings them to judgment as guilty of all. Therefore, it is against the Bible to classify transgressions of the commandments as venial and mortal. Whether a man commits a so-called venial sin, which some consider relatively less serious than so-called mortal sin, the Bible teaches that such a one is guilty of all!

Dear reader, everyone has transgressed the commandments, thus, we are all guilty before God. Read what Isaiah 64:6 says. We cannot argue that we have only failed in some ways. We must cry with the Psalmist as he cried in Psalm 130:2-4.

**THOUGHT:** Am I guilty of transgressing all of God’s laws?

**PRAYER:** Father, Thou alone can forgive and cleanse me. I confess before Thy holy presence my sinfulness, I am guilty of all!

---



TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 1

JAMES 2:12-13

MATTHEW 5:7

*“Blessed are the merciful...”*

---

## BE MERCIFUL

Every saint is a sinner saved by the grace of God alone through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. God’s grace that grants us, undeserving sinners, the gift to believe in Christ is coupled with His mercy that withholds the punishment we deserve because of our sins. This punishment was taken in full by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, when He became man’s representative and substituted us on the cross. Being recipients of God’s mercy, the Lord desires we should also be merciful to others.

Be judged by the law of liberty: The Apostle calls his readers’ attention to those who claim to be believers of the Lord Jesus Christ. He could have said, “You who profess to believe, you claim to be saved by His grace and mercy. Then prove your claim with your actions.” How? By keeping the law that has set them free from the bondage of sin. The Gospel is the law of liberty because it delivers them out of the bondage and condemnation of sin. It brings them the ultimate eternal emancipation from the Lake of Fire. As the Lord has treated us mercifully by withholding the judgment we deserve based on His law of liberty, must not this also be the basis in man’s dealing with others?

As a judge showing mercy: A person who claims to be a believer but does not apply mercy in judging others is perplexing. He who has received mercy from his Lord, why does he not show mercy to others? Such a confessor of Christ can rightly be assessed as being ignorant of God’s mercy. He may actually not have experienced the mercy of God. This is the most conceivable explanation. He cannot show mercy to others, for he has not received it. If this is true, then he is not saved.

Dear reader, please understand that there is no true born-again believer who has not experienced God’s mercy. And those who have experienced His mercy are able to be equally merciful to others. Only recipients of God’s mercy can undoubtedly be compassionate to others.

**THOUGHT:** Am I merciful to those around me?

**PRAYER:** Father, help me to apply in practice the mercy I have received from Thee through the Lord Jesus Christ.

---

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 2

JAMES 2:14

EPHESIANS 2:8-10

*“For we are his workmanship,  
created in Christ Jesus  
unto good works...”*

---

### THE FAITH THAT SAVES

The Epistle of James was written long before Paul’s letter to the Romans. Therefore, James was not trying to debunk Paul’s doctrine of salvation. Paul was also not trying to do away with James’ teachings. The Bible is God’s Word and, being the Author, God does not contradict Himself. James is confronted with professed Christians who do not manifest Christlike character in their lives. They say they are believers of Jesus Christ but they are not following His teachings. They profess they have Christ, but they did not possess Him.

A faith in words only cannot save: The Apostle speaks of a false profession of faith. *“Though a man says he hath faith...”* (James 2:14) indeed intimates a hypocritical boast of an empty faith, which is devoid of a regenerated life. James disputes with those who made a false pretence of faith because there is no evidence seen in their lives (Titus 1:15-16).

A faith that saves produces works: When James asks, *“Can faith save him?”* the context tells us that he was asking, “Can that faith which he says he has, save him?” “That faith” is dead and does not save because it does not produce any works. The faith discussed here is the professed faith only. James is not questioning whether faith can save or not. Paul explicitly declares, *“For by grace are ye saved through faith; ... For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them”* (Eph 2:8-10).

Therefore, James is not in conflict with Paul about the basis of salvation, as some interpreters have maintained. They are not standing face-to-face confronting each other, but are standing back-to-back fighting two common enemies. Paul opposes works-righteous legalism, and James contends easy-believism. However, both of them make clear that God-given faith will result in salvation which produces works, which is a sure indicator of genuine conversion.

**THOUGHT:** Do I say that I have faith only?

**PRAYER:** Father, I thank Thee for the grace to repent of my sins and believe in Jesus Christ as my Lord and Saviour.

---

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 3  
JAMES 2:15-16  
GALATIANS 6:9-10

“...do good unto all men,  
especially unto them  
who are of the household of faith.”

---

### IS YOUR FAITH PROFITABLE?

The Apostle James explains the scenario as to why he questions the genuineness of his readers' faith. Why is it that when a poor brother or sister lacks warm clothing during winter or lacks daily food, you do not extend any help to him or her? The things that the poor brethren lack are immediate necessities for their bodies. The believers have enough to give, but instead they just say, “*be ye warmed and filled*” (James 2:16). What is the use of such a response? Are their words able to keep their brethren warm, or fill their hungry stomachs? They are making a mockery of their profession.

Profitable to the brethren: The word “*naked*” (James 2:15) would refer to those who are poorly dressed. The “*food*” (James 2:15) literally means nourishment or provision (Matt 3:4). These brethren were “*destitute*,” indicating that they did not possess the necessities for daily living. James is not demanding from those who have none. He encourages those who can to exercise their duties of love towards the brethren. Professors of Christ can prove their claim if they would sacrificially give to a hungry man. This challenge is equally valid to him who sends away a poorly dressed man with words and offers him no help when he could have.

Profitable to their needs: “*Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled*” is a remarkably heartless and foolish statement when they could have given the needy warmth and food. This is an attitude of total disregard for the welfare of others to the point of absurdity. Their words profit the needy nothing. They are just sentiments from selfish and disinterested members in their assembly who do not extend what is necessary for the bodies of those in need. This behaviour shows their ignorance of their Saviour.

Dear reader, do you say you are a Christian but do not do what Christ wants you to do? Do you claim to be a recipient of the sacrificial love of the Lord Jesus Christ and yet refuse to sacrificially extend your substance towards your brethren?

**THOUGHT:** Does the faith I have result in salvation plus good works?

**PRAYER:** Father, Thy grace has saved me and enabled me to do good works for the profit of the brethren and to the glory of Thy name.

---

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 4  
JAMES 2:17  
1 CORINTHIANS 13:1-3

“...though I have all faith...  
and have not charity,  
I am nothing.”

---

### THE “ALONE-FAITH” VS FAITH ALONE

If it is not by God’s grace, faith will not result in genuine salvation and will not produce good works. It is dead! On the contrary, faith that is wrought by the irresistible grace of God upon His elect will undoubtedly result in true conversion because it regenerates. It gives the believer life and produces good works because he is alive in Christ.

The “alone-faith” has no works: The faith confessed by those who claim to be believers can only be proven its worth by the results it produces. One may boast eloquently and superlatively about his faith, but it is useless if it is not acted upon. Like thunder and lightning, which cause people to tremble, it is useless without the accompanying rain. The “alone-faith” which has no works is no better than a beautifully dressed corpse in an expensive coffin. It is dead!

The faith alone that has works: James says that faith alone is dead. The context, however, tells us that it is when faith is by itself, i.e. it is destitute of good works, that that faith is what is dead. But the faith alone that saves is not dead because it results in good works. A living faith is manifested with works that fulfil the commandments of God. It makes a believer love God and his neighbour.

*“Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit” (1 John 4:7-13).*

**THOUGHT:** Is my faith dead or alive?

**PRAYER:** Father, I praise Thee for Thy gift of salvation. It is so rich and free for it is by Thy grace through faith alone in the Lord Jesus alone!

---

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 5

JAMES 2:18

TITUS 3:8

“...they which have believed in God  
might be careful  
to maintain good works...”

---

## FORMULA OF GENUINE SALVATION

James gives a hypothetical situation where someone says to him, “You have faith, and I have works.” Which one of these two has genuine salvation? Can a man show his faith without works? Such a man can only say he has faith, nothing else; whereas the man who has works has the evidence of his faith.

Faith equals salvation without works?: This is a wrong formula. James challenges those who claim to have faith but do not produce works. The redemption wrought by this kind of fake faith is no redemption at all. Such faith is the faith of a false believer. Even though he may mimic the true believer and try to do good works, the Lord knows his works are not of God because it is not a product of the salvation wrought by God-given faith. “*Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity*” (Matt 7:22-23).

Faith equals salvation plus good works: This is the right formula. True faith by God’s grace gives new life. This salvation will surely bring forth works profitable to men and that will glorify God. The Lord Jesus “...gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Titus 2:11-14).

The Roman Catholic Church holds that both faith and works are needed to earn salvation. “Good works” through the sacraments and devotion to the church adds to the merit of Christ. On the other hand, today’s liberal Protestants and modernistic churches teach antinomianism. Faith to them is identification with Christ without a manifestation of Christ in them. For them, a professing Christian can live any way he wants. The biblical faith is the living faith that James teaches. Faith alone brings forth salvation, and salvation brings forth a Christ-like conversation.

**THOUGHT:** Am I truly saved or not?

**PRAYER:** Father, I thank Thee for the assurance of salvation in my life which produces the good works which Thou hast ordained for me to do.

---

LORD'S DAY, NOVEMBER 6  
JAMES 2:19  
MATTHEW 7:21-23

*"Not every one that saith unto me,  
Lord, Lord, shall enter into  
the kingdom of heaven..."*

---

### THE DEVIL'S FAITH

Can devils have faith? James says the devils also believe and even tremble before God! So can demons or the fallen angels be saved? Of course not! The Lord Jesus Christ said there is a place of *"everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels"* (Matt 25:41). The Lake of Fire, which burneth forever and ever, is their destination. Yet the demons know who Jesus is: *"...behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?"* (Matt 8:29). They know Him, but they do not have God's grace to have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Faith not to salvation: The Apostle challenges the believers' claim of faith in one God. The Jews regard Deuteronomy 6:4 as their confession of faith. The devils knew this truth even before any one of the Jews. They were once in the very presence of God in heaven and knew well that there is only one God. The problem is that they could not repent of their sins and could not believe in God as their Saviour and Lord. God did not provide a substitute for them to pay the penalty of their sins to save them.

Faith without good works: Aside from a failure to be saved, the devils also could not do any good works. There is nothing good in them. James is now implying that faith without works is equated with the devil's faith. They may confess faith with their mouth, but they cannot do anything good because they do not have salvation. He is now comparing this faith with those who argue that works are not necessary as long as they have faith.

Dear reader, you do not want to be a confessor of Christ and end up in everlasting torment in the Lake of Fire. The formula must be correct to arrive at the right destination. Do not just know Christ in your head without affecting your heart and without demonstrating with your hands. Do not be fooled.

**THOUGHT:** Do I have faith in Christ as my Lord and Saviour?

**PRAYER:** Father, help me do Thy work that will benefit others and glorify Thy name.

---

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 7

JAMES 2:20

LUKE 6:49

“...he that heareth, and doeth not,  
is like a man that without  
a foundation built an house...”

---

### A DEAD FAITH?

Those who falsely argue that good works must be added to faith in order to be saved popularly misinterpret James 2:20. They conclude, “*faith without works*” cannot save! Such a conclusion is, of course, erroneous for it lifts the verse out of its context. James did not say that works must be added to faith for it to be alive. Rather, he warns that those who say they have faith yet are not producing works are not regenerated. Their faith is dead. James seeks to show that a person who possesses faith in Christ is vindicated as a true Christian by his works; and that a mere profession of faith not evidenced by works is not characteristic of genuine conversion.

Of ignorant men: James points out the vanity of those who believe that an oral profession of faith is enough. That verbal assent is empty. Such hypocritical affirmation of faith without the fruits of good works in their practical lives is not really faith. It does not have any force to bring them any nearer to God. Real faith in God’s inspired words makes a man “*perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works*” (2 Tim 3:17).

Of faith without works: This kind of false faith is antinomian. It is against the law. Those with this kind of faith desire only Jesus to be their Saviour but never their Lord. It is enough for them to be saved from the wrath to come, but they do not want to have to obey the commandments of God. They do not know that keeping the law of God is the way to love God. A man of true faith loves his Saviour and desires to obey His words. Obedience to God’s law is what good works are! Not obeying God’s law is sin!

Dear reader, a genuinely saved person will have a spiritual desire to obey the laws of God. This change in life, following salvation, is what constitutes good works. Saving faith entails more than mere head knowledge. It includes trust in and obedience to God’s Word. The genuinely saved person would have the heart to read, study and obey Scripture.

**THOUGHT:** Is my faith dead or alive?

**PRAYER:** Father, I thank Thee for Thy Word which guides me in doing the work Thou hast assigned me to do.

---

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8

JAMES 2:21

ROMANS 4:1-3

“...For if Abraham were justified  
by works, he hath whereof to glory;  
but not before God.”

---

### JUSTIFIED BY WORKS?

James poses another question in James 2:21. He probably heard these arguments from those who hold the idea that Abraham did a work to add to his faith in order to be saved.

James does not speak here of the cause of justification or how men obtain righteousness. His object was only to show that good works are always connected with salvific faith. He was saying that Abraham's obedience to the command of God proved Abraham's faith. Long before the offering of Isaac, Abraham already had faith in God. *“By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went”* (Heb 11:8).

When Abraham brought his son Isaac in obedience to God's command, he had faith already. This incident was recorded in Genesis 22:9-12. In Genesis 15:6, Abraham *“believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.”* Thus, obedience to the command of God was his proof or justification of his faith. Abraham did not do it in order to be saved. He did it because he had that personal relationship with His Saviour and LORD!

