

James

CLA Spring 2014

Jim Hoffman

Tests

- **How do we deal with adversity? (James 1)**
- **How do we treat others? (James 2)**
- **Do we have good works? (James 2)**
- **Have we tamed our tongue? (James 3)**
- **Are we drawing close to God? (James 4)**
- **Have we occupied well? (James 5)**

How do we deal with adversity?

- **James 1:2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. 4 Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.**

James 1:1-4

- **We have anything but total control over what trouble comes our way, but we do have control over how we respond.**
- **How we respond to life's pains I believe is often a reflection of our view of eternity and eternal values.**
- **No matter how bad things may get, all is not lost for the Christian.**

James 1:1-4

- So one test for us is this – how do we handle adversity when it comes our way?
- Correct perspective will allow us to pass through the flame with a joyful attitude.
- Flames still burn and pain still hurts, but if we see our pain as a temporary condition that can be used to glorify God – well, that is a different situation.

James 1:1-4

- **James does explain the opportunity that pain presents to us – it gives us a chance to exercise and strengthen our faith.**



How do we treat others?

- **My dear brothers and sisters, how can you claim to have faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ if you favor some people over others? 2 For example, suppose someone comes into your meeting dressed in fancy clothes and expensive jewelry, and another comes in who is poor and dressed in dirty clothes. 3 If you give special attention and a good seat to the rich person, but you say to the poor one, “You can stand over there, or else sit on the floor” —well, 4 doesn’t this discrimination show that your judgments are guided by evil motives?**

How do we treat others?

- **We live in a world that functions on partiality. From the corporate world, to the halls of our political institutions, and even inside the church.**
- **We are judged and evaluated on the things that are usually the least important to God.**
- **It speaks to the superficiality of our culture.**

How do we treat others?

- Of all of God's attributes, perhaps the least discussed is His impartiality.
- What we wear, how much money we have, what titles we have are all but irrelevant to God.
- 2 Chron 19:7 Fear the Lord and judge with integrity, for the Lord our God does not tolerate perverted justice, partiality, or the taking of bribes.

How do we treat others?

- **The issue here is sin – if we believe that one’s outward appearance, their bank account, or any such thing merits more attention from us, we have missed the point of salvation.**
- **It is not possible to favor one group without showing disfavor to another.**
- **Prov 28:21 To have respect of persons is not good.**

How do we treat others?

- There is one kind of favoritism that is not only not wrong, but should be practiced
- Phil 2:3 Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves.
- In any relationship, when one sees the needs of others as a higher priority than our own, we honor God.

Do we have good works?

- **James 2:14** What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? **15** Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. **16** If one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? **17** In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. **18** But someone will say, “You have faith; I have deeds.” Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds. **19** You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.

Do we have good works?

- **The things James asserts:**
 - **There is ‘dead’ faith (no accompanying activities)**
 - **Works are required of the Christian and one cannot be a Christian without good works.**

Do we have good works?

- **The things Paul asserts:**
 - **Works play no role whatsoever in acquiring salvation.**
 - **We are saved by grace through faith alone; to add anything to the equation is heresy.**

Do we have good works?

- **"Trust only in movement, life happens at the level of action. We are not what we say, but we are what we do." Dr. Alfred Adler**
- **"You cannot talk your way out of what you've behaved yourself into." Stephen Covey**
- **"We are saved by faith alone, but the faith that saves is never alone." Martin Luther**

Have we tamed our tongue?

- **James 3:7 People can tame all kinds of animals, birds, reptiles, and fish, 8 but no one can tame the tongue. It is restless and evil, full of deadly poison. 9 Sometimes it praises our Lord and Father, and sometimes it curses those who have been made in the image of God. 10 And so blessing and cursing come pouring out of the same mouth. Surely, my brothers and sisters, this is not right! 11 Does a spring of water bubble out with both fresh water and bitter water? 12 Does a fig tree produce olives, or a grapevine produce figs? No, and you can't draw fresh water from a salty spring.**

Have we tamed our tongue?

- What we say can move, encourage, harm, defame, incite, and the list goes on
- Psalm 45:1 Beautiful words stir my heart. I will recite a lovely poem about the king, for my tongue is like the pen of a skillful poet.
- Psalm 52:2 Your tongue cuts like a sharp razor.
- Psalm 64:3 They sharpen their tongues like swords and aim their bitter words like arrows. (can kill from a distance)

Have we tamed our tongue?

- **Prov 15:4 Gentle words are a tree of life; a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit.**
- **Prov 18:21 The tongue can bring death or life.**
- **Jer 9:8 For their tongues shoot lies like poisoned arrows.**
- **James 1:26 If you claim to be religious but don't control your tongue, you are fooling yourself.**

Have we tamed our tongue?

- **Matthew 12:35 “A good person produces good things from the treasury of a good heart, and an evil person produces evil things from the treasury of an evil heart. 36 And I tell you this, you must give an account on judgment day for every idle word you speak. 37 The words you say will either acquit you or condemn you.”**
- **Like our works, our words tend to give away who we are at our core – whatever is on the inside will always come out, no matter how hard we try to suppress it.**

Are we drawing close to God?

- **James 4:2 You do not have because you do not ask God. 3 When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.**
- **If I could convince you to make a change this morning it would be – never be guilty of not asking.**
- **I don't know all that Jesus meant by 'faith the size of a mustard seed', but I suspect He meant we don't need a lot of it to be effective pray-ers.**

Are we drawing close to God?

- **And for some the problem is not the lack of asking – it's our poor motives for asking that keeps God from moving.**
- **Some want God to spare them from their terrible choices so they can keep on living the way they want to.**
- **Others want God to give them things to entertain themselves so they can continue their lives fully distracted from God.**

Are we drawing close to God?

- **If we ever sense you are far from God, we just may be, and it is always our fault.**
- **The Son of God came to seek and to save us.**
- **When a shepherd lost a sheep he went looking for it.**
- **When Adam and Eve sinned, God called to them.**

Have we occupied well?

- **James 5:7** Dear brothers and sisters, be patient as you wait for the Lord's return. Consider the farmers who patiently wait for the rains in the fall and in the spring. They eagerly look for the valuable harvest to ripen. **8** You, too, must be patient. Take courage, for the coming of the Lord is near.

Have we occupied well?

- **We are all accountable for the resources God has placed in our hands.**
- **If he has given you a lot, he expects a lot.**
- **Life is short – prepare for eternity.**

Questions