

James Notes

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Introduction:

James was the half-brother of Jesus. (Gal. 1:19; Jude 1:1; see also Matt. 13:55 which lists him with 4 other brothers, plus sisters of Jesus, all children of Mary.)

- He didn't receive Jesus at first – John the Baptist said I wouldn't have known Him unless the Spirit showed me. (Mark 3 – v. 21 says his own people say He is “beside Himself” and v. 31-35 tell of Jesus' mother and brothers coming for Him. Later in life, John 7:5 – “even His brothers did not believe...”)
- But Jesus went to James after His resurrection. (1 Cor. 15:7)
- Mary and Jesus' brothers are praying with the disciples in Acts 1.
- James is in the early church leadership. (Acts 12:17; 15:13,24; 21:18; Gal. 2:9,12)
- Tradition says that James was nicknamed “Old Camel Knees” for praying so much.

James unites spirituality with practicality – just as Jesus had done.

- Jesus and James likely grew up poor – In Luke they purify with doves. And there is good reason to believe Joseph died at an early age.
- There was a stigma on the family of adultery. (John 8:41 – fornication.)
- On the cross, Jesus committed Mary to the disciple, John – not James.

This letter is likely written before the Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15. That dates this letter to 40-45 AD. That makes this one of the first letters written that would then be included in the Canon of the Bible.

Historians say James was martyred in 62 AD – thrown from the Temple and beaten with clubs.

- Phil. 3:10 – “that I may know Christ...the fellowship of His sufferings.”

Chapter 1:

1:1 – “bondservant” – (Greek “doulos”) Lit. “slave.” This is a slave with no rights.

- “twelve tribes” – Jews, but Jewish Christians in particular.
- “scattered” – (Greek “diaspora”) Lit. “scattered seed.”
 - The Church is scattered from Jerusalem by persecution. (Acts 8:1)
- “Greetings” – This was a common greeting of the day and means “rejoice.”

1:2 – “brethren” – James calls these believers brethren 15 times in this letter.

- “count” – Lit. “to evaluate.” We have to look at difficulties from a different angle.
- “when” – Not “if.” (Rom. 8:28; 2 Cor. 4:17)
- “fall into” – Lit. “encounter, come across.” The text does not imply the trial happens by accident or coincidence.
- “various” – Lit. “multi-colored.” Trials take on all shapes and sizes.
- “trials” – (Gr. “peirasmos”) Lit. “an experiment of trial.”
 - The same Greek root word is used in vs. 12-13 to speak of temptations. It seems that any opportunity can be both a trial or a temptation, depending on how we handle it.
 - The good life is not found in the mere absence of pain.
 - These trials are not for punishment, but for training.

- 1:3 – “knowing” – This knowledge is what allows us to consider trials as joy. Maintaining this perspective in the middle of a trial allows us to use the immediate pressure for an eternal benefit. (Rom. 5:3-5)
- “testing” – Lit. “proving.”
 - “patience” – (Gr. “hupomone”) Lit. “to bear up under pressure.” It carries the idea of strength or endurance.
- 1:4 – “let” – This calls for our cooperation.
- “perfect work” – He takes us through trials to work out what He has placed in.
 - For the Word to cut accurately, we need to hold still: “let patience...”
- 1:5 – “lacks wisdom” – New trials take us to the edge of our wisdom and require us to get more.
- “wisdom” – The application of knowledge. And in the context, it is the ability to know what to do about the trial we find ourselves in.
 - “let him ask” – Lit. “let him continually ask.” (Luke 11:9-10)
 - “ask of God” – We are so quick to go to other sources.
 - “who gives to all” – The context is wisdom.
 - “liberally” – God is free and abundant with dispersing His wisdom.
 - “without reproach” – God does not scold us for our inability or dependence.
- 1:6 – “in faith” – Faith in Jesus, trusting His leading, ability, care, and protection.
- 1:8 – “double-minded” – Lit. “two minds.” We might label someone like this schizophrenic or multiple personalities.
- “unstable” – “A double-minded man is never sure of anything. He goes from one calling to another and from one line of service to another...Changeableness is an evidence of an unsubdued will and generally, too, of an inflated ego.” (H.A. Ironside)
- 1:9-11 – “the rich” - Some try to buy their ways out of trials.
- People have a tendency of changing their circumstances to alleviate the pressure.
- 1:9 – “lowly brother” – Financial poverty.
- These people do not have the ability to use money to fix their circumstances. They have the benefit of going to God immediately without burning through their resources first. (Mark 5:25-26)
 - “exaltation” – Now and for all eternity.
- 1:10 – “rich” – God does give some the ability to produce wealth. (Deut. 8:18)
- “his humiliation” – These difficulties are a reminder to the rich that their hope is not in this life, and that ultimately serves to bless them as they look to God and eternity.
 - “he will pass away” – Apart from the Rapture, everyone dies.
- 1:11 – “in his pursuits” – Better to live for God and eternity.