Some have imagined a contradiction between James' declaration of Abraham being justified by works and Paul's unequivocal teaching that he was justified solely by grace through faith (Rom 4). This is not the case. James has emphasised it is by God's gracious gift that a man is saved (James 1:17-18). Let us be comforted with the truth that we know we are truly saved because of the evidence of the Spirit of God indwelling within us who causes us to do good according to His words. Keeping and obeying His words are signposts that tell we are in the right lane. Do not deviate from the only way to heaven!

**THOUGHT:** Is my faith proven by the good works produced by my salvation?

**PRAYER:** Father, let the good works in my life prove the genuineness of my salvation from Thee.

---



WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9

JAMES 2:22

1 PETER 1:7

“...the trial of your faith,  
being much more  
precious than of gold...”

---

### THE PERFECT FAITH

James clarifies that faith is wrought together with the believer's good works. Out of his good works, faith is being made perfect. The Lord Jesus exhorts, “*Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect*” (Matt 5:48). It shows how important good works are to faith. Please remember that this does not speak of good works being added to faith in order to save. No one can do good except he be saved first.

Faith wrought with his works: The word “wrought” (James 2:22) refers to one engaging in an activity together with another, i.e. to be active together. This reveals the oneness of works with genuine faith such that they are not separate from each other. Thus, Hebrews 11:17 says, “*By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son.*”

Faith made perfect by works: James 2:22 says that “*by works was faith made perfect.*” It is not that salvation requires faith plus works, but that works are the consequent outgrowth of genuine faith. Genuine faith is said to have been perfected by works because genuine faith is proven to be genuine by works. Therefore, faith is the cause of salvation; and works are the effects of salvation. The effects demonstrate the cause, just as good fruits demonstrate that the tree is good.

We now see how good work is essential in the lives of genuine believers. A mere confession of faith does not show what genuine faith is. A true, born-again child of God will do what his Father wants him to do. Works that are fitting for children of God must be seen in the lives of children of God.

**THOUGHT:** Do my works prove that I have saving faith?

**PRAYER:** Father, strengthen my spiritual body to do the works Thou hast for me so that others may come to the saving knowledge of Christ.

---

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 10

JAMES 2:23

JOHN 15:15-16

“...I have called you friends...”

---

### ARE YOU A FRIEND OF GOD?

How can a man be called “*the Friend of God*” (James 2:23)? What a privilege it is to be acknowledged by such a relationship. But do you know that a Christian is known as the friend of God?

Believed in the words of God: Abraham believed in the words of God since his call. When God told him to get out of his country, he obeyed God and left his home country. There were times that he seemed impatient with the promise of God, but when God reassured him of His promises, Abraham “*believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness*” (Gen 15:6).

Imputed with the righteousness of God: The imputation of righteousness which Moses mentioned in Genesis 15:6 preceded by more than thirty years the obedience of Abraham to God’s instruction to sacrifice Isaac (the work which some claimed to have justified Abraham or made Abraham righteous). Definitely his work of obedience was not added to his faith, for he was already imputed with righteousness before that. Abraham had faith even before he arrived in Canaan. “*By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God*” (Heb 11:9-10).

Do you want to be a friend of God? Let us believe in His words. As the children’s song goes, “Obedience is the very best way to show that you believe, doing exactly what the Lord commands, doing it happily...” It is by good works manifested in the lives of the believers that true faith is made complete. Doing whatsoever He commands us to do is the only way we can be friends of God. “... *If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him*” (John 14:23).

**THOUGHT:** Am I a friend of God?

**PRAYER:** Father, may my obedience to Thee be a hallmark of my life.

---

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 11

JAMES 2:24

ROMANS 3:26-28

“...a man is justified by faith  
without the deeds of the law.”

---

### HOW CAN A MAN BE JUSTIFIED?

James argues in James 2:24, “Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.” But is he talking about how a sinner can be forgiven and be declared righteous as if he had no sin? If it is, then he contradicts what David wrote in Psalm 143:1-2. So who is right?

By works a man is justified: Certainly, the Bible tells us that it is by faith alone, yet it is not a cold, abstract, inoperative faith. James is right because he uses the word “justified” (dikaioo), which means to vindicate, prove, or show to be correct. The Lord Jesus uses this same word in Luke 10:29: “But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?” So what James says is very accurate: good works are proof of a man’s righteousness. Good works are evidence of the faith that wrought genuine salvation. Thus, a phoney faith is powerless and dead. In other words, no man will be justified who has not a faith that will produce good works.

By faith alone a man is justified: Faith alone that saves and produces good works justifies a sinner. No amount of good works can earn a man merit to declare himself righteous before the thrice-holy God. The ground of justification is faith, given through the grace of God, and that only, nothing else! Thus man is justified and saved not by any good works (Rom 11:5-6).

James, therefore, does not contradict the rest of Scripture. He says “that by works a man is justified” (James 2:24) because a faith that results in genuine salvation will have works as a necessary proof. He never denies that a man is justified purely by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. So, together with Paul, James says that nothing but a holy life can show that a man is a genuine Christian and is accepted by God. Likewise, nothing more than a God-given faith justifies a man, declaring him wholly righteous in the eyes of God.

**THOUGHT:** Do my good works justify (i.e. vindicate) me?

**PRAYER:** Father, I thank Thee that Thou art the Author of the perfectly infallible and inerrant Scriptures.

---

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 12

JAMES 2:25

JOSHUA 2:8-11

“...I know that the LORD  
hath given you the land...”

---

### THE WORKS THAT VINDICATE

The account in the book of Joshua tells us that Rahab had already acknowledged the God of Israel as the faithful LORD. She trusted in Him: “...for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath” (Josh 2:11b). That was why she hid the spies. Thus, in his divine commentary, Paul writes, “By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace” (Heb 11:31).

Works produced in the believer’s life: James bears testimony of the faith of Rahab (James 2:25). She professed her faith in what the LORD God had promised to the Israelites. She asked pardon for herself and her family as though the Israelites were already conquerors. In all this, she did not consider the fear of men but of God alone. “The evidence of her faith was, that she received the spies at the peril of her life: then, by means of faith, she escaped safe from the ruin of her own city” (Calvin).

Works produced in the believer’s hope: Rahab is proven righteous due to the genuine faith which she possessed. She gave the fullest proof that she did by her conduct. The Lord approved of her because her faith led to her obedience to His will. Her justification was not demonstrated by her mere profession of faith, but by her putting everything dear to her on the line for the Lord’s sake. She entrusted herself to God without reservation. She was supremely committed to the Lord, whatever the cost.

Although Rahab knew nothing of salvation’s doctrines, she proved her genuine salvation (obtained by faith) by the works she performed. She may be very young in the faith, but her works vindicated a great faith, far greater than many of us. Dear reader, do you have this kind of saving faith that results in works that prove your righteous standing before the Lord?

**THOUGHT:** Do my works prove that my faith is genuine, and that I am genuinely saved?

**PRAYER:** Father, may I obey Thy Word that my obedience will vindicate the saving faith which Thou hast graciously given.

---

## DEAD FAITH AND DEAD WORKS

No one wants a dead faith, just as no one wants false salvation. But why do many choose to have a faith that is not proven by works? Why are so many Christians content to label themselves as believers without evidence of being regenerated? It is baffling to imagine how they will face the Lord and be asked, *“And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?”* (Luke 6:46).

Like a body without the spirit: James ends his discussion on faith with this real analogy: *“...as the body without the spirit is dead...”* (James 2:26). He compares faith to the living organism which possesses two indivisible elements: material (the body) and immaterial (the spirit or soul). He likens the absence of the immaterial part from the organism to the absence of works in the life of those who say they have faith. It is clear that the organism is physically dead, just as the one who says he has faith has a dead faith. A claim of faith that is not followed by obedience to God's law is dead. It is phoney faith, not true faith at all. It brings no assurance of salvation but rather condemnation.

Works without faith: Let us clarify that good works outside of faith are equally dead. Whatever good works a man without faith will offer to God will all be in vain. The Roman Catholics believe that you must add good works to your faith in order to be saved. This way equally leads to a dead end! The person has nowhere to go except hell and the Lake of Fire (for purgatory does not exist)!

My dear reader, we have gone through several days discussing how a man can be made just before God: by faith or works? I trust that it is now clear to you that we are justified (i.e. saved) by grace through faith alone. This genuine salvation will produce good works in the life of the believer. That is the living faith! For those who trust in the “alone-faith” without works, their faith is dead (i.e. false). Do not be deceived by of those who claim to be saved but do not want to live according to God's Word.

**THOUGHT:** Am I clear what living and true faith is?

**PRAYER:** Father, help me to have a humble heart to receive Thy instructions according to Thy Word.

---

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 14

JAMES 3:1-2

ROMANS 2:21-23

*“Thou therefore  
which teachest another,  
teachest thou not thyself?...”*

---

### BE NOT MANY MASTERS

“*My brethren*” (James 3:1) indicates that James is addressing believers of Christ. Specifically, he is speaking to the masters or teachers. James warns them to make sure that their desire to teach is genuinely according to the Lord’s will, not merely their own. Calvin understands “*masters*” (James 3:1) to refer not only to those who perform public duties in the church, but also those who take upon themselves the right to pass judgment upon others. Such reprovers are masters of morals, and they are to be held accountable for their judgments.

The greater the condemnation: James was not discouraging the people from desiring to be teachers. Those who are genuinely called of God must follow God’s vocation for them. James’ purpose is to correct God’s people who do not accurately articulate the truth. He calls them not to desire to become teachers knowing that a greater condemnation is waiting for those who teach wrongly. James’ point here is that no believer should begin any form of teaching or sharing of God’s Word without a deep sense of the seriousness of this responsibility.

The more easily we offend: The word “*offend*” (James 3:2) has a primary meaning of stumbling against something. Figuratively in the New Testament, it means failing to do God’s will, such as to err or sin against God. The word “*perfect*” (*teleios*) has two possible meanings: absolute perfection or complete/mature. The latter is evidently what James means here. To “*bridle*” is to exercise close control over some function (i.e. exercise self-control). So James wants his readers to be careful about their speeches and not impart wrong doctrines to other brethren.

Dear reader, although we are all commissioned to teach, let us be careful with what words we teach, share, admonish or reprove others. To sin with the tongue when alone or with one or two other persons is terrible enough, but to sin with the tongue in public is far more terrible.

**THOUGHT:** Do I desire to be a “*master*”? Why?

**PRAYER:** Father, may I do only what Thou wantest me to do.

---

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 15  
JAMES 3:3  
PSALM 32:7-9

*“Be ye not as the horse,  
or as the mule,  
which have no understanding...”*

---

### AS BRIDLES FOR HORSES

What are “bits” (James 3:3)? A bit is a mouthpiece placed in the bridle of a horse. And the bridle is passed around the under-jaw of the animal. When the bit is placed in the animal’s mouth, this comparatively small instrument enables its rider to control its movements and direction. It is “something to put in a horse’s mouth to guide it.”

Obey: The context here is about a small item controlling a larger item. Later, James 3:5 speaks of how a small member like the tongue can significantly influence the whole body. James’ recipients probably are familiar with horses, the rugged kind of farm horses. These horses needed rigorous training before they obey their owners. Yet, it is through a bit and a bridle that they are put under control. This shows how great an impact this small item has on the rough and brute beast of their day.

Follow: An unruly, ungovernable horse can run away with its rider or throw him off to the ground. Likewise, one who has no command over an unruly tongue may suffer also. Just like the horse, there may also be a great deal of brutish fierceness and shamelessness in a man. And the man’s tongue will manifest this. Just as the bit can help the rider to control the horse, man’s tongue needs to be controlled too (Ps 39:1).

When our tongues are subject to God’s control, we do not do things as we wish but are kept in custody and moderation because the power is in the hands of God. May our tongues not speak outside of the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Dear reader, let us be watchful. By God’s grace, let us bridle our tongues and let God be in control of us. Just as the bit controls the rugged horse, let our bridled tongue influence our demeanour. With this, all the motions and actions of the whole body will be easily guided and overruled.

**THOUGHT:** Do I allow my tongue to be controlled by God?

**PRAYER:** Father, grant me the grace to be prayerful and watchful every time I open my mouth to speak. Bridle it, O God.

---

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 16

JAMES 3:4

PROVERBS 21:1

“...he turneth it  
whithersoever he will.”

---

### AS SMALL HELMS FOR SHIPS

The Apostle James invites his readers to consider another illustration: the ships. These are great vessels. The size of a ship in Paul's time is indicated by the fact that there were 276 people onboard (Acts 27:37), plus the cargoes. However, these big vessels are driven and guided by a small helm, even when there is a strong wind. A helm is an instrument for steering the ship or a device for making the boat go the way one wants it to. It steers via the rudder which is underwater. With this seemingly little instrument, the great vessel is directed.

It turns: In James' days, the people were familiar with large ships. A ship appears to be unmanageable. The rudder (controlled by the helm) is responsible for managing these big boats. Even though the rudder is only about 2% of the ship's size, the rudder can control the ship. It can turn the whole body of the ship. The rudder is small but mighty!

It steers: The rudder, though small, can steer a ship to a particular destination as the pilot drives. The large body of the ship, composed of wood and metal, does not navigate on its own but follows the dictates of the captain who steers via the small helm. This illustration shows how significant the rudder's influence is on the whole ship. The mighty seafaring boat has no will of its own except to submit to the direction of the helm (via the rudder).

As the helm which guides a large vessel and overcomes the impetuous winds, so also is man's tongue. Like the small helm, the tongue can change the course of events from good to evil, and from charity into hatred. We must control our tongues because, though they are little members of our body, they can do much good or damage to our lives as well as others'.

