

BEARING FRUIT THROUGH SUBMISSION IN CHRIST (JAMES 1-5)

We've gone over some of the book of James in the last few years but haven't touched it at all yet this year. So, to make up for it, we'll attempt to, Lord willing, go through all 5 chapters of James, as James certainly intended it to be read that way. James was not only the half-brother of Jesus, he also became the leader of the church in Jerusalem, as one can read about in the book of Acts. While it is mostly considered or referred to as a book of wisdom, similar to the book of Proverbs, it is different from Proverbs in that it gives us the wisdom of God that is through our Lord and Savior Christ Jesus even though Christ Jesus is only mentioned twice, in James' opening address and then the beginning of chapter 2.

What we can be looking for, as we read the book of James, is in how we, as children of God, by believing on Christ Jesus and then receiving Him into our hearts (**John 1:12-13**), by being "born-again" (**John 3:3**), we are continually submitting our will and ways to the will and ways of God, and that what will help us to not only overcome, to be victorious in Christ (nikon/nike), and also to bear fruit for the kingdom of God and for God's glory, it all works in us through Christ Jesus, the Son of the Living God, as we grow in the knowledge of God, putting our trust in Him, and then honoring Him with all that we say and do! To sum it up, the Apostle Paul put it this way, "do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." (**1 Cor. 6:19-20**) Jesus gives us an analogy that speaks to that, as is recorded in **John 15**, "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; **for without Me you can do nothing.**" (**John 15:4-5**) We are then, bearing fruit for the kingdom and glory of God through our humble submission to Him through the redemption we have in Christ and then through the working of the Holy Spirit in us "to will and to do for His good pleasure." (**Phil. 2:13**)

While the world and in its wisdom says that if one is weak and suffering, they are good for nothing. Nature itself reveals that the strong survives, the weak becomes food for the strong or that the weak are just consuming valuable resources and are just a drain on society. Yet the Apostle Paul, in praying to God, to remove the "thorn from his flesh", so to speak, the weakness that seemingly hindered him, slowed him down, and had him suffer, Paul says this, "And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." (**2 Corinthians 12:9**) King David was not ashamed to say, in **Psalms 18**,

"I will love You, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised; So shall I be saved from my enemies." (**Psalms 18:1-3**)

Hebrews 11 speaks of the many who lived by faith in God, as is recorded for us in the Old Testament. The end of that chapter it says this, "who through faith subdued kingdoms, **worked righteousness**, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, **out of weakness were made strong**, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, 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 mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, **that they should not be made perfect apart from us.**" (**Hebrews 11:33-40**) What does that mean? "Dear friends, now WE are children of God, and what WE will be has not yet been made known. But WE know that when Christ appears, WE shall be like him, for WE shall see him as he is." (**1 John 3:2**) What the book of James reveals to us, as **Hebrews 11** does also, and really all of God's Word, we are not just looking to God for that one-time experience of "being saved", and we are not just looking to God for us to be thoroughly equipped in wisdom to where we then go out on our own and conquer the world. It is though, moment by moment, day by day, week after week, year after year, or as it was put in **Isaiah 28**, "precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little", getting to know trust, and honor God. It is God who is building His eternal kingdom, we are just being blessed to be a small part of that. "Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain." (**Psalms 127:1**)

The Apostle Paul tells us, in **1 Corinthians 1:30**, of 4 most important things that we receive by God through Christ Jesus, Wisdom from God, Righteousness from God, Sanctification from God, and Redemption from God through Christ Jesus! Likewise, it is in Christ Jesus that we bear the fruit of the Spirit, "love, joy, peace, patience (longsuffering), kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law." (**Galatians 5:22-23**) And all of that which we receive through Christ Jesus demands our constant, humble submission to God. God isn't equipping us and then just sending us out on our own to win the world to Christ. Right? Jesus,

in giving the disciples the Great Commission, of which we are now entrusted with, said, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20)

JAMES 1: James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad [diaspora]: Greetings. [While this was addressed to the 12 tribes of Israel, we can be reminded, "if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Galatians 3:29)

Profiting from Trials

My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials [peirasmos-temptation, trial, testing], knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience [hypomonē (from hypó, "under" and ménō, "remain")] But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, **lacking nothing**. ["I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through Him who gives me strength."-**Philippians 4:12-13**] If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation ["as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the Lord."-**1 Corinthians 1:31**] but the rich in his humiliation, because as a flower of the field he will pass away. For no sooner has the sun risen with a burning heat than it withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beautiful appearance perishes. So the rich man also will fade away in his pursuits. [speaking of those not in Christ]

Loving God Under Trials

Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been **approved** [dokimos: "In ancient Greek culture, "dokimos" was often used in the context of metallurgy, where metals were tested for purity and quality¹], he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised **to those who love Him**. Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. [There is the dichotomy of sin leading to death, vs. righteousness leading to life, loving God vs. loving the world] Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every

1 <https://biblehub.com/greek/1384.htm>

perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures. So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; **for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.** ["If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him."-1 John 2:29]

Doers—Not Hearers Only

Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with **meekness** the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into **the perfect law of liberty** and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, **this one will be blessed in what he does.** If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless. Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to **keep oneself unspotted from the world.**

JAMES 2: Beware of Personal Favoritism

My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality. For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, "You sit here in a good place," and say to the poor man, "You stand there," or, "Sit here at my footstool," have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? But you have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts? Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you are called? If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you do well; but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors. [that of course requires the wisdom that comes from God through Christ] For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. For He who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. So speak and so do as those who will be judged by **the law of liberty** [as one who is in Christ Jesus]. **For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy.** Mercy triumphs over judgment. [Sounds to me like James was listening to Jesus' "Sermon on the Mount". "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who

mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. [Greek, "praus", same root for gentleness in the fruit of the Spirit. "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:3-10)

Later Jesus says, "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you." (Matthew 7:1-2)]

Faith Without Works Is Dead

What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God. You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

James 3

The Untamable Tongue

My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment. For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body. Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body. Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires. Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell. For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth

proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so. Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening? Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh. [be quick to listen and s--l--o--w to speak]

Heavenly Versus Demonic Wisdom

Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the **meekness of wisdom**. But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. ["**blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God**"]

James 4

Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures. Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? [enmity=echthra: hostility, hatred] **Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.** Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"? But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, but gives **grace to the humble**." Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. **Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.** Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. **Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.** Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another? Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit"; whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that." But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. Therefore, **to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.**

James 5

Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you! Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver are corroded, and their corrosion will be a witness against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have heaped up treasure in the last days. Indeed the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. [That goes from the other perspective, where God sees all of how others manipulate, steal, and take advantage of His people] You have lived on the earth in pleasure and luxury; you have fattened your hearts as in a day of slaughter. You have condemned, you have murdered the just; he does not resist you. **Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord.** See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. **You also be patient.** Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door! My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and **patience**. Indeed we count them blessed who endure [remain under]. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord—that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful. But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. But let your “Yes” be “Yes,” and your “No,” “No,” lest you fall into judgment.

Meeting Specific Needs

Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms. Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. [raise=egeiro: same word used saying “He is risen”—Matthew 28:6] And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.

Bring Back the Erring One

Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.

We have the calling upon us to share and show the love and the gospel of Christ Jesus, bearing fruit for the kingdom and glory of God, as we humbly submit to God according to His will and His ways.