

A True Disciple and the Word

Ask yourself this: What does God have for me today and how will I respond to it?

A Disciple Does as Directed

1. He Will Soak Up the Word with Purity of Heart:

21 - “wherefore” – pointing us to the previous verses.

“**lay apart**”= lit. having put aside; it is a condition for receiving the “**engrafted word**” – the word which has been implanted.

Before God’s Word can produce His righteousness in us, we must renounce “**lay apart**” [put away (put aside)] the sin in our lives that stands between us and that righteousness.

Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:8-10; Hebrews 12:1; 1 Peter 2:1-2

“**filthiness**”= any sort of moral defilement or impurity;

“**superfluity of naughtiness**”= overflow of wickedness.

2. A True Disciple Will Soak Up the Word With Humility:

“**receive with meekness the word**”= gentleness; humility.

“**meek**” is the same word that is used in the Beatitudes – “**blessed are the meek.**” “*humility.*”

We are not only putting **sin** aside, but we are also to put **self** aside.

“**engrafted word**”= ‘to plant in’= implanted word.

3. A True Disciple Will Soak Up the Word Submissively:

22 – “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only”

“Well **done**, [be a doer] **my good and faithful servant!**”

1 John 2:3-4; 1 John 3:10

The professing Christian who hears the Word without obeying it, has made a serious spiritual miscalculation, which causes them to delude themselves. Self-deceived.

One Scottish expression goes like this: “**they are sermon tasters who never tasted the grace of God.**” Matthew 7:21-22; Joshua 1:8

4. A True Disciple Will See Himself in the Word:

23-24 James uses a simply fantastic analogy, or illustration to teach us a lesson in obedience to the Word of God.

We are to see and to respond to what God shows us.

A Disciple Does as Directed

We could have a forgetful response: **v. 24**

5. A True Disciple Will Consistently Allow It to Work on Them:

The disciple is one who sees himself in the Word of God and obeys the Spirit’s guidance.

James 2:1-13. Your Testimony Shows Others What God is Like

1 Peter 2:11-12

Colossians 4:6

How do you “**show forth His praises**”?

When people look at our lives, and they see things that reflect the Lord, He is glorified.

What does God look like, according to your life?

Getting others to See God’s Goodness in You Gives God Glory

Your testimony shows others what God is like

I. Have a Love for Other People

1 – “**brethren**”= born again believers

“**the Lord of glory**”= His excellencies; His attributes;

8 – “**the royal law**”= [king] it is the 2nd great commandment

If we obey this command, “**ye do well**”

We are all created in the image of God **Genesis 1:27**

1 - “**with respect of persons**”= personal favouritism

Unfair, unkind, ungodly way – giving a certain group of people preferential treatment over another group of people.

9 – “**ye commit sin**”= the idea of missing the mark (of glorifying God)

“**and are convinced** [convicted] **of the law as transgressors** [stepping over a boundary]”

II. Never Show Partiality

OT - **Deuteronomy 10:17-18** **NT** - **Romans 2:11**; Eph. 6:9

Sinful example (try to avoid) 1-4

Godly Example (try to emulate) 5-7

We do it with **income**, **race**, **age**.

III. Follow God’s Warnings (10-13)

Pray that your testimony will be outstanding for God’s glory.

James 2:14-20 True Faith vs Professions

What you do displays who you are.

This is what real Christianity looks like 1:26-2:26

We are then led to ask the question, “*Is my faith real? Is my faith alive?*”

The message here in this part of James’ letter is not “how to become a Christian.”

What James is arguing for, is *if you have authentic saving faith, it will show itself in good deeds.*

What James is going to do in this next section is give us **3 indicators of dead faith.**

I. A profession of faith without works (14)

Romans 10:9; Matthew 7:21-23

It’s not the doing that saves, but saved ones do.

II. Professing Love, but not putting it into action (15-17)

Galatians 6:10

III. A profession of good doctrine, but failure in application (18-20)

Applications:

- Wayward children.