**THOUGHT:** Am I able to control my tongue?

**PRAYER:** Father, keep my tongue from speaking guile and evil that I may glorify and honour Thee with my lips.

---



THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 17

JAMES 3:5

PROVERBS 18:21

*“Death and life  
are in the power of the tongue...”*

---

### NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF THE TONGUE

What is a tongue? It is an organ of speech and taste. In the Bible, the tongue is used figuratively to represent verbal communication. From this, it is evident that it is not the tongue as an organ of taste which corrupts the whole person. It is its capacity for speech that has such a corrupting effect. James sums up by saying that although the tongue is a little member of the body, it can boast greatly. He likens it to a little fire that can create a great forest fire that can destroy acres of trees, even houses, and people's lives.

Boasts great things: The tongue can go haywire when it boasts of things of its own. It becomes the trumpeter of a man's own praise. It heralds wonderful things about what he has done, and can do. It shows off proudly his power and strength. By doing so, the tongue denies the work of God in the person's life. It puffs up his self-confidence, and he esteems himself more highly than what is true. Since it communicates with others, many may hear and be influenced by its poison.

Burns great matters: James compares the effect of the tongue to that of a fire. He describes how a tiny spark can set a great forest ablaze. We know what will happen when a man drops a lit match onto the forest ground on a hot, dry summer day. The small item is contrasted with its huge, drastic outcome. The tongue (a small member of the body) can lead to a fiery disaster! James calls attention to the tremendous destructive power of hateful, false, heretical, discriminatory gossip or simply careless words.

There is a saying: “A tongue is three inches long, yet it can kill a man six feet tall.” Dear reader, as horses have bridles and ships have helms, let us endeavour to keep our tongues under our control. As the little children sing, “O be careful little tongue what you say...” Let us take heed!

**THOUGHT**: Is my tongue a fire?

**PRAYER**: Father, let me be careful with my tongue so that I may only speak words that are pleasing to Thee and that will glorify Thee.

---

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 18

JAMES 3:6

MATTHEW 15:18

“...things which  
proceed out of the mouth  
...they defile the man.”

---

### THE TONGUE IS A WORLD OF INIQUITY

The Apostle James declares that “*the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity*” (James 3:6). Thus, our tongue, being part of us, can pollute our whole body. It can even set on fire several generations and put them in the fire of hell. What a horrible description of the tongue! “*And Jesus said, Are ye also yet without understanding? Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man*” (Matt 15:16-18).

It defiles the body: James then explains the evils which can proceed when the tongue is not restrained, thus teaching us that the tongue can do much good or much evil. James described the tongue as “*a world of iniquity*” because the contamination of the tongue can spread to every aspect of a man’s life. He explains that the tongue is full of sin and pollution. There is a great pollution and defilement in the sins of the tongue. The tongue can cause defiled passions to be kindled, vented, and cherished. And this in turn affects the person’s mind, heart, and soul. The whole body is drawn into sin and guilt by the small tongue.

It destroys nature: James explains that the tongue “*setteth on fire the course of nature.*” It is like a fire that destroys many great things. James recalls his representation of the tongue as a little fire. This thought brings us close to the truth that despite the smallness of the tongue, its destructive power can lead to harm far and wide to our brethren and to the name of our God. The affairs of humanity are often thrown into confusion, all because of the flame of the tongues of men. All our generations can be set on fire by a false claim or accusation by the tongue. No age of the world, nor any condition of life, private or public, can escape the violence of the tongue.

**THOUGHT:** Is my tongue “*a world of iniquity*”?

**PRAYER:** Father, may Thou be gracious and merciful to help me to control my tongue so that I may not defile my body and destroy others.

---

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 19

JAMES 3:7-8

ROMANS 3:13-14

“...with their tongues  
they have used deceit...”

---

## THE UNTAMEABLE TONGUE

James further illustrates that all of nature's wild beasts, birds, creeping things, and marine creatures are being tamed and have been tamed by man. However, the tongue is beyond the ability of man to tame. It is likened to the devil and is full of “*deadly poison*” (James 3:8). This term seems such an exaggeration by James, but let us remember this is the Word of God. The Lord knows what exactly our tongue is like. His description tells us that we must seek His help to tame it, for no man can!

Beasts can be tamed: To tame a wild beast is to bring it under control and to continue to restrain its animal instinct. The wildest, most brilliant, fastest, most powerful, and most elusive creatures are subject to man's taming. James is asking his readers (by implication) to consider these animals as more civilised and controllable than their tongues. He mentions that the most savage beasts, and creatures of the greatest strength, have been tamed and “domesticated” by men. Likewise, the wild birds, notwithstanding their wildness and timorousness, the serpents, notwithstanding all their venom and cunning ways, have been made familiar and harmless.

But the tongue cannot: While the wild beasts can be tamed, the tongue cannot be tamed. “*Deadly poison*” implies “death-bringing,” and “*unruly*” (James 3:8) refers to something uncontrollable that cannot be restrained. It is the same word rendered “*unstable*” in James 1:8. In this context, the meaning goes well beyond that of unruly or restless. It suggests the idea of a wild animal fighting fiercely against the restraints of captivity.

While there is no power in man to control his tongue, Christians are confident of a far greater power that is able to keep and stay the tongue. When Balaam's tongue was untamed, the LORD, by His own will, kept his tongue to say things according to His will.

**THOUGHT:** Do I seek God's help to tame my tongue?

**PRAYER:** Father, Thou art the Creator and Designer of every part of my body. I pray Thou wilt bring all under Thy subjection, for Thy name's sake.

---

### ARE YOU DOUBLE-TONGUED?

Man is created in the image of God, for Genesis 1:26 says, “... *Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...*” God “...*hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring*” (Acts 17:26-28).

It blesses God: The consideration that man is made after the image of God should restrain the tongue from cursing. It should remind men to give due honour and respect to their Creator. As they sing the high praises of God and are ready to utter words of thanksgiving, they should do it honestly from their hearts. They must thank God for His creation and His perfect design to create man in His image. Therefore, as they use their tongues to address with reverence the divine Being, men must, to be consistent, turn upon fellow-creatures with good words and exhortations. Such is the expected outcome of tongues that acknowledge the greatness of their God.

It curses men: How absurd it is that those who use their tongues in prayer and in praise of God, use the same tongue in cursing, slandering, and the like. It is sinful to revile those who are made in God's image and more so those who have been renewed by the grace of the Gospel. These acts are a most shameful contradiction of all the pretensions of wicked men who appear to honour God the Father but dishonour His children.

It is then great hypocrisy, and one is guilty when one employs the same tongue in blessing God and cursing men. My dear reader, are you double-tongued? Prayerfully consider guarding your tongue against being used inconsistently in sacred duties and in demonic atrocities.

**THOUGHT:** Am I double-tongued?

**PRAYER:** Father, help me by Thy grace to be watchful in using my tongue that I may use it for Thy glory and for the good of Thy people.

---

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 21

JAMES 3:10

1 TIMOTHY 5:13

“...speaking things which  
they ought not.”

---

### THESE OUGHT NOT SO TO BE

James again addresses his readers as “*my brethren*” (James 3:10), which impresses upon them to have a heart-to-heart discourse to resolve the matter. He is not arguing against enemies, but against his beloved brethren in the Lord. James questions whether it is possible that blessing and cursing come out of the same mouth. He answers that it is not likely that such things will happen. These are inconsistent actions contrary to God’s divine designs, even as seen in nature.

From the same mouth: James argues that one mouth should have one message. A spiritual mouth should utter spiritual things, thus praising God and edifying God’s children. It should not also utter hurtful words which offend the brethren. A tongue under the Holy Spirit’s influence should not speak words contrary to God’s nature. A mouth cleansed by God should speak good words to the praise and glory of His name.

Out comes two mixed messages: This particular truth must caution every believer not to hastily speak out against the brethren. It may result in curses being spewed out. As God’s children, we have to train our mouths to speak forth godly strains of kindness and love, such as offering praises to God. This is the mark of the tongue that regularly communicates with his Lord, who truly worships and honours Him. He will be afraid to speak slanderously of man as he does not use such words.

However, it is not easy to control our tongue using our own strength. There is a long and arduous spiritual struggle to overcome the “*old man*” who still wrestles against us. Paul describes this situation in Romans 7. However, this is not an excuse not to struggle. God will help when we seek His help. Paul made us realise that to pray without ceasing should be the default duty of believers. Let us not be like the man who was supposed to be praying but uttered demeaning words (Luke 18:10-12). Dear reader, “*these things ought not so to be*” (James 3:10).

**THOUGHT:** Am I used to speaking to the Lord with praise?

**PRAYER:** Father, draw me always close to Thee to communicate with Thee daily that my tongue may honour and praise Thee.

---

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 22

JAMES 3:11

MATTHEW 6:24

“...for either he will hate the one,  
and love the other...”

---

### ONE FOUNTAIN, ONE WATER

Can a spring send forth both sweet water and bitter water? God's creation is a sure guide to man in many things. No inconsistency is found in God's design. No single water source sends forth different kinds of water. This is a contradiction and indeed an impossibility in nature. However, this improbability happens in the depraved spiritual state of man, where he can bless and curse from the same tongue.

Sweet: Sweet water must come from a fountain that produces sweet water. What else can we expect? Thus, as Christians, we are expected to speak wholesome words. Paul writes in Ephesians 4:23-25: *“And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.”* But how is it that we still use this sweet tongue to lash out at people bitterly? We must pray for the Lord to keep our tongues from evil.

Bitter: On the contrary, bitter water comes out from a painful source. This is true. So from a wicked mouth, no one will expect kindness and goodness from it. There may be some appearance of good words, but unbelieving people do it to flatter and corrupt our minds. Such are the unregenerate, *“their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness”* (Rom 3:13-14). Do our tongues spew out words to destroy others by gossip, false accusations and character assassination?

Let us listen to our words and ask for the Lord's wisdom to show us whether we speak sweet or bitter words. Be careful, as well, not to write words in your blogs and social media that may be destructive to the faith of others. Above all, check that you do not blaspheme the name of God!

**THOUGHT**: Do I use my tongue to speak both sweet and bitter words?

**PRAYER**: Father, keep my mouth controlled by Thy Spirit that it will open only to speak words that glorify Thee and edify Thy people.

---

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 23

JAMES 3:12

LUKE 6:44

*“For every tree is known  
by his own fruit...”*

---

### AS THE TREE, SO THE FRUIT

Another query follows, *“Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs?”* (James 3:12). No mango tree can bear durians, and no grapevine can produce strawberries. Similarly, not one fountain can produce both salty and sweet water. A well does not give both saltwater and fresh.

Can a fig tree bear olive berries? A fig tree bears only figs, so the tongue ought to give utterance only to one kind of sentiment and emotion. But if we are already born-again believers, why are we using our tongue to hurt? Oh, how we must be careful what we say. Jesus said such is the character of false prophets. *“A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them”* (Matt 7:18-20).

Can a vine bear figs? It is the same with the vine. It cannot bear figs. Jesus again highlights this truth in Matthew 12:34: *“O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.”* Christians, let us not take these things lightly. We must all admit that we have used our tongue to malign and gossip more than once.

Can a fountain both yield salt and fresh? No fountain can yield both salt water and fresh. Neither can a salt fountain yield fresh water. The Apostle argues from what is impossible. It is as ridiculous in religion for the tongue of a regenerate man, which is used to bless God, at other times curse man. Likewise, it would be strange for the same tree, on the same branch, to bear different kinds of fruits; or for the same fountain at the same place to send forth both bitter water and sweet.

Dear reader, we are found liars if we deny we are not like what is described above. We must repent and seek the Lord’s help to change us.

**THOUGHT:** Am I bearing the good fruit?

**PRAYER:** Father, help my weakness and frailties as I struggle with how to control my tongue. Let me be a blessing to others.

---

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 24

JAMES 3:13

JEREMIAH 9:23-24

“...Let not the wise man glory  
in his wisdom...”

---

### ARE YOU WISE?

Who is a wise man? Read the introduction to the Book of Proverbs in Proverbs 1:1-4. A wise man will hear and have a fear of the Lord.

He is endowed with knowledge: The phrase “*endued with knowledge*” (James 3:13) is taken from where we get the word “epistemology,” the theory of knowledge. It pertains to understanding and evaluating a man who is insightful and intelligent. Since wisdom is the application of knowledge, a wise man must be knowledgeable first. However, the reference here is not to worldly knowledge but to knowledge from the Scriptures, which is the truth. A person may boast that he is wise, but if he lacks knowledge of the truth, he is falsely wise.

He shows a good conversation with meekness: Conversation means his way of life or conduct. It refers to his behaviour and attitude, especially towards others. One who is endowed with knowledge conducts himself in a manner that blesses and encourages others. He gives due respect to the authorities and, above all, he is submissive to the will of God. He is characterised by a virtuous life that is beneficial. He also has the quality of gentleness and friendliness. He is endowed with strength that accommodates another’s weakness.

A wise and knowledgeable person acknowledges that his wisdom and knowledge are from God, and not of himself. He realises that he is made wise by the mind of Christ, and his knowledge is by the grace of God. Let God’s people prove themselves by living out a good conversation, and let their works bring blessings to people. Let them show a testimony of their wisdom, not in their words with hard criticisms, but according to their works. Dear reader, be wise from the truth of God’s Word. Let that wisdom be demonstrated by good conduct and gentleness. Let wisdom shine in all your actions to glorify God who is its source.

**THOUGHT:** Am I a wise person?

**PRAYER:** Father, grant me desire to know more of Thy Word that I may have the wisdom to use it every day as I live for Thee.

---



### DO NOT LIE AGAINST THE TRUTH

James now pleads with his readers that if they have bitter jealousy and rivalry in their hearts, they should not boast, for such attitudes are incompatible with wisdom from God. They should not exalt themselves to claim wisdom when evil lurks in their hearts. The Apostle is giving commands of prohibition: do not brag and do not lie against the truth. James wants to correct those who claim to be Christians, yet have bitter envying and strife in their hearts.