- 1:12 – “temptation” – The context changes from trials which test us to temptations intending to destroy us. These temptations are appealing to our flesh in an effort to cause us to sin.
- “approved” – Lit. “tested out to completion.”
 - “the crown of life” – The reward for those who finish their race in Christ. (Rev. 2:10)
 - “love Him” – Love is proved out in the difficult times and circumstances.
 - The pressures and difficulties of life define the good things of life. What one’s faith can endure proves what it is worth.
- 1:13 – “when” – Not “if.” As long as the world, the flesh, and the devil exist, we will be tempted.
- “tempted” – (Greek “peirazo”) From the same word as translated “trials” in v. 2.
 - The temptation itself is not sin – only what we do with it.
 - “I am tempted by God” – This would be blaming God, as Adam did in Eden.
- 1:14 – “enticed” – Lit. “to bait the hook.”
- The bait keeps us from seeing the consequences of sin.
 - “his own desires” – Sin starts within each of us.
 - Jesus was tempted like us but without sin, because there was nothing in Him that sin could appeal to. (Heb. 2:18; 4:15)
- 1:15 – “when desire has conceived” – When temptation is harbored, it unites with our desire until an opportunity affords us to sin. It is best to kill the sin right at the point of temptation.
- “brings forth death” – As opposed to God, who brings forth life. (John 10:10)
 - The ruthlessness of sin requires we be ruthless with sin.
- 1:16 – “Do not be deceived” – Trials and temptations serve the purpose of revealing us to ourselves.
- 1:17 – “good gift” – The difficulties are not God’s way of hurting or getting us.
- God, not us, is the initiator of everything that is good.
 - “good gift...perfect gift” – Lit. “good giver...perfect gift.” There are two different words for gift in this verse.
 - “lights” – This is speaking of the lights of the heavens; sun, moon, stars, etc.
 - “no variation” – God is consistent. (Heb. 13:8)
 - “shadow of turning” – There aren’t momentary outages or loss of signal with God, because He is not moving.
- 1:18 – “He brought us forth” – God is the initiator of this relationship.
- 1:19 – “swift to hear” – He is calling us to active movement in this passive capacity.
- The obvious parable on our face is that we have two ears and one mouth. We should clearly listen far more than we speak.
- 1:20 – “the wrath of man...righteousness of God” – Jesus was gentle and lowly. (Matt. 11:29)
- Because God comes gently, we can have a tendency to miss or overlook Him.
 - David said it was God’s gentleness that made him great. (Ps. 18:35)
 - “[His] voice is not heard in the streets.” (Matt. 12:18-21)

- 1:21 – “filthiness...wickedness” – Which stand in contrast to the righteousness of God. (v. 20)
- “lay aside...and receive” – Sin can inhibit our ability to hear the word.
 - “meekness” – This is the opposite of “wrath.” (v. 20)
 - “the implanted word” – The word is a seed that bares good fruit when understood and received. (Matt. 13:23)
 - When did James realize that reading God’s word was the closest thing he could experience to sitting with Jesus around the kitchen table or watching Him work in the carpenter’s shop?
- 1:22 – “doers of the word” – This is how the word gets to be implanted in our lives. (Heb. 5:11-14)
- “deceiving yourselves” – Hearing God’s word without doing it can give us a false sense of security.
- 1:23 – “anyone” – James writes predominantly to “brethren” in this letter, but he also deals with another group scattered among the brethren: “anyone” (v. 23), “anyone” (v. 26), “someone” (2:14).
- “a mirror” – The word will reveal us to ourselves.
- 1:25 – “looks into” – The tense is “continually looks into.”
- “law of liberty” – “The truth shall make you free.” (John 8:32)
 - “Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.” (2 Cor. 3:17-18; see also Gal. 5:1)
 - “blessed in what he does” – James does not say, “for” his deeds that any man is blessed, but “in” his deed. This is a way in which we shall certainly find blessedness, but not the cause of it.
- 1:27 – “pure and undefiled religion” – True spirituality is very practical, just as Jesus was.
- To love God and love others. (Mark 12:29-31)
 - “pure” – Lit. “all of one substance, single-minded, focused.”
 - “religion” – means “the outward practice in service of a god.”
 - “visit orphans and widows...keep oneself unspotted” – Charity and chastity; compassion and purity; loving and moral.
 - “orphans and widows” – These are people who can’t give anything back. (Luke 14:12-14)