The prayer, “*God, please save my child*” is certainly an okay prayer.

“Faith without works is dead.”

Pray for souls.

If you can’t tell that they are a Christian by watching them, then it is safe to pray for God to save them.

- Search yourself: have you been pretending and professing but without real fruit

Some reject the teaching of James and quote **Eph. 2:8-9**, but don’t forget v. 10!

2(21-26) Living Faith

Read Rom. 5:1 – justified by FAITH

We are not naturally at peace with God. We are naturally the enemies of God, when we are without Christ.

We can have peace with God through His Son Jesus Christ.

We can only have this peace when we are “justified”

How do we get justified? See v 1 – “by faith”

You don’t get justified by doing good deeds.

Rom. 4:2-5 - we are not saved by works!

To understand James’ use of the word “justified,” we must consider **the Context**: The whole context is that if you are a Christian, your Christianity will lead to good works.

If not, you are not a genuine Christian.

Works are the evidence of genuine Christianity.

“Justified” used 3 times at the end of ch. 2 does not mean “declared not guilty.”

He uses this word in the sense of demonstrating to others that a person is a righteous person.

It is a term that can be translated, “to vindicate” (which means to be cleared of blame or suspicion); to be proven righteous.

Are there other Biblical examples of this word “justified” being used in the sense of vindication [a **demonstration of a person’s righteousness**] instead of being declared “not guilty.”

There are 3 key passages

Luke 7:28-29; Rom. 3:3-4; 1 Tim. 3:16

These teach there is another meaning to the word “justified”.

God was in no need of justification – being acquitted of his crime.

But the 2nd meaning of justification applies here – He **displayed his righteousness**.

Now we will see how James uses 2 illustrations, Abraham, and Rahab, to emphasise that true faith will always be accompanied by works.

Illustration #1 - Abraham (21-23)

Genesis 22; Heb. 11:17-19

Illustration #2 - Rahab

There is no such thing as a believer who doesn’t change. There is no such thing as a Christian who has no good works. He or she might have faith, but it is not a living faith. What kind of faith does James call it? Dead faith! Saving faith is always demonstrated by works.

Sermon Notes: James 3:1-12

Taming the Tiny Talking Tool – Your Tongue

I. Controlling your tongue is a key indicator of spiritual growth (1)

Increased influence always brings increased responsibility.

“For in many things we offend all” = we all stumble in many ways.

Stumble is a metaphor for sin.

We all sin in so many ways. **Rom. 3:23**

Q: Do our statements glorify God?

II. It is incredibly damaging to fail to control your tongue (3-6)

3 illustrations that basically have the same point

Each of them explain how something small can do big things.

Illustration #1 (3): Bit for the horse

Illustration #2 (4) Rudder

Illustration #3 (5-6) Fire

III. You are unable to control your tongue in your own strength (7-8)

Isaiah 53:7, 9; 1 Peter 2:22-23

IV. A new heart is needed to control the tongue (9-12)

Matthew 15:18 But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man.

3(13-18) Earthly Wisdom and Wisdom from Above

How would you know if a man is supposed to be in a place of leadership in the church?

James asks this rhetorical question in the **13th verse... read**

“wise”= a teacher or scribe – a person in the position of Rabbi.

“who among you is wise”= biblically wise – the **“fear of the Lord”** being the beginning of wisdom.

Who among you is **“endued with knowledge”**= understanding; being a professional – an expert.

One who lives it out in his life (13)

True wisdom is shown in his behaviour

“let him shew out of a good conversation his works”

“conversation”= behaviour; speech; entire lifestyle

True wisdom will always lead to a good life example the same way that true salvation will always lead to good works.

“his works with meekness of wisdom”= gentleness of wisdom; meekness; humility; gentleness in their consideration of other people.