Have no bitter envying: Bitter describes a sharp, penetrating sense of taste. Figuratively, it speaks of a resentful or harsh attitude towards others. It is used in James 3:14 as an adjective to further describe the negative attitude of “envy.” Although the original word for envy has a good nuance, it is translated as “*emulations*” in Galatians 5:20, i.e. it is used with a lousy sense of jealousy. The words combined (“*bitter envying*”) now have the idea of a very fierce contention. Children of God are not to have this attitude as they are supposed to manifest divine wisdom in their lives.

Have no strife in heart: “*Strife*” (James 3:14) describes factions or rivalry. There is contention because of self-seeking ambitions (Phil 2:3). Envying comes first, and then it excites strife. This rivalry is expressed in wanting to be better than someone else or wanting to make people think they are better. Strife then engenders vain-glorying and lying because they want to make themselves look better or more important than others. Here ensues confusion and every evil work. They live in malice and contention. They are liable to be provoked and hurried to do any evil work to outwit others. The spirit of love and unity in the name of Christ is nowhere to be found.

Envy and wisdom cannot dwell together in the same heart. It is absurd to claim to possess envying wisdom. It is equally absurd for one to claim to have the indwelling of the Spirit of God and at the same time live a life with bitter envying and strife in his heart.

**THOUGHT**: Is my heart filled with bitter envying and strife?

**PRAYER**: Father, Thou knowest what occupies my heart, let me not lie against the truth, grant me the grace to repent of my envy and strife.

---

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 26

JAMES 3:15-16

1 CORINTHIANS 2:14-15

*“But the natural man  
receiveth not the things  
of the Spirit of God...”*

---

### WORLDLY WISDOM

The character of *“bitter envying and strife”* (James 3:14) is of the unbelieving world. Sadly, these characteristics are found also among new believers and even within the church leadership. There is a lack of heavenly wisdom. We need to pray for divine wisdom to overrule in the church of God.

Earthly, sensual, devilish: Earthly or worldly wisdom is limited only to the present material world of time and space. It is restricted only to things that man can imagine, determine and accomplish by himself. It has no place in the spiritual truths of God’s Word. It is of man’s own making and prompted by satanic influence that promotes the ideas and philosophies of this present age. Thus, it is *“sensual”* (James 3:15), i.e. it is wisdom dictated by carnal desires, the lust of the flesh, the eyes, and the pride of life. It relates only to the fallen, unredeemed man, wholly corrupted by the Fall and separated from God. This wisdom is therefore *“devilish”* (James 3:15) because its root source is Satan himself.

There is envying, strife, and confusion: James reiterates what he had mentioned in verse 14: envying and strife (i.e. jealousy and selfish ambition). There is confusion, disorder and every evil thing whenever these two exist, leading to worthless, bad results in the church of God. It not only produces infighting and division in the church, it also tarnishes the precious name of our Lord and Saviour and stumbles many causing them to turn away from the faith.

Dear reader, you do not want to be an agent of Satan to wreck your local church because of your worldly wisdom. Worldly wisdom is not wisdom from above. Worldly wisdom is a manifestation of the depraved and corrupt nature of man.

**THOUGHT:** Is my wisdom of this world?

**PRAYER:** Father, deliver me from the devil’s influences that I may live a life that is true to Thy cause.

---

### HEAVENLY WISDOM

In contrast to worldly wisdom, there is "*wisdom that is from above*" (James 3:17), i.e. from heaven. This wisdom from above comes out of the knowledge of God's Word. It glorifies God and edifies His people. It is God's wisdom possessed only by those who are truly born-again, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and who have the mind of Christ.

It is pure, peaceable and gentle: Heavenly wisdom is God's gift. It is not gained under the tutorship of men nor by the world's knowledge in science and philosophy. James describes it as "*pure*." It is not a mixture of ideas or objects that would degrade it. Heavenly wisdom is free from iniquity and defilements, without any influence of sin. It is also "*peaceable*." Those who are truly wise will do what they can to preserve peace. They endeavour to restore the harmony of men with God, and amongst men. Heavenly wisdom is "*gentle*." It is not furious about opinions, forcing one's own convictions beyond good intentions. It is not rude and overbearing in conversation nor harsh and cruel in temperament.

It is easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits: Heavenly wisdom is "*easy to be intreated*," meaning it is open to reason and is compliant, very persuadable, either to what is good or away from what is evil. It is "*full of mercy and good fruits*," i.e. inwardly disposed to everything kind and good, both to relieve those who want and to forgive those who offend. This wisdom is merciful because it is from the God who is full of mercy, who withholds our punishment and condemnation through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Without partiality and hypocrisy: Heavenly wisdom is "*without partiality*." The original word signifies to be without suspicion or free from judging, making no undue suspicions nor differences in conduct towards one person more than another. This wisdom is "*without hypocrisy*." It has no disguises nor deceptions. It is sincere and open, steady, uniform and consistent. O, may we have heavenly wisdom!

**THOUGHT:** Is my wisdom from God?

**PRAYER:** Father, Thou art able to grant wisdom upon Thy people who seek after Thee. Grant us Thy wisdom.

---

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 28

JAMES 3:18

ROMANS 12:17-18

“...live peaceably with all men.”

---

### THE FRUIT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Remember that heavenly wisdom is “*peaceable*” (James 3:17). Those who have it make peace and preserve peace. Now James concludes that those who have heavenly wisdom sow the fruit of righteousness in peace. Everyone desires peace, and those who possess true knowledge understand that true and everlasting peace is attained only through the righteousness of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Sown in peace: The “*fruit of righteousness is sown in peace*” (James 3:18). Sowing the fruit of righteousness certainly attracts opposition from the enemy. Satan is ready to create confusion. But those who are wise according to God’s will are kind, meek, and merciful. They have God’s wisdom not to cover transgressions nor favour them. On the contrary, they strive to correct them peaceably. Thus, heavenly wisdom grants the believer the ways and means to continue sowing the fruit of righteousness amid the onslaught of the enemies.

Sown by peacemakers: The sowing is done by “*them that make peace*” (James 3:18). Who are the peacemakers? We have learned a few days back that they are born-again Christians who have peace with God and are making peace. They possess that wisdom that is peaceable (Matt 5:9). They pursue peace, and exercise and maintain that peace for others to obtain the righteousness of God. They live a godly life and are filled with the fruit of righteousness.

Dear reader, the wisdom of God is given to every believer to advance the Kingdom of God for the glory and honour of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The wisdom of this world tears the church apart and destroys the believers’ testimony. Which one have you? I pray you to pursue after the divine wisdom and use it to sow the Gospel seed to those around you that they may believe and be saved. Let your life glorify God, for that is the chief end of man, and you will have joy in His presence forever and ever!

**THOUGHT:** Am I sowing the fruit of righteousness in peace?

**PRAYER:** Father, Thou who art Almighty, use me for Thy glory, make me a peacemaker to sow the fruit of righteousness in peace.

---

## THE EVILS OF CHRISTIAN HEDONISM

Hedonism unbiblically teaches that pleasure or happiness is the sole or chief good in life. The word comes from the Greek *hedone*, which means “pleasure” or “lust” (James 4:1). It is said that “John Piper coins Christian Hedonism.” Hedonism wrongly teaches that the desire to be happy is a proper motive for every good deed, and if you abandon the pursuit of your joy, you cannot love a man or please God.

Wars in you: From the Greek word for “wars” (James 4:1) we get the English “polemics,” i.e. prolonged and severe disputing or combat. Figuratively and negatively, as a word, it means “battle within a community,” strife or quarrel. The word for “*fightings*” refers to conflicts, a specific fight or battle. The phrase “*wars and fightings*” entails a severe conflict, either physical or non-physical. Intensively, it describes clashing severely or struggling. Both terms (“wars” and “*fightings*”) are used here metaphorically for violent personal relationships, which, in the extreme, can result even in murder.

War in your members: James states plainly that the source of conflicts is “*lusts*,” or worldly pleasures. This word “*lusts*” is translated from the Greek “*hedone*,” from which “hedonist” and “hedonism” are derived. It connotes the gratification of sensual, natural, fleshly desires. The word is always used in a negative, ungodly sense in the New Testament. Hedonism is the uncontrolled personal desire to fulfil every passion and whim that promises sensual satisfaction and enjoyment. It is used consistently in the New Testament of sinful pleasures or the desire for them (e.g. Luke 8:14).

Dear reader, many young people today are deceived by the New Calvinistic, false teaching on Christian Hedonism. It is a syncretistic teaching of the world’s philosophies and the Bible. It is dangerous because it is promoted as a Christian teaching when it uses the humanistic ideas of satisfying the desires of the flesh.

**THOUGHT:** Am I a hedonistic Christian?

**PRAYER:** Father, grant me the discernment to see the subtleties of today’s deceptions. May I not be sucked into this hellish whirlpool.

---

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 30

JAMES 4:2-3

LUKE 11:9-13

“...Ask, and it shall be given you...”

---

## YOU DID NOT ASK

Prayer is the most potent means for Christians in doing things. Its effectiveness does not lie in our prayerfulness nor the eloquence of our words. It is powerful because it seeks the all-powerful God to fulfil what we ask according to His will. According to God’s decrees, every prayer will permanently be established and perfectly done according to His purposes.

You lust, and have not: The verb *epithumeo* (to lust) refers to having a desire or longing, but the context clarifies that the desire mentioned here is inordinate, misdirected, and sinful. James does not refer to any specific object of desire (doubtless because the particular entity does not matter as far as his point here is concerned). When any strong, sinful lust is not gratified, the worldly person is prone to lash out in angry frustration, sometimes even to murder.

You kill and cannot obtain: To “kill” translates the verb *phoneuoo*, which, in this context, could include murderous hatred, extremely destructive behaviour, and even suicide. When a person cannot achieve his desired goals, whether for reputation, prestige, sexual gratification, money, power or whatever, the result is catastrophic to others and always destructive to oneself. Because of the lust to fulfil his will, he is ready to murder others just to achieve his aim. This is, of course, devilish, and though evil people may succeed temporally, their eternal damnation awaits them because of their sinful desires.

Dear reader, we pray amiss when our aims and ends are not proper under God’s will. Let us not pray and ask for blessings to indulge our lusts and pleasures. If we do this, we ask amiss and are sure to miss. We must guard our affections and be sure of our intentions in prayers. James says, “*Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss...*” (James 4:3). He did not say that they did not pray, but that their prayers with the wrong motives are the same as not praying!

**THOUGHT:** Am I praying amiss?

**PRAYER:** Father, teach me to pray aright that I may seek after only the things according to Thy holy will.

---

### ARE YOU A FOE OR A FRIEND?

When James calls the believers “*adulterers and adulteresses*,” (James 4:4) he speaks figuratively concerning what they have done lusting after the things of this world. Because they are unfaithful to God, they are thus spiritual adulterers. The Old Testament prophets used similar language for those who forsook the Jehovah God of the Scriptures and went after idols. The Greek word *philia*, translated as “*friendship*,” is used only here in the whole New Testament. The verb form, *phileo*, is often rendered as “*love*” in other passages (eg. Matt 6:5, 10:37; 1 Cor 16:22) and is even used for the Father’s love for His Son (John 5:20) and of the Father’s and Jesus’ love for those who have saving faith (John 11:3). James’ readers have a deep affection for the corrupt world system.

A foe of God: James warns his readers of the evil of their affections by describing their actions as enmity with God. The true nature of their friendship of the world resulted in their hostility against the Lord their God. They became traitors to God by turning to the world’s pleasures. Such was the gravity of their sin. Indeed, James rightly counts them as “*adulterers and adulteresses*”! What about us?

A friend of the world: Whosoever, therefore, is the world’s friend is the enemy of God. The original word “*friend*” is a derivative of the word for “*friendship*.” It describes a continual relationship with the world, leaving God out of the picture, and abiding by the principles and philosophies of this world. Read what Jesus said in Matthew 6:24.

Our covetous and idolatrous love of the world makes us spiritual adulterers! The outcome will be our enmity towards God, we become enemies of God. Who can fight against God and win? Dear reader, do not allow the lusts and allurements of this earth drive your mind and heart. Let not the ideas and ambitions of this age corrupt your actions. Do not be a friend of the world lest you become a foe of God!

**THOUGHT:** Am I a Christian who is an enemy of the God of the Bible?

**PRAYER:** Father, hear me when I pray and teach me to pray aright that I may seek only after the things that are according to Thy holy will.

---

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2

JAMES 4:5

JOHN 16:13-14

“...the Spirit of truth, is come,  
he will guide you into all truth...”

---

### THE SCRIPTURE AND THE SPIRIT

James asked his readers, “*Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?*” (James 4:5). What does this mean? It is a rhetorical question for those who love the world. If they have genuine faith, the Holy Spirit indwells them, and they will not be led by lust to envy the things of this world. Lust and envy are contrary to the nature of the Spirit. James’ object is to prove that the Spirit of God has no part in their envy. The Scripture does not teach in vain. The faithful (whom the Holy Spirit indwells) will not go after the lust of the flesh.

The Scripture is not in vain: James asks the believers whether the Scriptures are good for nothing. Do the Scriptures say that the Holy Spirit (indwelling the Christian) will lead us to envy? The Word of God is the truth. It describes the Spirit of God as the guide into all truth. Is the Holy Spirit capable of sinning? It does not even deserve an answer. Therefore, James challenges the believers (who have the indwelling of the Spirit) that they should not lust to envy because the Spirit in them does not agree with such a sinful act. Read what Jesus said in John 16:7-10.

