

Scraps from the margins of my Bible.

JAMES

with a little expansion
Phil Myers

Direct quotes from the Bible are
***bold** **italicized* *underlined
i.e. **scattered**

Introduction

- Perhaps the very first or second NT book ever written.
- A letter written by James, Jesus' little brother, pastor of the Jerusalem church.
see Acts 15.13 Gal 1.19 Gal 2.9,12
I Cor 15.7 Acts 12.17 Acts 21.18
- Audience: brethren (16X), believers—1.2,16 2.14 3.1,10 4.11 5.9
- Audience: the **scattered**, the Diaspora, 1.1 [*diaspora, διασπορα*] because of the persecution in Jerusalem, Acts 8.1
These were James' former sheep.
- Major theme: the believers' works, mouth, money, trouble, judging others
James = they are displayed to glorify God, Matt 5.16
Paul = salvation is "not of works" to earn eternal life, Eph 2.8,9
- There are only about 10 words of introductory greeting.
- Entire book is very practical.
- This is a collection of 18 sermonettes which I believe pastor James had already preached when the **scattered** had been living in Jerusalem. They are almost cryptic vignettes which his former congregation would remember.
- No organization. One topic doesn't lead into the next.
- Most often repeated themes: works, faith, suffering because of Christ, abuses of the rich, contentment, trouble gives you an edge on growing mature [*problems produce perfection—maturity*]
- Key verses: 1.22 be doers
2.26 faith without works is useless
- No epistle mentions Jesus' name less except III John.
- Author introduces himself as a servant [*doulos, δουλος*] of Jesus, not trading on family ties.
Jesus had 4 brothers [Matt 13.55]. James was mentioned first [*oldest?*].
- Rich people are mentioned [4X?] in a negative light.
- There are 54 imperative statements, i.e. "do this."
- "Perhaps the best Greek in the new Testament." *Moulton & Howard's commentary*
- Subtitle of the book might be: "How to walk while the world is watching."

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Diaspora, map of 1st century dispersed Jews throughout Roman empire, 50 cities

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- 1.1 **greeting** = rejoice [*charis, χαρις* = grace, also rejoice]
- 1.2 **trouble?** Bring it on! Result is spiritual muscle building.
- 1.2,3 **trials...testing**, [also translated temptations] Rom 8.28 "all things work together. . ."
trials, short term? temptations/testing, long term?
Trouble has a purpose, so does adversity. Both may be punishments. Either may be a blessing.
- 1.4 **perfect and entire** = mature Col 4.12, perfect & complete
- 1.6 don't doubt, but if you do:
* Sarah doubted but got pregnant
* Thomas doubted and Jesus confronted him gently
* the Baptist's dad doubted, went mute

ask in faith,

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10 Ingredients in Prayer: Why doesn't God answer my prayer?

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3 "crutches"
One has crutch.
Two need one.

These are 18 easiest-to-recognize letters
in the 24-letter Greek alphabet.

α β δ ε γ ι κ λ μ ν ο ω π ρ σ τ υ ς
a b d e g i k l m n o o p r s t u s

- 1.8 **unstable in all his ways** = indecisive, wavering, doubting [v.6],
 * in all kinds of ways?
 * in all the ways he doubts?
- 1.10 money in James 10X
 1.10 rich man, humility
 1.11 rich, wealth fades away
 2.2 poor, humiliated, ignored, disrespected
 2.5 rich in faith
 2.6 dishonored the poor
 2.6 rich oppress poor
 4.13 make a profit
 5.3 riches rot
 5.4 rich withhold wages
 5.5 rich flaunt wealth
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Poverty: blessings & hazards
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- 1.12 **endureth temptations** = perseveres under persecution because you're a Christian
 * this is more than a "bad hair" day
 * evidently temptation to do evil
 * pass the test ⇨ eternal crown of life, "to them that love Him" [see 5 crowns]
 * context = verse 3, testing my faith in God, not just putting up with bad health, finances, or inconveniences
the crown of life, one of 5 crowns available in heaven
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Crowns & Rewards
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- 1.13 **tempt**, also translated "test"
 * God never tempts us to sin.
 * He tests us to show ourselves that He is faithful.
American vernacular = "Sometimes He pushes us to our limit so we gain trust in Him."
- 1.14 **temptations** come into everybody's life
carried away, at the end of each day we realize we have chosen to do each deed
tempted. . . drawn away of his own lust, Satan gets blamed falsely too often for our own sin.
- 1.15 **lust**, [*epithymia, επιθυμια* = desire, passion, want, not necessarily evil]
 * here it is an evil desire
- 1.19,20 **quick to hear**, some learn this in childhood
slow to wrath, fools blame their anger on grandma's genetics
 * Everyone is born with the propensity to sin.
 * Many choose to nurture it into adulthood. It is a choice we don't have to make.
- 1.21 **lay aside**, another active choice: bad language, habits, etc.
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Predetermined Dedication
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- Word. . . save [deliver] your souls**, memorized Scripture has kept me from adultery, theft, porn, unkindness, and complaining [*still working on this one*]
- 1.22,23,25 **doers. . . doer. . . doer**, we must not give ourselves excuses
- 1.26 **bridleth not his tongue**, we believers commit most sins with our mouths [*me = 94.5%*].
- 1.27 give \$ to the poor with a kind word and a Gospel tract [*Kay uses McDonald's meal cards*]
-
- 2.1,2 **faith**, is demonstrated by being nice
 * issue is not **faith** or good works
 * but **faith** that works
 * Does everybody who has met me 5X know I'm a believer? neighbors, repairmen, cashiers. . .
 * After 10X can they explain the Gospel clearly back to me?
 * Faith without works is useless. Some good works only glorify the individual, not God.
- 2.3 [undue] **respect** for: money, education, status, reputation, other's spiritual gifts [?], occupations, nationality, IQ, experience
- 2.4 Unkindness is an **evil thought** [*our motives*], This is pretty strong language.
- 2.5,6 **listen/hearken**, see 1.19, quick!
 Love the poor man even if you don't like him.