Chapter 2:

- 2:1 – “partiality” – Lit. “to look in the face.” (Acts 10:34 – “to not look in the face.”)
- 2:2 – “assembly” – Lit. “synagogue.”
- “poor” – Lit. “destitute, abject poverty.”
 - Jesus came to earth as a poor man.
 - “fine apparel...filthy clothes” – These people are judged strictly on the basis of their outward appearance. (John 7:24)
 - Man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart. (1 Sam. 16:7)
- 2:3 – “sit here in a good place” – Or a position on the board; Or in charge of a ministry.

- 2:4 – “judges with evil thoughts” – Important for James who saw Jesus as a carpenter.
- 2:5 – “Has God not chosen the poor?” – We dare not equate spirituality with prosperity.
(1 Cor. 1:26-29; Rev. 3:17-18)
- “hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom...who can be saved?” (Matt. 19:23-25)
- 2:8 – “royal law” – “He who loves has fulfilled the law.” (Rom. 13:8; see also Matt. 22:36-40 and Lev. 19:18)
- “as yourself” – The assumption in the Greek is that you already love yourself. This is not an encouragement to self-love or self-esteem.”
- 2:10 – “guilty of all” – Against any who think their good deeds can outweigh their bad deeds.
- Our lack of love via partiality is seen as murder and adultery in God’s eyes.
- 2:12 – “So speak and so do” – We are to walk the talk.
- “as those who will be judged” – Even though we won’t be judged apart from Jesus.
 - Those living under grace should not live more sinful lifestyles than unbelievers.
- 2:13 – “Mercy triumphs” – Jesus said, “I desire mercy, not sacrifice.” (Matt. 9:13; 12:7)
- The world will know we are Christians by our love for one another. (John 13:35)
- 2:14 – “says he has faith” – A professing believer without true faith.
- James is speaking of “hypocritical professors (who) boasted of their faith as sufficient to secure them against that judgment (v. 13), though they neglected the practice of holiness and righteousness.” (Poole)
 - “says” – Lit. “alleges.”
 - “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. 7:21)
 - “works” – These are not the works of the Law that Paul talked about. These are the resultant works of salvation.
 - “Can faith save him?” – Idea is “that kind of faith.” James is defining faith.
 - John Calvin wrote, “It is faith alone that justifies, but faith that justifies can never be alone.”
 - “faith” – Genuine, saving faith is the living trust in Jesus work on our behalf.
- 2:15-17 – “faith by itself...is dead” – Faith is literally “to lean heavily upon.”
- Mental assent or mere words are not Biblical faith. (another example...)
- 2:16 – “be warmed and filled” – These words indicate that the needs are evident. The question remains of how we address these apparent needs...with words or action.
- 2:17 – “is dead” – Faith without works is dead in the same way that a body without the spirit is dead; the shell of the body may remain, but without any true hope of life.
- 2:18 – “show” – Lit. “display, exhibit.”
- “faith by my works” – Hebrews 11 said repeatedly “By faith...did something...”
 - It is not “faith and works” or “from faith to works” but rather “faith that works.”
 - You can tell a tree by its fruit.

- 2:19 – “there is one God” – The Jews spoke the Shamma daily. (Deut. 6:4-5)
- “demons believe” – They know the facts, but cannot surrender to the truth of it.
- 2:20 – “foolish” – Lit. “vain, empty.”
- 2:21 – “righteous for what he did” – “The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.” (Gal. 5:6)
- 2:22 – “perfect” – Lit. “brought to completion.”
- 2:23 – “believed God...accounted for righteousness” – Abraham was considered righteous in Gen. 15:6, years before Isaac was even born.
- “friend of God” – The difficult thing to understand is not how faith and works go together, but how God could call any man His friend. (2 Chron. 20:7; Isa. 41:8)
 - To be accepted by God, something must far exceed our works.
- 2:24 – “justified by works, and not by faith only” – Mere profession of faith is not enough to save us.
- One’s regular and continual lifestyle shows where they really stand.
- 2:25 – “Rahab the harlot” – She was a prostitute of the Canaanites in a time when the iniquity of the Amorites was full. Yet she came to trust the God of the Jews. (Heb. 11:31)
- 2:26 – “faith without works is dead” – The clearest evidence of a saved life is a changed life.
- “Shall we continue in sin that grace should abound...God forbid.” (Rom. 6:1,2)
 - “Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith.” (2 Cor. 13:5)