The Spirit is not envious: The Spirit dwells in God’s people, and He resides there according to the tenor of what is said in Isaiah 57:15, “*For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.*” The Holy Spirit leads and guides the believer to do what is according to the Scriptures. Therefore, He will never cause the Christian to desire jealousy. Read Galatians 5:16-17.

Dear reader, we should never point to the Scripture and the Spirit as instigators to sin. The Word of God does not teach people to sin, nor does the Spirit of God move a believer to go against the teachings of God.

**THOUGHT:** Does the Spirit of God truly indwell me?

**PRAYER:** Father, convict my heart when I am against Thy will and let me not wander away from Thy presence.

---



SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3

JAMES 4:6

PROVERBS 3:27-35

“...he scorneth the scorners:  
but he giveth grace unto the lowly.”

---

### THE PROUD AND THE HUMBLE

The proud refers to the arrogant and haughty. He is an empty boaster who brags about his position and despises others. How about the humble? The original word describes a person who is discouraged. He is lacking in hope because he is dejected, downhearted. He is possibly associated with a low social status. How does the gracious God treat these two types of people?

Resists the proud: The word “*resisteth*” means to “set in array against.” The term describes setting oneself against or opposing and being hostile towards another (Acts 18:6). James condemns the sin of pride. He uses a military term that tells us how God resists the proud. The term signifies that the Lord Himself is at the forefront in a battle arrayed against the proud. God sets Himself against the proud sinners to punish and plague them. They are wholly out of His favour. He hates them with high displeasure. He will expose them to His wrath, and nothing can protect them except their repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Gives grace to the humble: The word “*giveth*” is in the present tense, which depicts the Lord as One who continually, generously extends His grace. What comfort to the humble! It portrays God as tirelessly on the side of those who are discouraged. Let us remember that James’ readers were suffering Christians under persecution by the Jews. God never falters concerning our needs. He always has more grace at hand available for us. He is never less than sufficient. He always has more, and yet more to give. Read what Jesus says in Matthew 23:11-12.

Dear reader, who are you in the sight of the Lord? Are you proud? Then God is resisting you. You have no means to fight against God. You must surrender and repent of your sins. Or are you downcast and discouraged? Never despair nor be dismayed, for the grace of our God will never be out of stock. He gives more and more to the humble.

**THOUGHT:** Am I a proud man or a meek one?

**PRAYER:** Father, help me see the vanity of the pride of life and that it cannot help me to please Thee.

---

### LET THE DEVIL FLEE

The *"devil"* (Greek: *diabolos*) means the false accuser and slanderer. The Scripture always represents him as the adversary both of God and men. As a false accuser, he will bring up, again and again, the guilt of our sins that may result in discouragement. Read Revelation 12:9-10.

Submit to God: To *"submit yourselves"* (James 4:7, *hupotasso*) means to be subordinate. The believer is to be obedient and to be made subject to God. This command to submit is primarily a military term meaning literally *"to rank under."* In the passive form, it indicates submission that is voluntary. God asks from us obedience to His written Word. When we obey and keep His Word, we do His will in our lives. When we live for the Lord, the devil will flee from us. He will have nothing to do with us, for we submit to God's Word. Remember what Jesus did when Satan tempted Him in Matthew 4. Jesus said, *"It is written."* Jesus, in effect, told the devil that He cannot do anything apart from the Scriptures. And so must we. Hence, James concludes that we ought to lay aside envy, for the Scriptures do not command it.

Resist the devil: To *"resist"* means to *"set oneself against."* The Scriptures command believers to take a firm stand against the devil (Eph 6:13). *"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world"* (1 Pet 5:8-9).

Dear reader, we must not give in to the wiles and seductions of the devil. Do not be fooled! The moment you doubt the Scriptures, and you do not submit to its authority, Satan will come in and lead you. The Bible is our supreme and final authority in faith and practice. Do not attempt to step out from it. There is no neutral ground. Either you are submitting to God or the devil. Be aware of the danger!

**THOUGHT:** Am I submitting to God and resisting the devil?

**PRAYER:** Father, grant me the grace to resist the devil by submitting myself to Thy holy commandment.

---

MONDAY, DECEMBER 5

JAMES 4:8

PSALM 145:17-19

*“The LORD is nigh  
unto all them that call upon him,  
to all that call upon him in truth.”*

---

### DRAW NEAR TO GOD

“*Draw nigh to God*” (James 4:8) is now James’ command to his readers. The word “*draw nigh*” is in the imperative. To come before the presence of God, they need to know what to do to be acceptable to God. James has already mentioned the sins of professing believers in his time. They need to be cleansed and purified as they approach the Holy God.

Cleanse your hands: The word “*cleanse*” is a command which gives the idea of a thorough cleansing for sacred use, such as washing vessels for holy purposes. Figuratively, it is associated with ritual cleansing, implying moral purity. God makes us acceptable by cleansing us. Therefore, it is a command for all who have been made filthy by sins. James here addresses all those alienated from God because of their doubts or because of the transgressions of the wicked.

Purify your hearts: The word “*purify*,” also a command, is synonymous with cleansing. It is a step further from the order “to cleanse.” We must not be satisfied with a mere external reformation and putting away of our outward transgressions. No amount of exterior rehabilitation is enough if there is no inward transformation. There must be a cleansing that reaches the heart and a purifying that renews our affections. The Lord knows that nothing can be correct if the heart is wrong.

The Lord commands us to be near Him. It is because He alone can cleanse and purify us. If we prefer to remain at a distance because we still want to cling to our sins, there is no hope that we can draw near to Him. If we draw near to Him, He will draw near to us. He is ever ready to cleanse and purify us. Read what Jesus said in John 6:37.

Dear reader, are you not seeking the spiritual cleansing and purifying of your heart and mind? We can never hope for God’s favour if we continue to indulge in our sinful lusts and doubts about God.

**THOUGHT:** Am I drawing near to God?

**PRAYER:** Father, I thank Thee for Thy promise that when I draw near to Thee, Thou in Thy mercy and grace will draw near to me.

---

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 6

JAMES 4:9

2 CORINTHIANS 7:9-10

*“For godly sorrow  
worketh repentance...”*

---

## GENUINE REPENTANCE

What is repentance? Two Greek words are translated as repent or repentance in the New Testament. “*Metanoeo*” refers to an act of repentance with a change of mind. It involves regret and sorrow, accompanied by a genuine change of heart toward God. In a practical sense, it implies a pious sorrow for unbelief and sin and a turning from them unto God and the Gospel of Christ. Another word is “*metamelomai*,” which expresses the desire that what is done may be undone, accompanied by regrets and remorse, but with no real change of heart.

Be afflicted: The word translated as “*afflicted*” carries the idea of being broken and feeling wretched. James commands his readers to be afflicted and to be wretched or sorrowful. These are expressions of miserable feelings, a show of grief, remorse, or lament (Luke 18:13).

Mourn: To mourn is to experience sadness or grief. The idea is of deep grief and remorse, complete despair that laments over sin the way one mourns the death of a family member. The Lord prescribes, “*Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted*” (Matt 5:4).

Weep. To weep is to express a more profound grief. It is a command to lament. It describes an outward manifestation of the previously mentioned misery and sorrow. Isaiah reminded unfaithful Israel, “*And in that day did the Lord GOD of hosts call to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth*” (Isa 22:12).

Turn your laughter to mourning: This is another command to cause a change of state from merrymaking to lamentation. They should not rejoice over the wicked and evil deed they have done, but grieve over what the Lord had suffered on the cross, all for our sakes.

Will you take heed? Note: True repentance manifests these expressions.

**THOUGHT**: Am I obedient to the above commands?

**PRAYER**: Father, help me understand the gravity of my sins and repent of my sins with the change of my mind towards God.

---

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 7

JAMES 4:10

1 PETER 5:5-6

*“Humble yourselves therefore  
under the mighty hand of God...”*

---

### HUMILITY IS THE KEY

Change takes much effort. To reform a man who is used to living a wicked life will not be easy. The spirit of envy and strife are manifestations of man's pride. The seed of all evil is pride. It first germinated in Lucifer, and he cast this seed onto this earth. The critical antidote is humility, *tapeinoo*, which means to make low. The sinner must humble himself. He must have the genuine realisation of complete unworthiness and lostness because of sin. Jesus says, *“Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven”* (Matt 5:3).

God shall be pleased: The phrase *“in the sight of the Lord”* (James 4:10) signifies being in the Lord's presence. God shall be pleased when we humble ourselves before Him. Many appear to be meek before people. But when they are alone (or in their hearts), they have a proud spirit. God is not pleased with hypocrites. Jesus warns, *“Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known”* (Luke 12:1-2). Our God is omniscient as well as omnipresent. King David knew this. Read his prayer in Psalm 51:4.

God shall lift you up: If we truly humble ourselves and sincerely repent of our sins, James says God shall lift us up. The original word for *“lift”* speaks figuratively of honour and position, i.e. God will exalt us. Vain are man's efforts to be exalted. Only the Lord can lift us up in a genuine sense. He will lift us out of trouble, or He will raise up our spirits and comfort us in crisis. He will lift us to safety in this wicked world. He will surely lift us up on our way to heaven. Read Psalm 147:5-6.

Dear reader, there is nothing in us that we can be proud of. Moreover, we cannot even lift ourselves beyond the bounds of our galaxy, which is just a dot compared to God's vast universe. We better admit the reality of who we are. And when we do it in repentance of our sins and put our faith in Jesus Christ, the Lord Himself will lift us up.

**THOUGHT:** Do I have humility?

**PRAYER:** Father, grant me the grace to be humble and see myself as incapable of doing that which is pleasing in Thy sight.

---

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 8

JAMES 4:11

EPHESIANS 4:25-32

*“Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger,  
and clamour, and evil speaking,  
be put away from you...”*

---

### SPEAK NO EVIL

Another command of James is to stop evil-speaking or slandering one another. The Apostle is warning them because they are already practising it. They must stop doing it. It is known that some speak evil of their brethren. Others are judging their brethren. James says that such is effectively speaking evil of the law and criticising it. Those judging the law are, in effect, not doers of the law but acting as judges of the law. Such a thought is ridiculous, for what is man to judge the Law of God?

Speak no evil of one another: There must never be a time that a man speaks evil of his brother. If anyone slanders his brother, he is judging his brother wrongly. Insults amounting to character assassination against a brother negate the Law of God. It is commanded, *“Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour”* (Exod 20:16).

Speak no evil of the law: When a man speaks evil and judges a brother wrongly, and yet says he is using the law, he misinterprets the law. It makes him judge the law as evil. Whosoever does this speaks evil of the law because he is doing contrary to what the law commands. Jesus said, *“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets”* (Matt 22:37-40). Is there evil-speaking against a brother in the law?

Those who do contrary to the law become judges of the law. They are not doers of it. We are not commanded to judge the law but to obey it. Be careful when you judge. Observe the law properly according to its correct interpretation. Do not use it as a pretence to judge others according to your standard. Read Matthew 7:1-5.

**THOUGHT:** Do I speak evil of my brethren?

**PRAYER:** Father, keep my tongue from judging others. Let me be a doer of Thy law.

---

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 9

JAMES 4:12  
ISAIAH 33:22

*“For the LORD is our judge,  
the LORD is our lawgiver...”*

---

### THE ONE AND ONLY LAWGIVER

James affirms that there is only one Lawgiver. And He has the power to save and destroy. So he inquired, why are you judging one another? A problem among the believers during that time was discrimination against the poor. The Apostle gives this example where they judge others based on their own standard and not according to the Law of God. They presume to use the law in evil ways to destroy their brethren. James warns them not to abuse the law, for the One and only Lawgiver is all-powerful. The Omnipotent God can save those brothers who are evil spoken of and destroy those who are evil-speaking.

Who can save: God is able to save. He is the only Saviour of the world. *“Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour”* (Isa 43:10-11). *“Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else”* (Isa 45:22). Read also 1 John 4:14, John 3:16-17.

Who can destroy: Jesus said, *“...fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell”* (Matt 10:28). Paul says, *“And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day”* (2 Thess 1:7-10).

Dear reader, do not use the law of God in evil ways against your brethren. Be doers of the law, keep it and obey it.

**THOUGHT:** Do I fear the Lord, the Giver of the law?

**PRAYER:** Father, grant me the heart to love Thee as I ought and to love my brethren as myself.

---

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10

JAMES 4:13-14

PSALM 39:4-5

“...verily every man at his best state  
is altogether vanity...”

---

### FOR WHAT IS YOUR LIFE?

How long is our life here on earth? Read the Psalmist's answer in Psalm 90:9-10.

**Boast not:** Many Christians today are comfortably settled in life. They have their long-term plans as though they have many years at their disposal. Believers ought to depend on God always. Nobody knows the future, not even one moment of it. It is ridiculous to boast about what we will do tomorrow. What James reproves here is the arrogance of man. They have so many things in their minds, as if “they are counting the chicks before the eggs are hatched.” The rich fool in Jesus' parable says, “*And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry*” (Luke 12:19).

**Forget not:** The question for that rich fool is, “Does he know if he will still be alive tomorrow?” Jesus continues that parable above by saying, “*But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?*” (Luke 12:20). We must not forget the brevity of life. James uses the similitude of the vapour. The original word refers to steam or mist. Figuratively, it refers to the transient nature of earthly life. It also reflects the frailty, shortness and uncertainty of life.

Dear reader, we are unsure what is ahead of us. We can fix the hour and minute in our plan, but we cannot be certain how it will turn out. We may not live to see what we set out to do. Such is our life. It appears but for a time, and then vanishes away. The word “*vanisheth*” describes something that disappears or becomes unrecognisable. This is the world that we are in.

However, there is a life that will continue in the other world for believers. Since this life is so uncertain, why not prepare ourselves for this sure and secured future? Why not plan for it now?