- 2.8 **AS**, This is the operative word in the verse. It can never be exaggerated or emphasized too much.
 * 2.8 royal law * 2.10 whole law
 * 1.25 perfect law * 2.12 law of liberty
 * remember, this whole book is written specifically to James' scattered Jewish congregation of believers.

2.10 **and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all**, "but I only broke one part of the mirror!"
 2.14 **Can [that] faith save him?**, Yup! Undeniably! My faith, not my good works is my ticket into eternal life.

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211X, Belief or Faith, *God repeated Himself 200 X*.

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2.14 faith without works saves

2.19 demons have faith

2.21 Abraham justified by works for us to see. [Gen 22, offering Isaac]

2.21 Abraham justified by works "but not before God"

2.25 Rahab justified by works for us to see.

2.17 }
 2.20 }
 2.26 }

faith without works is dead.

Dead, useless, counterproductive, embarrassing, putrid, empty, and causes the Father to cry.

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Eternal or Conditional Security

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God's 2 Favorite Words about Salvation

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Not of Works

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New Nature & Old Nature, *Why do Christians still sin?*

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Once Saved, Always Saved?, *does the Bible teach this?*

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Repentance, 2 Kinds, a. for the saved b. for the unsaved

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2.18 **show me. . . I will show you**

2.22,24 **you see. . . you see**, [seest thou?]

* Believers are "**justified**" in the eyes of other believers by their works, amen!

* Believers are "**justified**" in the eyes of God by belief alone. Rom 5.1 *He does not justify us by our works.*

* Visible deeds are not proof of saving **faith**.

* But we do expect lots of good **works**. [see below **]

3.1 don't become a Bible teacher [unless you're willing to allow others to examine your life with a magnifying glass]

3.3-12 10 verses about my mouth: honesty, tones, retaliation, grudges, unkindness [and kindness]

* my mouth = a window into my soul

+ see Prov 18 mouth, words, lips 12X

+ Prov 15 12X

+ Prov 10 15X

3.6 **tongue** set on fire by hell

3.8 I can't **tame** my **tongue** without God's divine help.

3.13 **meekness** [gentleness] of wisdom. Think, Phil, think.

3.14 **glory not** [arrogant, do not boast] This is the antonym of wisdom.

3.18 peacemakers sow seeds of holiness

4.1 conflicts, **wars**, quarrels, church fights all come from the absence of peacemaking in the previous verse, 3.18.

lusts [hedonon, ηεδονον = desires & passions: often but not always used in evil sense]

* different Gr word than used in 1.5

* Hedonism is the lifestyles of fulfilling all one's desires, "Eat drink, and be merry for. . ."

4.2 **you lust** [pithymeite, πιτημειτε = same word as in 1.5]

* murder, envy, fight, quarrel [n.b. the brethren are doing this]

* Yes, sin can reign in the lives of brethren [believers]. Brethren are mentioned 15X in James.

+ don't let it reign, Rom 6.12

** 2.22,23 evidence of salvation

* I have a friend who came to faith in Christ because of her brother. Today he is not walking with the Lord and she even fallaciously doubts that he was ever saved. Judging faith by works.

* If we look for "proof" of salvation we might simply ask a question. "What are you depending on for eternal life?"

* A simple answer should satisfy. "I believe Jesus died in my place and I'm depending on Bible verses that promise God gives eternal life to those who trust in Him."

- You have not because you ask not**, yes, persist but not too much. Psa 106.15 “. . .He sent leanness to their souls”
- 4.7 A 9-point solution for strife:
 a. submit, b. resist, c. draw near, d. cleanse, e. purify, f. be miserable, g. mourning, h. gloom, i. humble.
 * Strife is not always the other guy's fault. I've been in strife. I'm 100% responsible for poking the hornet's nest.
- 4.15 **if the Lord wills**, by the way, the Lord allows us to choose sin. He allows everything that happens.
 * The sense is, “**If** I know it **will** please Jesus.”
- 4.17 **knoweth to good and doeth it not**, = sins of omission = “I should-a done it.”
 * Rom 14.23 is the converse, “Whatever is not of faith is sin.”

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- 5.1 The rich [*see below ***]
- 5.7 Be patient with people, with the mail, with traffic, with government services, ad infinitum
- 5.9 Don't complain. It's a sin.
- 5.11 While you are enduring, be deliriously happy and contented
- 5.12 Be ridiculously honest
- 5.13 Pray. Sing if you're suffering because you are a Christian.
- 5.14 Sick? Check yourself for little flaws [*persistent sinful habits*].
 greed, meanness, selfishness, griping about. . . , envy, pride, prayerlessness, not using your spiritual gift at the church,
 not being hilariously generous, not praying God will send missionaries into the harvest, not praying for lost neighbors,
 sporadic church attendance, fault finding, pity party, ad infinitum.
- 5.16 confess = apologize
 Pray for others in church, neighborhood, relatives, etc. long term like Elijah's 3 1/2 years.
- 5.19,20 Don't forget to correct those who go astray [*gently*].

****** 5.1 RICH = if you check 12 or more of the following POOR = you check 7-9 POVERTY = check 5 or less

TV, cell phone, 4 pairs of shoes, 10 shirts, computer, car, stove, refrigerator, medicine in the cabinet
 3-meals-a-day, snacks, many books, flush toilet, running water, a bed, more than 6 kitchen utensils,
 education beyond grade 6, closets, eye glasses, carpets, electricity, a Job, insurance