

James 1

1:1 James calls himself a bondsman. He was bought with the blood of Jesus and so like any slave bought from the slave market: He has no law but his master's word, no rights, no personal goals... he is provided for so that he may obey his master's wishes. What a place to come to in Christ. It was also said of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, the prophets, Paul and Jude. Slavery to the King of kings made them great.

To the twelve tribes... There were more Jews outside of Palestine than inside. There were spread throughout the civilized world. Alexandria was said to have had a population of over 1 million Jews. It is more likely that this is either to the Jewish Christians who are not scattered nearly as far, or to the Israel of God. Paul makes a very clear argument that if you are a Christian you are the new Israel. Galatians 3:29

2-4 To test - as in a bird testing its wings. It could be translated exercise. It is difficult with a purpose and that purpose is to purify. Indeed, 'the testing' is the same word for purifying a metal for coinage. Perseverance (hupomone) is more than to get through or bear up but to completely conquer so that there is strength for a greater battle. mature -teleios Developed to the point of being able to do what you are designed to do. complete - Unmarred, whole in every way, like the sacrificial lambs. lacking in nothing - able to meet all goals - used in the defeat of an army These three terms are more similar than different. He is saying we need the trials that produce perseverance as this is the road to maturity – Christ likeness.

5-8 The question follows, how can I have the wisdom to turn trials into the consistency that makes me mature? Ask God for it. To the Jew, wisdom was not knowledge, Ropes defines this Christian wisdom as "the supreme and divine quality of the soul whereby man knows and practices righteousness." Hort defines it as "that endowment of heart and mind which is needed for the right conduct of life." We must believe that God is a loving Father that loves to give good gifts to his children and not doubt. The wavering here literally means two souls or minds. Sounds like schizophrenia. Indeed it is a civil war within us. Make up your mind. God wants to give you wisdom to live. Ask and believe.

9-11 There were no class systems in the early church. A slave could of been his masters pastor. It seems like James is saying God gives each of us what we need. There is a real warning here for us in developed nations. It speaks of a southerly wind that came up from the desert and like a blast furnace would quickly wilt the tender grass or flowers in its path. So is wealth. One change in our circumstances and what we labored for to find security in is gone. It reminds me of planning a budget this week. Two phone calls and our new budget was totally wasted. God is a lot more security than anything you can collect on your own. After I wrote this, a check came from an unexpected place that took care of it. God likes to give us live illustrations.

12 The one who meets trials or testing in the right way - no ifs about it coming- proves himself of sterling worth. The same word is used here as above of a pure silver refined of its impurities. The crown was authority, victory, honor, and this crown is not just of some game or government but of Life. Quite a reason to endure. 1Pt 1:6,7

13-15 The blame game. It goes back to the Garden. Adam says, "The woman YOU gave me, she made me do it." Eve says, " The Devil made me do it." Job 9:20 One great lesson in life is not to blame God or others. Where did evil come from? Where did the pride come from in Satan's heart. No one can tell you. It is a mystery. Here are my 2 cents. Evil is the absence of good. It is not a thing, it is the choice to not do the good. Evil is often expressed in the negative of the good. Ungodliness, Lawlessness, etc. You can obey or choose not to. It becomes so hideous when one intentionally chooses not to obey (which is rebellion) because it is assisted by supernatural powers that also chose to rebel. They find a human agent they can work through. Romans 6:13 Adam and Eve were created with the ability to choose. When they chose to disobey, ungodliness was experienced, they died spiritually, and disobedience became the tendency instead of a possibility. vs 14 dragged away - whoever commits sin is the servant of sin. Once you yield your ability to obey has been severely handicapped. The end product is death. Romans 6:23 All disobedience is destructive and ultimately deadly.

16-18 Don't be deceived by thinking good is to be found in the changeable creation. It only comes from the unchangeable God. God is good... It could also be translated, God only gives good things. It goes along with the above idea that God does no evil. Firstfruits are dedicated to, belong by right to God! That is you and me! Because we were born of his unchangeable Word that is forever settled in the heavens. 1Peter 1:18 Of all He created we are that which is reserved for Him alone- holy.

19-20 2 ears/ 1 mouth/ use proportionately. The ancients saw this as a great virtue and a sign of wisdom. Our society rushes to speak and often gets a word in by speaking on top of another's words. I don't think I know a person this is true of, except maybe my son. Notice it says MAN'S anger. There is a godly anger, we only read of it twice that I recall in the life of Jesus.

21- Moral filth/ likened to dirty clothes that need to be changed. This is something we must make the effort to do. God doesn't miraculously do it for us but He will assist us as we make the effort. Then we put something on in its place, 1Peter 5:5 Colossians 3:12-14 Medically it meant ear wax. Spiritually ears plugged with moral filth could keep you from hearing God's word. Things we hang onto of fleshly attitudes and actions hinder our understanding of God's word. The word translated gentleness -prautes- is untranslatable in one word. It means to have emotions under control to such an extent that nothing within you would hinder you from hearing God's word.

22-24 What a great set of verses to apply to our time in the Word. Just reading the Word is of little value. As you see an application to yourself in the Word, you must remember to make whatever adjustment in your life is required. Change should be the objective of your Word time.

25 law of liberty -His service is perfect freedom and in doing his will is our peace.

26-27 A person's faith should affect their life, but especially the instrument with which he conveys his faith to others. Worship that does not affect our life, send us out to love in

Jesus name, is just a mockery. This was the message throughout the Old Testament too.
Ps 68:5, Micah 6:6-8