**THOUGHT:** Am I looking ahead with eternity's values in view?

**PRAYER:** Father, point my heart towards Thy eternal Kingdom in heaven. May I not look down on this momentary world.

---



### D.V.

What is D.V.? It stands for the Latin “Deo Volente,” which means God willing. James advises those who plan ahead to say, “*If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that*” (James 4:15). It is better to commit everything to the Lord, for we are not sure if we will still be alive an hour later. We should not be presumptuous to imagine significant gains of riches when we are not even sure of the length of our days on earth.

If the Lord wills: James teaches us to be mindful of our dependence on the will of God. We must learn to commit to the Lord even the trivial and minor issues in life. In entrusting everything to the Lord, our hearts are trained to rely on Him and to honour Him whether things go according to plan or not. Leaning upon His will leads us to constant prayers and devotions, for we know nothing can be realised without His permission. It is an excellent reminder that everything is under His control and nothing happens by chance. We must remember that our times are not in our own hands but at the disposal of God. We live as long as He appoints and therefore, we must be submissive to Him.

If we shall live: All our actions in life are under God’s control. Yet many plan so much that they are overburdened. We may propose to do much for ourselves, our families, or our friends, but the truth is all these things depend on God alone. Therefore, both our counsels for action and our conduct should be referred to God. All that we plan and all that we do must be with a submissive dependence on God, who has the power to give us breath to live each day.

When we talk of future things, let us accustom ourselves to such terms as “the Lord willing,” “if it shall please the Lord,” or “if the Lord will permit.” But let not these become mere Christian jargons uttered without meaning, or used as a holy prescription as though it were a sin to omit them. We say it because we understand what it means. Read what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 16:5-7.

**THOUGHT:** Do I mean it when I say, “the Lord willing”?

**PRAYER:** Father, help me understand that everything in my life is under Thy care and plan that I may always seek Thy will in everything that I do.

---

## EMPTY BOASTINGS

Boasting reflects the attitude of the presumptuous man. He thinks he can control his own life through his plans and power. He sees things according to his lens of self-confidence. God is totally out of the equation, and he trusts that all is well because he has laid it out well in his mind and on paper. Such is empty boasting! Read Proverbs 25:14.

Boasting is not glorifying to God: Man’s boasting is presumption characterised by word or action. He does not glorify God. It is pride, and it glorifies self rather than God. It is like seeing a mirage of success ahead. He is inflated with self-confidence, and his mind is inebriated with vanity to disregard God. He simply gratifies his foolish senses, without any regard for God. He is a great flatterer of self, patting his own back without evidence of goodness or advantage for others.

Boasting is evil: Boasting is a sin because the seed of boasting is Lucifer’s pride. *“Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee”* (Ezek 28:17). It is founded on a wrong view of self and what God has designed us for. It shows our total lack of dependence on God. It reveals our insensibility to His presence, which is why we take Him out of the picture. Let us not glory in boasting. It only brings the wrath of God upon us, for it is blasphemy to think that we can ever achieve anything without God.

Dear reader, consider what King Nebuchadnezzar experienced when he boasted of his kingdom. *“All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar. At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty? While the word was in the king’s mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee”* (Dan 4:28-31).

**THOUGHT:** Am I a boaster?

**PRAYER:** Father, grant me the spirit of humility to acknowledge that I cannot do anything apart from Thee.

---

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 13

JAMES 4:17

JOHN 9:41

“...If ye were blind,  
ye should have no sin...”

---

## THE SINS OF OMISSION AND COMMISSION

As a Christian, you know what God wants you to do. When you disobey Him, you have sinned against Him.

When you do not do the good you know should be done: The Psalmist says that the Word of God is “*a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path*” (Ps 119:105). The Bible guides every believer to do God’s will in his life. Notably, the Ten Commandments given to man are clear instructions on how we must live each day. When we fail to do it, we sin by omission. Jesus says, “*And that servant, which knew his lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes*” (Luke 12:47).

When you do the evil you know should not be done: What is sin? The Westminster Larger Catechism says, “Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, any law of God, given as a rule to the reasonable creature.” Read also 1 John 3:4 and 8. When we do what God forbids, we sin by commission.

Sin is sin, whether by omission or commission. Therefore, let us be careful to be rightly informed by continually reading and studying God’s Word. Ignorance excuses no one! We have so many opportunities to know and understand God’s Word in this age. Do not waste your time on social media. Read spiritual media for your soul to be fed and to grow. And pray to be faithful in obeying His Word. The omission of a known duty is a sin. The commission of a known sin is a transgression.

Dear reader, hear the Psalmist cry, “*Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently. O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes! Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments. I will praise thee with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned thy righteous judgments. I will keep thy statutes: O forsake me not utterly*” (Ps 119:4-8).

**THOUGHT:** I must always be obedient to God.

**PRAYER:** Father, forgive my sins of omission and commission. Help me to live to please Thee only.

---

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 14

JAMES 5:1

1 TIMOTHY 6:9-10

*“But they that will be rich  
fall into temptation and a snare...”*

---

## ENVY NOT

Read the words of the Psalmist in Psalm 49:16-20.

A command to weep: James refers to the wealthy in his days, and commands them to “weep” (James 5:1, Greek: *klaioo*) which means “to sob out loud” or “to lament.” It describes the wailing when someone dies (eg. Mark 5:38-39). It is an expression of a strong inner emotion. It is crying and the shedding of tears, emphasising the sound that accompanies the weeping. It also depicts the outward reaction that sometimes accompanies intense shame and guilt (eg. Matt 26:75).

In addition to “weeping,” they are also to “howl” (Greek: *ololuzoo*). This word appears only here in the New Testament. The term implies a more emphatic sorrow. This onomatopoeic word goes beyond mere lamenting. It refers to an intense outburst of despair and violent, uncontrollable grief. The Old Testament prophets frequently described such wailing over the effects of sin (eg. Isa 13:6).

A coming misery: James commands the wicked rich to weep and howl for sufferings will follow. The word for “*miseries*” refers to an emotional condition that arises from inner or outer torment. It is a hardship in life resulting in wretchedness. The word expresses idiomatically “to have nothing” or “to have even one’s shirt in rags.” Paul uses this word only twice. In Romans 3:16, Paul uses it to describe the life of an unrighteous man: “*Destruction and misery are in their ways.*” Though the miseries are in the future, there is an assurance that they will surely come.

James calls the rich people to reason and to weigh the matter thoroughly. Though living in affluence and luxury, they must consider how they will stand before God the Judge. Many of the rich in James’ time reject Christianity. They are hardened in their unbelief and even persecute those who believe in Christ. James commands them to seriously lament over their slothfulness in the things of God.

**THOUGHT:** Do I love the riches of this world and reject Christ?

**PRAYER:** Father, look into my heart, and remove the affections that I still have for material things.

---

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 15

JAMES 5:2

MATTHEW 6:19-21

*“Lay not up for yourselves  
treasures upon earth...”*

---

### PERISHABLES

Perishables are things that will decay quickly. “Diamonds last forever,” but they can still degrade into graphite. Nothing lasts forever in this world. Even the present universe will not last long. Read what Peter says in 2 Peter 3:10-12.

Riches are corrupted: Riches refer to wealth in general (Matt 13:22; 1 Tim 6:17). It is an abundance of possessions exceeding the norm of a particular society and it often has a negative connotation. In his condemnation of riches, James includes all that the wealthy possess. These are the things that they have accumulated throughout their lives. However, the Apostle says that all these things will be “*corrupted*”! He uses the word that describes the literal decay process of organic matter. He suggests a narrow reference to foodstuffs, such as the decay of flesh and rotten fruits. Although the possessions of the rich include gold and silver, these translate into their daily necessities like food and drinks which will perish. Thus, James may also be implying the speedy deterioration of all their material things. In general, James’ point is that all these riches will not last for long.

Garments are moth-eaten: The word “*garments*” (James 5:2) refers to the outer layer of clothings, eg. robes, mantles, or cloaks. It is distinguished from the clothing worn next to the skin. The outer layer is often embroidered and embellished with jewels. The rich possess such garments as they can afford them. James tells them that their garments have been eaten by worms or damaged by the larvae of moths, and are full of holes. This points to the vanity of their excessive wearing of luxurious attire, and the reality that beauty will not last any longer.

Is your life driven only to accumulate money and clothes? Take heed to what James says about the reality of these perishable things.

**THOUGHT**: Am I a materialistic person?

**PRAYER**: Father, help me see the vanity of wealth, and help me to pursue instead after treasures that will last for eternity.

---

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16

JAMES 5:3

2 PETER 3:10-12

*“Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved...”*

---

### TREASURES FOR THE LAST DAYS

The last days began when Jesus was born on earth, and will last till the time that this universe is dissolved. *“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds”* (Heb 1:1-2).

Of vanity: Gold and silver may be God’s blessings on His people that they in turn can bless others. James chided the rich who hoard things to please their own lust and pride. Thus, these things become a curse. Amassing treasures and spending them without benefit are signs of greed and inhumanity. These seemingly indestructible commodities will become “*cankered*” or “*rust*” (James 5:3). Cankered is from a Greek compound word that has an added preposition that intensifies the force of the meaning of the primary word. It thus means to wholly and thoroughly rust or corrode. Their “*gold and silver*” will perish. We are living in the last days. Let us not devote ourselves to accumulating these earthly treasures that will not last.

Of misery: James says that the rusting of gold and silver will be, as it were, the occasion of God inflaming His wrath. The rust-like fire will consume them. The illustration portrays a burning house where the fire consumes everything. Not a single possession will be spared. The rust will be the evidence of their avarice, thus there will be no escaping God’s judgment. Their misery will not be temporal but eternal. Read Revelation 20:11-15.

The Day of Judgment is coming! Have you repented of your love for the things that glitter on earth? Read Paul’s warning in Romans 2:4-6. Dear reader, are you accumulating wealth just to secure a certain position in society? Do you realise that you are collecting a most fearful treasure against the day of final retribution?

**THOUGHT**: Am I treasuring up God’s wrath towards Judgment Day?

**PRAYER**: Father, convict my heart to know that Thou art Judge, and Thou wilt judge righteously.

---

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 17

JAMES 5:4

DEUTERONOMY 24:14-15

*“Thou shalt not oppress  
an hired servant...”*

---

### THE LORD KNOWS

James calls the attention of the rich to the plight of the labourers who toiled for them. The rich have kept back by fraud the wages due to their workers. No wonder the rich became so much richer! They have exploited their servants. They abused their power over the poor, getting them to work for less pay, delayed pay or no pay! But the Apostle affirms that the cries of the defrauded will surely reach the ears of the Omniscient God.

The cruelty of the rich: The wicked rich were guilty of sinfully hoarding their wealth, and had also sinfully acquired it. The “hire” (James 5:4) refers to the payment due to the labourer for the work they have done for the rich. However, the payment is far from generous. Read Deuteronomy 15:9-10 as it commands the rich not to be wicked to exploit the poor. Instead, the rich are commanded, *“Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land”* (Deut 15:11). James condemns the cruelty of the rich for avarice. They feel no pity towards the man whose sweat they have employed for their benefit.

The cries of the poor: The “cries” (James 5:4) indicate cruelty against the poor at the highest level. The labourers worked, yet they did not receive compensation. They supply the rich with bread through their labours; and they themselves suffer hunger. Yet, they could not raise their voice against the rich. But God knows, sees and hears their agony.

It is unimaginable that people can eat their sumptuous goodies because of the labourers’ work on the abundant harvest and yet can leave these same labourers hungry. This is an injustice not only in the eyes of man. Surely God will give due compensation for the way of the wicked. *“As a cage is full of birds, so are their houses full of deceit: therefore they are become great, and waxen rich. Shall I not visit for these things? saith the LORD: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?”* (Jer 5:27, 29).

**THOUGHT:** Do I treat my employees fairly and honestly?

**PRAYER:** Father, hear the cries of the poor and let the works of the wicked rich not prosper.

---

### WHAT IS YOUR PURPOSE IN LIFE?

James warns those who live just for earthly pleasure, living a life of indulgence to feed their hearts. Is this the purpose of life? The Westminster Shorter Catechism Question 1 asks, “What is the chief end of man?” The answer given by the Westminster Divines is, “Man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.” Solomon concludes in Ecclesiastes 12:13-14, *“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.”*

For pleasure: In James 5:5, James describes the self-indulgence of the rich. They live *“in pleasure”* (in bliss) and *“wanton”* (or luxuriously) while exploiting their labourers. James condemned the evil rich for such living at the expense of others. The word *“wanton”* has the connotation of pursuing lustful desires. Those who seek fun and luxury often descend into vices to satisfy their insatiable appetites. These undoubtedly characterise people who have no God. They are blind and cannot see beyond worldly conveniences. Read John 3:3.

For nourishment: They nourish or fatten their hearts. To nourish is “to feed,” which, in a bad sense, points to overindulgence in revelry. The striking picture portrayed is that of oppressive, self-indulgent robbers, who have satiated themselves on the plunder taken from their poor victims. The desire for luxury leads to vice. This action leads the unjust hoarders to selfishly seek and indulge every desire of their hearts. The delights of their senses are their chief pleasures. They intend to gratify their sensual appetites without restraint.

Dear reader, what is the purpose of your life? Is it to glorify God in heaven or to enjoy gold on this earth? Similarly, read Paul’s warning in 1 Timothy 6:17-19.

**THOUGHT:** What is the purpose of my life?

**PRAYER:** Father, may I be obedient to fulfil the purpose of my life according to Thy Word.

---



MONDAY, DECEMBER 19

JAMES 5:6

PSALM 94:21-23

*“And he shall bring upon them  
their own iniquity..”*

---

### CRIME DOES NOT PAY

In James 5:6, James exposes further the wickedness of the rich.