James contrasts 2 types of wisdom:

Earthly wisdom (14-16)

James teaches us some things about earthly wisdom:

Earthly wisdom’s character

15 – it’s not heavenly, from above, it is **“earthly, sensual, devilish”**

“earthly”= earth bound; wisdom that is only concerned for the things of this world;

2 Corinthians 5:1; Philippians 3:19

“sensual”= **“natural”**; ESV – **“unspiritual”**; natural in it’s appetites and desires of the flesh

Same word as Paul uses when he says...**1 Corinthians 2:14**

Wisdom from below is **“devilish”**= demonic – from Satan

Motivation for Worldly Wisdom

James is saying that this earthly wisdom is taught by people who are motivated by these 2 things: envy [jealousy;] and strife [selfish ambition].

This word **“envy”** is *lit. the word “zeal”*

Misguided zeal can result in a kind of contention, or as v. 16 puts it, **“confusion and every evil work.”**

It is described as **“bitter”** envying – it is bitter, harsh was what motivated these people.

Wisdom from Above (17-18)

7 Pearls of great wisdom (from above)

1. First pure
2. Peaceable
3. Gentle
4. Easy to be entreated
5. Full of mercy and good fruits
6. Without partiality
7. Without hypocrisy

James 4:11-12 Exercise Humility (part 1)

For memorisation: 4:6-10

How do we know if we are heading the right direction when it comes to this humility?

James gives two ways for us to know if we are making progress:

- Show we are humble by not speaking against other Christians (11-12)
- Show we are humble by not presuming upon the future (13-17)

I. Stop Speaking Against Other Christians

The problem is that we often speak against others by saying things that are true, but unnecessary.

Just we notice some weakness in someone does not mean that we have to share that.

Humility = to have a low opinion of oneself

To begin to think, “I know how to do this better than he/she is doing it” is to have a high opinion of yourself.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

The word “judge” can be used in a positive way – to make an evaluation

In our passage the word “judge” is used in the following sense:

Criticise, Condemn, Find fault with

Why are we to stop speaking evil about another? The reason is because...

II. Speaking Against Other Christians is Arrogant

1. we speak against God’s law and judge God’s law.

Matthew 18:15

2. To Arrogantly Challenge God’s Authority

Are we making progress in allowing God to humble us.

Here is one practical way to gauge how we are doing in the humility category.

Since God has been working on you this past week in the area of humility, is it true that you have spoken less against your fellow believer?

If the opposite is true, then we need to recognise that we have been **dishonour the authority of our God and challenge it.**

By God’s grace, may it be true that each of us would humble ourselves before our Almighty God, and recognize our need for His daily grace.

4(11-12) Exercise Humility (part 1)

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James 4:13-17 Exercise Humility – Part 2

We need God's grace – humble people get God's grace.

What is **humility** = having a low opinion about yourself and what you think.

How will you know if you are progressing with humility?

11-12 “speak not evil of your brothers”

13-17 Not Boasting About the Future

It is the 2nd point that is the focus of our message today

NOT BOASTING ABOUT THE FUTURE

1. I won't arrogantly plan the future (13, 16)

Proverbs 13:22; 1 John 2:16

Dictionary definition: To **boast** means to make more of ones-self than reality justifies; ascribing to ones-self more or better things than he has or what he doesn't possess at all.

2. I must recognise my human weakness (14)

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18; Proverbs 27:1; Luke 12:16-20; Job 7:7; Psalms 39:5; Psalms 49:11

3. I will submit to God's Sovereignty (15, 17)

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James 4:1-6 The Source of Conflict

I. Conflict with others has its roots in IDOLATRY

“I want what I want, and I want it now!”

When people stand in our way, that is a problem.

The sermon on the mount – **Matt. 6:19-21**, with focus on 21

- 1. Every person treasures something:**
- 2. The thing we treasure controls the heart**
- 3. The heart determines the behaviour.**

II. Idolatry is spiritual adultery (4)

III. Spiritual adultery is a rejection of God (5-6)

We reject God by **rejecting His word (5a)**

We reject God by **rejecting His desire (5b)**

We reject God by **rejecting His Grace (6)**

4(6-10) How to Help Your Idolatrous Heart

Christians sometimes have things that they love more than Christ. What is the cure for idolatry? In one word, GRACE.