Against the sinless: The word “condemn” is a legal, technical term meaning to give judgment against, or to render against the accused a verdict of guilt. In other words, the “just” is judged to be definitely guilty and thus is subject to punishment. The decisions of the rich are tainted with abuse. They kill to deprive a person of life by illegal, intentional killing. The poor cannot oppose this hostility. Take note this was done against the just! These wicked rich persecute particularly those who genuinely believe in Jesus Christ. They condemn, and even kill, the poor who are just.

Against the helpless: James reaches the final progression in the downward spiral of the rich people’s wickedness. They unjustly hoard their money. They rob the wages of their poor labourers and spend it on their self-indulgent desires. Further, they condemn and even put to death the righteous. They are ready to do it to continue their lavish lifestyle. Romans 3:15-18 gives us the characteristics of the unsaved: *“Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes.”* The righteous do not resist nor oppose the hostilities of the wicked rich. They do not retaliate as the Lord has encouraged them in Romans 12:19: *“Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.”*

Do not be like the wicked rich who condemn and kill. They soon will be charged and suffer eternal death under God’s judgment. Crime does not pay. There is an infinite punishment ahead (Mark 9:43-48)!

**THOUGHT:** Do I have the same attitude as the wicked rich?

**PRAYER:** Father, forgive my self-indulgences. May I always do Thy bidding.

---

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 20

JAMES 5:7

HEBREWS 12:1-3

“...let us run with patience the race  
that is set before us.”

---

### LONG PATIENCE

The Apostle commands the believers to demonstrate patience despite difficulties. They have been persecuted, experienced discrimination from their brethren and are oppressed by the wicked rich. And some cannot endure the tribulations anymore. They need encouragement to trust and to anticipate the promises of God as written in the Scriptures.

Unto the coming of the Lord: “*Be patient*” (James 5:7) has the idea of restraining the temper. The believer must not allow mistreatment and oppression to drive him to hatred, bitterness, or despair. In tribulations, such feelings against the wicked (or even against God) may arise. The former because of the suffering; and the latter because the believer thinks He is to be blamed for allowing hardships. The non-retaliatory response must be the believer’s acceptance “*unto the coming of the Lord.*” James is referring to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. And this hope must be in every Christian as he faces the world’s many challenging situations.

As waiting for the precious fruit: In Palestine, there are two rainy seasons, on which the harvest essentially depends: the autumnal and the spring rains. In the Scriptures, they are termed the early and the latter rains (Deut 11:14; Job 29:23; Jer 5:24). The autumnal or early rains usually commence in the latter half of October or the beginning of November. The whole period from October to March constitutes one continued rainy season, without any regularly intervening time of prolonged fair weather. So the early and the latter rains are a long wait for the farmers from the first showers of autumn. The early rains revive the parched and thirsty earth, and prepare the seed until the latter showers of spring, which refresh and hasten the ripening crops for harvest. It is about five to six months of waiting, but the farmers patiently anticipate the harvest.

Dear readers, the soon return of Jesus is even surer than the harvest. But many doubt because it seems to take such a long time. Read 2 Peter 3:9. Be patient, for we have a sure hope in God.

**THOUGHT**: Do I have long patience?

**PRAYER**: Father, help me to endure life’s challenges patiently as I anticipate the return of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

---

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 21

JAMES 5:8

LUKE 21:27-28

“...then look up,  
and lift up your heads;  
for your redemption draweth nigh.”

---

### THE LORD’S COMING IS NEAR

Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ’s coming (*parousia*) is an important New Testament eschatological event. This coming refers to the Rapture just right before the beginning of the Great Tribulation. Read the prophecy by our Lord Himself in Matthew 24:36-42.

Be patient: The Apostle reminds his readers to be patient. This patience is out of the truth that He will come and deliver believers from this wicked and oppressive world. So it describes a patient waiting. This patience is the confidence of a saint in the words of his Saviour. He will not turn away to find another means of comfort and protection from his present hardships. He is willing to bear the pains and agonies patiently, for he knows there is deliverance in God’s perfect timing. *“Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry”* (Heb 10:35-37).

Be established: They must have their hearts set, which means they must remain immovable or fixed. To “*stablish*” (James 5:8) is to become stronger in being firm and unchanging in attitude or belief. The saints are stable and established in the everlasting love of God. The covenant of grace preserves them until the end in the hands of Christ, the Rock of ages.

Let us take heart and be of good cheer. Let us not be dismayed nor faint and sink under pressure. Be of good courage, lift your heads. The coming of the Lord is drawing near. Let the joy of the Lord, the hope of His salvation and the assurance of eternal life be your compelling reasons to be patient and be established. It is sooner than you think. It is not very far off. It is drawing nearer and nearer. Be ready. God is near, and soon we shall see Him, and we shall be with Him forever and ever!

**THOUGHT:** Do I look forward to seeing my Lord and Saviour?

**PRAYER:** Father, may Thy children live with the understanding that the return of Jesus before the Great Tribulation is very near.

---

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 22

JAMES 5:9

LEVITICUS 19:17-18

*“Thou shalt not avenge,  
nor bear any grudge against  
the children of thy people...”*

---

## GRUDGE NOT

To grudge or complain is to groan within oneself or to sigh. It describes a bitter, resentful spirit that manifests itself in one's relationships with others. James gives the command of prohibition not to engage with this. He then gives a simple but powerful motive for avoiding such bitter complaining: that they may not be condemned on Christ's return.

Lest ye be condemned: The Apostle has been describing the lives of the persecuted believers which are full of distress due to the oppression and exploitation of the wicked. He urges them to be mindful of how they treat one another. They are not to sin against one another, for God will judge. The word “*condemned*” (James 5:9) is a legal, technical term for pronouncing a sentence or judgment on the guilty. We understand that there is no more condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (Rom 8:1). However, if Christians wilfully sin against one another, they will receive chastisement from the Lord (1 Cor 11:32).

For the Judge is coming: James reminds his readers that the Judge is “*before the door*” (James 5:9), able to enter the door any time. It highlights His nearness, and His knowledge of the grudges that come from their mouths. The Judge who will punish the wicked and reward the good is at hand. The certainty and nearness of Christ's return as Judge should establish their hearts to obey God and do what is right. Jesus will return to judge the world, including the wicked. Believers must not be part of the condemned. Stay with God and look forward to His holy place in the Kingdom where sin molests the saints no more.

Fretfulness and discontent expressed by our murmurings, envy, groanings and grudgings against one another invite God's judgment upon us. Instead of receiving blessings, we will receive God's chastisements. When we are under a tormenting situation, let us go to our Lord in prayer to seek His help and comfort. Read what our Lord Jesus says in Luke 18:7-8. The question is: Do you pray? Or do you grudge?

**THOUGHT**: Am I grudging against a brother or sister-in-Christ?

**PRAYER**: Father, forgive my sins of grudging and resentment.

---

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 23

JAMES 5:10

MATTHEW 5:10-12

“..for great  
is your reward in heaven...”

---

### THE PROPHETS AS EXAMPLES

According to the Bible, the prophet is a speaker of, or for, God. His words are not from his own spirit, but come from a higher source. He proclaims the inspired utterances on behalf of God by forth-telling and foretelling. He warns the people of their waywardness and announces God's future dealings with His people. His words are the inspired utterances on behalf of God's authority, and thus his words are God's authoritative words.

Suffering affliction: James commands the believers to consider and ponder the life of the prophets in the past. They were faithful to their tasks in the midst of a rebellious and wicked people. James says we must learn from their patience. The prophets suffered many trials and afflictions, not just minor pains. Many were persecuted to the point of death. They were courageously sustained in their faith because they were mindful of the One who had appointed them and His promises to them. Thus, James concludes that believers too must learn to be patient in the Lord.

Suffering with patience: In pointing out the example of the patient prophets who suffered, James further encourages the believers to endure unjust sufferings. The Greek word for “suffering” is *kakopatheia*, a compound word from *kakos* (evil) and *pathos* (to suffer). They were suffering because of the evil deeds of those around them. The prophets were repaid with cruel and violent responses. Many of them “...were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth” (Heb 11:35-38).

The prophets were persecuted, but they continued, and their patience in their trials and afflictions is a model for us today.

**THOUGHT**: Do I have the patience to endure afflictions?

**PRAYER**: Father, may I learn patience from the prophets of old, trusting only in Thee, the Omnipotent God.

---

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24

JAMES 5:11

JOB 13:15-16

*“Though he slay me,  
yet will I trust in him...”*

---

### THE JOY OF ENDURING

In James 5:11, James specifically points to Job whose trials and afflictions were beyond what a man can overcome. He was a wealthy and pious landowner who lived in patriarchal times, in the land of Uz, on the borders of Idumea. His experience would be an excellent standard of measure, for he certainly went through extreme suffering.

The endurance of Job: James highlights the incredible story of Job’s perseverance so as to comfort the suffering believers. Job went through unimaginable and unexplainable sufferings which were the fierce attacks of Satan: the loss of his children, his wealth, his health, his reputation, and worst of all, his sense of God’s presence. Yet, read how Job responded in Job 1:21-22. His triumphant statement was: *“Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him”* (Job 13:15).

The goal of the Lord: The afflictions endured can be counted as joy only when the purpose of the Lord is understood. We know how He will deal with us if we know who He is. James reminds us of the nature of God. God is *“very pitiful.”* This Greek word, used only here in the New Testament, means *“many-boweled,”* reflecting the Hebrew idiom which speaks of the bowels or stomach as the seat of man’s emotions. To say that God is *“many-boweled”* affirms that He has an enormous capacity for compassion or is full of compassion. He is full of pity.

James mentions another attribute of God: *“tender mercy.”* This shows that God has the full capacity of mercy, and He shows this mercy in tender ways, not forced, but out of His generosity and lovingkindness.

Thus, when God allows His children to go through trials and tribulations, He is not being cruel. And He shows His compassion in fulfilling His covenant with them. God assures His children that we can rejoice in the midst of afflictions because the end is our good and God’s glory.

**THOUGHT:** Do I have joy in the Lord amid sufferings?

**PRAYER:** Father, help me see the goal of everything Thou doest for Thy children and let me rejoice in Thy compassions as Job did.

---

## NO CONDEMNATION

Once in the history of humanity, God lived with men. As we remember the birth of Jesus, let us also remember Romans 8:1-2: *"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."* The Son of God became the Son of man so that the sons of men may become the sons of God. He lived a perfect life, went to the cross to shed His precious blood, died, was buried, but He rose again from the dead. He ascended back to heaven and promised that He will return, and that could be today!

Swear not: To "swear" (James 5:12) is to affirm or confirm an oath to the person or object by which the oath is taken. James commands that believers must not swear lightly and inconsiderately. It is sinful when we do not consider the pledge seriously, thereby profaning the name of God. We must not imagine that there is no evil in openly mentioning the name of God irreverently and frivolously. Read what Jesus says in Matthew 5:33-37.

Doubt not: James commands that we are to be sure of, and to be final with, our words. We are not to doubt. We have the Bible as our supreme and final authority in faith and practice. How can we demonstrate to others the infallibility, inerrancy and authority of God's Word when we profane it and doubt it?

We thank the Lord for giving us our final standard of faith and practice: the inspired and preserved Word. We must not dare take oaths when we do not have the support from the Scriptures, thereby profaning God's name in vain. Let us be mindful of the commandment, *"Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain"* (Exod 20:7).

**THOUGHT:** Do I take the Lord's name in vain?

**PRAYER:** Father, keep me searching the Scriptures for the truth that I may not swear falsely or frivolously before Thee.

---

MONDAY, DECEMBER 26

JAMES 5:13

PSALM 116:2-5

“...therefore will I call upon him  
as long as I live.”

---

### IN SICKNESS AND IN HEALTH

The Apostle now turns to the fundamental part of man's life. The day-to-day experiences of man must all be for the glory of God. Sickness and health are part of man's daily existence. The sick must pray, and those who are well must praise! In all things, we must acknowledge God.

Let him pray: James' pastoral care is for the weary and suffering believers. They are those who are suffering hardships in life. The word “*afflicted*” (James 5:13) refers to those who are in trouble or afflictions. They are enduring hardships in life. The idea of enduring describes their persistence in doing what they should do despite suffering. They remain firm. As an antidote to their despair, James urges them to pray. As noted above, prayer is essential to enduring affliction. As the Psalmist cries, “*The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow. Then called I upon the name of the LORD; O LORD, I beseech thee, deliver my soul. Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful*” (Ps 116:3-5).

Let him sing: Those who are well and cheerful, let them sing praises to the Lord. To be merry, men must be encouraged. The Apostle sets them to sing psalms in opposition to profane and unbridled joy, where they glory in themselves and the world. Thus, they must express their joy led by the understanding that their prosperity is from God. Read what the psalmist says in Psalm 105:1-3.

Prayer and praise should be the constant posture of believers as they worship God. When afflicted, He alone is the source of healing. When merry, He alone is the strength and health. Therefore, there is no time for believers to neglect their constant communion with God. There is no single second that God has let you go out of His reign. Does He not deserve your unceasing pursuit? Dear reader, whether in sickness or in health, let us come before God in prayer and praise! We must give glory to Him in everything.

**THOUGHT:** Do I seek my Lord always?

**PRAYER:** Father, create in me that hunger and thirst to seek after Thee, and to behold Thee every moment of my life.

---



TUESDAY, DECEMBER 27

JAMES 5:14

ACTS 14:21-23

“...they had ordained them elders

in every church,

and had prayed with fasting...”

---

### IS SOMEONE SICK?

The Greek word for “elders” (James 5:14) is where we get the English word Presbyterian. The context tells us that this denotes the leaders who preside over Christian assemblies or churches. Read Acts 14:23 where Paul demonstrates the Presbyterian system of governance in the church when he starts the pattern of the plurality of elders in every church.

Let the elders come: When there is someone sick among God’s people, they must desire to seek the church’s assistance and prayers through the elders. The teaching elders are furnished with gifts to counsel in the Word and doctrine (1 Tim 5:17). It is the pastoral duty of the ones whom God has called to shepherd His flock.

Let the elders pray: Let the elders come and pray over the afflicted. It is the duty of elders, especially the pastor, to pray for the sick members. The elders must make intercession for those affected by calamities, setting the affected before God, and presenting the sick to God. It is also a means to stir up the greater affection and warmth among leaders and people.

Let the elders anoint: The elders will anoint the sick with oil. Anointing signifies the external physical application of oil or perfumed ointment (Mark 6:13) to a part of one’s body (Matt 6:17). The purpose of this anointing is not a sacred ritual, but a medicinal one. “Olive oil, which is abundant in the Middle East, is often used for such oiling to soothe the tired or weak body” (Khoo).

In Acts 20:34-36, Paul exhorted the Ephesian elders about the caring of God’s flock: “*Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive. And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all.*” May this be the heart of our elders to give themselves to attend to the needs of God’s children, especially the sick.

**THOUGHT:** Do I pray for the elders of my church?

**PRAYER:** Father, help my church elders to remember their duties.

---

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 28

JAMES 5:15

PSALM 103:1-5

*“Who forgiveth all thine iniquities;  
who healeth all thy diseases.”*

---

### THE PRAYER OF FAITH

The *“faith”* here in James 5:15 refers to the objective faith, the whole body of doctrine given in the Holy Scriptures. It is not the personal or subjective faith of an individual Christian. It does not refer to the Christian’s confidence in his prayer but rather the prayer made according to the principles laid out in the written Word of God.

Save the sick: The Greek word for *“sick”* literally means those weary in soul or discouraged. It implies being worn out or wasting away. In this context, prayer in the faith requires the pastoral care of the elders. They attend to the spiritual need of the *“sick.”* The intelligent prayer based on the understanding of the will of God, as stated in the Scriptures, will revive the weakened believer. The persecution, discrimination, exploitation, and even threats of execution are overwhelming. The believers need the usual and general prayers of the elders and the blessing of the faith that answer the complicated and challenging questions they have as they suffer. God’s Word encourages them and will bring them back to active worship and service. And *“the Lord shall raise him up”* (James 5:15). The word *“raise”* implies a sleeping person who is awakened; or figuratively it implies someone being moved to a state of watchfulness or readiness. The person is made aware and begins to think carefully or pay attention.

Forgive the sins: The prayer of faith deals with the struggles of the Christian faith. This prayer will not neglect the righteous commands of the apostles to be patient and not to grudge where many of the believers fall short. If the person commits sins, both omission and commission, he is undoubtedly brought to his knees to seek the repentance of his sins. Read 1 John 1:8-10.

So the prayer of faith will not just revive the wearied believer but will restore his joyful relationship with God, for his sins are cleansed. Read what David says in his penitential psalm, Psalm 51:5-8.

**THOUGHT:** Do I confess my sins when I pray?

**PRAYER:** Father, restore in me that joy of fellowship I once had with Thee.

---

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 29

JAMES 5:16

PSALM 145:18-21

*“The LORD is nigh unto all them  
that call upon him,  
to all that call upon him in truth.”*

---

### THE EFFECTUAL FERVENT PRAYER

The Greek word for “*effectual*” includes the possible focus upon the energy or force involved. It refers to the empowered prayer of the righteous man that has much spiritual or supernatural power. It is not the prayers (or the one who prays) that effected the powerful result, but it is God who answers our prayers. The word “*availeth*” describes the prayer and the praying man as the recipient of the powerful response of God Almighty.

Confess one to another: James commands mutual confession and mutual prayer. He associates the confession with the cleansing of the one who prays and who is prayed for. *“Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul. I cried unto him with my mouth, and he was extolled with my tongue. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me: But verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer. Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me”* (Ps 66:16-20). God can help us by hearing our brethren’s prayers only because they have confessed their sins.

Pray for one another: They are both stimulated to pray. The purpose of the mutual prayer that James calls for is that believers may be healed. *Laomai* (healed) does not necessarily refer to physical healing only. The word symbolises how God withheld His forgiveness of Israel’s sins (Matt 13:15). Paul also used it metaphorically to speak of spiritual restoration (Heb 12:12-13), while Peter used it to describe the healing from sin that Christ on the cross had purchased for believers (1 Pet 2:24). James uses it to refer to God’s forgiveness, making the repentant believer spiritually whole again.

Again, we can continue to reflect upon David’s penitential psalm when he repented of his sins. He was mindful of the restoration of the whole city of Zion that God had entrusted to him. Read Psalm 51:14-19.

**THOUGHT:** Do I confess my sins?

**PRAYER:** Father, let the Holy Spirit convict me of my sins and grant me the heart to confess them before Thee.

---

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 30

JAMES 5:17-18

1 KINGS 18:42-45

“...the heaven was  
black with clouds and wind,  
and there was a great rain...”

---

### WITH PASSIONS ALIKE

Elijah was a great prophet in the time of Ahab, king of Israel. Elijah is identified at his first appearance (1 Kings 17:1) as “*Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead.*” The object of his ministry was to recover the people to the God they had forsaken. This account will explain the miraculous displays accompanying his testimony, by which the people were left without excuse. James describes him as similar to ourselves. He has a similar experience, has the same feelings and experiences similar fears.

Prayed earnestly: James proves the general proposition he had laid down, that the fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much, by a particular instance, that of Elijah. He was as if the one who carried the keys of heaven at his girdle. Elijah’s prayer could shut and open the heavens. The phrase “*prayed earnestly*” literally means he prays a prayer. It is telling because many of us appear to be praying but are not. As some preachers say, our prayers do not go beyond the ceiling of the church building.

Prayed efficaciously: James told the people that when Elijah prays, heaven gives rain, and the earth produces fruit. He who prays must be a righteous man, not honest in an absolute sense, but moral in a Gospel sense, not loving nor approving of any iniquity. The Lord will not hear my prayer if I regard iniquity in my heart (Ps 66:18). Further, the prayer itself must be a fervent, in-wrought prayer.

However, James shows that Elijah was the same as we are despite this answered prayer. Read 1 Kings 19:1-2, 4.

The prophet who victoriously wrought against the hundreds of prophets of Baal and Jezebel retreated with fear. This illustration shows that the power of efficacious prayer is not in man but in God, who ordains all things according to His decrees. Let us keep on trusting the Jehovah God, the same God in the person of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

**THOUGHT:** Do I see myself as a clean vessel for God’s use?

**PRAYER:** Father, strengthen Thy people to do Thy works.

---

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 31

JAMES 5:19-20

DANIEL 12:2-4

“...they that turn many to righteousness,  
as the stars for ever and ever.”

---

### SAVE A SOUL FROM DEATH

In James 5:20, those with “*error*” refers to those who have been led astray, caused to wander or, figuratively, those who are misled, or caused to be mistaken.

Convert him: The persecuted believers must be kept from embracing error or falling into sinful practices. The phrase “*err from the truth*” (James 5:19) shows that they are contrary to what the Bible teaches and require correction. The apostle knows such a case may occur. James’ conclusion of the epistle is meant to call their attention to the importance of endeavouring to save an erring brother if such an instance should happen. The appeal addresses any church or any congregation. If one converts him, this does not mean to convert him from being a sinner but to turn him from the error of his way. That means bringing him back from his wanderings or re-establishing him in the truth and the practice of virtue and religion. So far as the word used here is concerned, he who had erred from the truth and who was to be converted may have been a faithful Christian before. The word means to turn, from his way of error.

Hide his sins: Nothing is better or more desirable than to deliver a soul from eternal death, and this is what he does who restores an erring brother to the right way: therefore, a work so excellent ought by no means to be neglected. When we consider giving food to the hungry and drink to the thirsty, we see how much Christ values such acts, but the soul’s salvation is esteemed by Him to be much more precious than the life of the body. Therefore, we must take heed lest souls perish through our sloth. Not that we can bestow salvation on them, but that God by our ministry delivers and saves those who seem otherwise to be near destruction.

Dear reader, have you considered looking around you to see who may need your help? Let us be mindful that we are saved not to enjoy the filthiness of this world, but to keep others away from this filthiness. May the Lord grant us a blessed time of recovering the truth to become as the salt and light of this world. Press on!

**THOUGHT**: Am I a worthy vessel to transport God’s blessing to others?

**PRAYER**: Father, grant me the boldness to share Thy Word with others until the coming of Thy Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

---

## *Notes*

To: *The RPG Ministry*

Calvary Pandan B-P Church

201 Pandan Gardens, Singapore 609 337

Tel: (65)-6560 1111 Fax: (65)-6561 1861 Email: rpg@calvarypandan.sg

Read Pray Grow (RPG) is a Daily Devotional Guide published and distributed quarterly free-of-charge by The RPG Ministry. If you have been blessed by this Devotional Guide, you may wish to request it for yourself or for your loved ones and friends by filling in the form below.

1. Please send me: (*Maximum 2 years*)

\_\_\_\_ years of \_\_\_\_ copies per issue of RPG

\_\_\_\_ years of \_\_\_\_ copies per issue of Teenz RPG

\_\_\_\_ years of \_\_\_\_ copies per issue of Junior RPG

\_\_\_\_ years of \_\_\_\_ copies per issue of Chinese RPG

Starting from month: JAN / APR / JUL / OCT \_\_\_\_\_ (year)

2. Name: (Dr/Rev/Mr/Mrs/Miss/Mdm/Ms) \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Country: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel no.: \_\_\_\_\_ (H/O) \_\_\_\_\_ (Mobile)

Email (*Important for receipt & renewal*):

\_\_\_\_\_

*Postage & handling cost for 4 issues per year*

<i>No. of copies per issue</i>	<i>Singapore</i>	<i>Malaysia/Brunei</i>	<i>Asia</i>	<i>Other Countries</i>	
	<i>Local Mail</i>	<i>Airmail</i>	<i>Airmail</i>	<i>Surface Mail</i>	<i>Airmail</i>
<i>1 copy</i>	<i>S\$6.00</i>	<i>S\$8.00</i>	<i>S\$15.00</i>	<i>S\$8.00</i>	<i>S\$20.00</i>
<i>2 copies</i>	<i>S\$7.00</i>	<i>S\$12.00</i>	<i>S\$23.00</i>	<i>S\$12.00</i>	<i>S\$31.00</i>
<i>5 copies</i>	<i>S\$10.00</i>	<i>S\$23.00</i>	<i>S\$50.00</i>	<i>S\$24.00</i>	<i>S\$67.00</i>

*Love Gift: The RPG Ministry welcomes love gifts from readers to help meet the cost of publishing and distribution. Hence, your generous support is much needed and greatly appreciated. "Freely ye have received, freely give." (Matthew 10:8)*

Enclosed is my love gift of

Please make all love gifts payable to: **CALVARY PANDAN B-P CHURCH**

*International donors please send love gifts by Bank Draft in Singapore Dollars.  
Please do not send cash by post.*

I give clear and unambiguous consent for Tabernacle Books to receive, store and use my personal information given above. (In compliance with Personal Data Protection Act 2012, Singapore)

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Name / Signature*



To: *The RPG Ministry*  
 Calvary Pandan B-P Church  
 201 Pandan Gardens, Singapore 609 337  
 电话: (65)-6560 1111 传真: (65)-6561 1861 电邮: rpg@calvarypandan.sg

《读经、祷告、长进》(读祷长)乃读祷长事工定期出版并免费赠阅的每日灵修辅助本。你若因这灵修辅助读本蒙福,且愿意为自己或朋友订阅此刊物,请填妥以下表格:

1. 请寄: (最多两年数量)

\_\_\_\_\_ 份 \_\_\_\_\_ 年数量之英文版读祷长  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 份 \_\_\_\_\_ 年数量之英文少年版读祷长  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 份 \_\_\_\_\_ 年数量之英文小学生版读祷长  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 份 \_\_\_\_\_ 年数量之中文版读祷长

从 \_\_\_\_\_ 年 一月/四月/七月/十月 起分发

2. 姓名: (Dr/Rev/Mr/Mrs/Miss/Mdm/Ms) \_\_\_\_\_  
 地址: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 国家: \_\_\_\_\_ 邮区: \_\_\_\_\_  
 电话: \_\_\_\_\_ (H/O) \_\_\_\_\_ (手提电话)  
 电邮(为发收据与更新使用): \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

一年四期的邮费及运送费					
每期数量	新加坡	马来西亚/文莱	亚洲	其他国家	
	本地邮费	空运	空运	平邮	空运
1 copy	S\$6.00	S\$8.00	S\$15.00	S\$8.00	S\$20.00
2 copies	S\$7.00	S\$12.00	S\$23.00	S\$12.00	S\$31.00
5 copies	S\$10.00	S\$23.00	S\$50.00	S\$24.00	S\$67.00

爱心奉献: 读祷长事工欢迎读者的爱心奉献以资助印刷与运输费。因此,我们需要您的慷慨奉献与帮助。谨此献上感谢。“你们白白地得来,也要白白地舍去。”(马太福音10:8)

谨此附上爱心奉献

支票请注明收款人: CALVARY PANDAN B-P CHURCH

海外捐款者, 请使用(以新币兑现之)银行汇票。请勿汇现金。

我谨明确允准帐幕书局收收据集, 储存并使用我所提供的上述个人资料。(遵照新加坡个人资料保护法令 2012的要求)

姓名 / 签名