There is only one kind of person who gets grace from God.

James tells us who this person is... “**the humble**”

To get this humility we must follow God’s guidance from our text:

1. We must humbly submit to God

2. We must humbly refuse to listen to the devil

3. We must humbly draw near to God

“**Draw nigh** [near] **to God, and He will draw near to you.**”

4. We must humbly repent of our sins (8b-10)

Psalms 24:3-4 Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? ... **4** He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart;

2 Corinthians 7:1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

James 5:12 Integrity

“But above all things”= there is an emphasis

We know not to believe everything that we hear.

And sometimes churches have people who struggle with telling the truth.

Illus: Ananias and Saphira

Throughout history, and even in Jewish life, people have emphasised the taking of oaths, for the sake of truthfulness.

“swear not” - James is not talking about swearing, as in cussing. He is talking about taking an oath.

Matt. 14:3-11

Oaths have been common throughout history.

A person is saying this: *“What I am saying is true. And I invite God to punish me if I fail to keep my word.”*

Illus: Rahab

Hebrews 6:13-18

Matt. 26:57-64

1. You should never lie

Leviticus 19:12; Numbers 30:2

The Jews **reinterpreted** some of the words of Moses.

“swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath”

James is saying, **“Stop intentionally lying to people.”**

Jesus condemned the Pharisees of the same thing:

Matt. 23:16-22

2. You Should Keep Your Word

“but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay;”

It means that we should always keep our word.

People who lie are people who feel burdened to take oaths.

Matt. 5:33-37

We make vows for major things.

We make vows over smaller things.

3. Verbal Integrity is Evidence of Real Faith

“lest ye fall into condemnation”= “so that you will not fall into judgement”

Psalms 58:3; Revelation 21:8

Psalms 31:5 ... the God of truth; Titus 1:2; Proverbs 6:16-19

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James 5:13-18 Prayer – Part 1

The Bible has been called, “our daily bread”- something we should feed upon each day. In conjunction with that, **prayer** should be our **breath**!

13 – When you are down, keep praying

Our Bibles have the words “**Let him pray**” – as if there is an allowance for him to do so. But it is actually in the imperative – “*he must pray*”

“**afflicted**”= suffering in some translations

The literal meaning = “*to suffer a misfortune*”

Afflicted – pray! He must pray, continually pray

Challenge - 10 minutes a day for the next week on the apparent “affliction” you have.

13 - When you are up, keep praising

It’s not a suggestion for you, it is a command: “*sing praises,*” is literally what it means. Most people would say, don’t limit your praise to just songs. Any type of praise to God. Prayer and praise throughout your days

14-15 - When you need help, reach out.

Praying is like breathing.

14 - “Is any among you sick?”

20 times in the NT this Greek word is translated “sick.” But when this word occurs in a letter or epistle, it is almost always translated, “weak” instead of sick.

15 – “and the prayer of faith shall save the sick” (different word used only 1 other time in NT)

Heb. 12:1-3 – here it is translated “*wearied and faint*”

He’s saying, “*Look to Jesus who endured the cross ... so that when you are living for Him you will not get spiritually discouraged*”, depressed, checking out spiritually, weary.

It is my best understanding that this passage is not teaching physical healing at all.

- This is not the purpose of the letter.
- It is not the context
- It is not theologically correct
- And it doesn’t fit with how this word is translated elsewhere

Sick sheep don’t need therapists, they need shepherds.

“**anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord?**” It’s the word that simply means “rub”

Luke 7:36-50, Jesus went to the home of a man named Simon, a Pharisee

God wants NONE OF US TO BE SPIRITUALLY DISCOURAGED!

He wants us to realise that “**the joy of the Lord is our strength.**”

So we know that this is a prayer He will answer every time.

When you are spiritually low, please reach out!

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James 5:13-18 Prayer – Part 2

v. 13-18 notice that the word “pray, prayer, or prayed” is in each verse at least once.

Sermon Summary: Pray for One Another (16a) Because Prayer Works (16b) as Seen in the Example of Elijah (17-18)

I. Pray for One Another (16a)

We can have a mutual ministry for one another.

We must pray “**for one another**”= a mutual thing.

The church is a body! We all need each other to function properly.

“**Confess your faults one to another**” = imperative command.

“**Confess**”= *to say the same thing; to acknowledge*

In this context, when I confess my sin to you, I am not asking for forgiveness from you. I am acknowledging my sin – to confess means to acknowledge

Illus: Samuel and John Wesley

II. Prayer works (16b)

It’s a very powerful statement: “**the** [effective] **effectual and fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth** [can accomplish] **much**”!

The “**prayer of a righteous man.**” = one who has been declared righteous.

III. The Example of Elijah (17-18)

We should be encouraged by the example of Elijah.

17 – “**Elijah was a man**”= he was just like you!

“**subject to like passions**”= lit. of like feelings or affection; he shared the same emotion and passion and impulses. He had a fallen sinful nature just like you and me.

1 Kings 19:9b-10; 13b-14

The Bible says that he prayed. **17-18**

“**he prayed earnestly**”= lit. *he prayed with praying*. He prayed earnestly and fervently, and God answered his prayer.

James is saying that Elijah could pray with power and so could you!

Luke 18:1-8

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James 5:1-6 The Giant of Envy

It's easy for a person, even a Christian, to become discontent with what we have and want what the rich person has. We might not be envious, but we still struggle with the idea that it just isn't fair.

I. We Must Not Envy the Rich in their Wickedness (1-3)

We see 3 reasons why we must never envy the prosperity of the wicked.

1. God says they have misery to look forward to (1)

Luke 6:24 But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation.[comfort]

Luke 16:19-26

2. Their wealth won't last (2, 3a)

Food, clothing, things.

1 Peter 1:3-5, v. 6 – “for a season”

3. Their judgement is certain (3b)

Hebrews 9:27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

Matthew 6:19-20

II. God is Just and Helps the Mistreated (4-6)

Leviticus 19:13 Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob *him*: the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning.

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1 Peter 1:3-5, v. 6 – “for a season”

3. Their judgement is certain (3b)

Hebrews 9:27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

Matthew 6:19-20

II. God is Just and Helps the Mistreated (4-6)

Leviticus 19:13 Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob *him*: the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning.

James 5:7-11 Patience

We will suffer in this life, God says, **2 Timothy 3:12** Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

What will help us most in facing this opposition? I would suggest that understanding the character of God and His promises will be the best help.

1. Jesus Will Return (7-8)

“Be patient”= to have a very long fuse.

Why? There are 2 reasons given for us, and they have to do with the fact that Jesus will return:

a. (v 7) **“be patient therefore brethren, unto the coming of the Lord”**

b. (v 8) **“Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh”**

1 **John 3:2** ...when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

2. Jesus will judge (9)

The words **“grudge not”** means, *“do not complain.”* It is literally the word for *“sighing”* or *“groaning”*

It is not wrong to groan or sigh if it is for a good reason – **2 Cor. 5:1-2**

3. Jesus is faithful (10-11)

The text gives an example of suffering evil – **the prophets**

Endurance is the word I have been using to describe the word patience.

V. 11 says, **“count them happy which endure”**= this is not the same word as patience (a long fuse); instead, it is the word for **remaining under circumstances.**

What do we learn about God from studying these people?

- He has a Purpose - Just knowing that God has a purpose helps us through.
- God is Compassionate= a wonderful word that means that **you feel something so hard that it hits you in the gut.**

He doesn't take us out of the trial before His perfecting work is done.

But He aids us all the way through it.

A proper view of God is a help to us.

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