Chapter 3:

- 3:1 – “let not many become teachers” – The context here is in the synagogue where any could teach. (James 2:2)
- In the NT, the position of pastor-teacher is given to the Church (Eph. 4:11) at the direction of the Spirit (Acts 13:2). This is not a position to be taken to oneself.
 - 1 Tim. 3:1 – “any desiring position of bishop desires a good thing.”
 - Heb. 13:17 – “they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account.”
 - “stricter judgment” – This implies differing degrees of judgment before the Lord.
 - There are some who “handle the Word of God deceitfully.” (2 Cor. 4:2; 2 Pet. 2:1-3)
- 3:2 – “we all stumble” – James includes himself.
- “stumble in word” – Teachers wrongly teaching the Word are misrepresenting God. And that can have eternal consequences.
 - It is imperative for those teaching to keep opinion and speculation out of the teaching of God’s Word.
 - “perfect man” – Lit. “mature man.”
 - “bridle” – James has talked about the tongue already. (James 1:26)
- 3:3-5 – “bits...rudder...fire” – Our tongues can either control or destroy. (Prov. 10:19-21; 12:25; 15:1; 16:24)
- “Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit.” (Prov. 18:21)

- 3:5 – “boasts great things” – We use our speech to make ourselves appear better than we really are. That is the kind of insincerity James was confronting in chapter 2.
- “how great a forest a little fire kindles” – The tongue can start something that grows into something they cannot control.
- 3:6 – “the tongue” – This could also be true of the pen or the keyboard.
- “defiles the whole body” – An uncontrolled tongue can eliminate all the other good that could otherwise come out of that body.
 - “the course of nature” – The realm of our existence.
 - “hell” – (Greek “Gehenna”) The continually burning garbage dump outside of Jerusalem. (Matt. 5:22)
 - All evil philosophies are promoted by the tongue.
 - Marx/Hitler said “Give me the music and literature and I will have the nation.”
- 3:8 – “no man can tame the tongue” – That requires a heart change.
- “unruly” – Lit. “restless.”
 - “deadly poison” – Our words can spread and pollute like a deadly virus.
 - Words can kill hope in a young child or the reputation of a friend.
- 3:9 – “we” – James includes himself again.
- “bless our God” – This is the highest purpose of speech.
 - “curse men” – This brings evil to people.
 - “Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.” (Eph. 4:29)
- 3:10 – “of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing” – That is because the saved person now has two natures at war within. (Gal. 5:17)
- 3:11 – “spring” – Our speech reflects our hearts.
- “Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks.” (Matt. 12:34; 15:1-20)
 - “with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” (Rom. 10:10)
- 3:12 – “grapevine bear figs” – “Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit.” (Matt. 12:33)
- 3:13 – “wise and understanding” – James is continuing to address those who would be teachers. (v. 1)
- “good conduct” – The life is better proof than mere words. (On the heels of vv. 1-12.)
 - “works done in the meekness of wisdom” – Good works done in sincerity. Not putting on a show or presenting a façade, but genuinely helping others as Jesus did.
 - “meekness” – or “gentleness.” It describes power under control.
 - “wisdom” – The application of knowledge.
 - Knowledge is amassing information. Understanding is putting information together. Wisdom is making it work.
- 3:14 – “envy” – Implies “selfish ambition or zeal.”
- “self-seeking” – Lit. “party spirit.” Greek word used of a campaigning politician.
 - “in your hearts” – No matter what kind of presentation you make before the people.
 - “boast” – Making some profession before the people.

3:15 – “earthly, sensual, demonic” – The world, the flesh, and the devil. (Eph. 2:1-3)

- “sensual” – (Greek “psukikos”) Lit. “natural, of the senses.”
 - The difference between the natural and the spiritual is dangerously subtle.

3:17 – “wisdom that is from above” – True wisdom is God’s gift. (James 1:17)

- “pure” – Lit. “chaste, free from defilement.” (Also implies “all of one substance.”)
- “peaceable” – There is a settled resolve to God’s wisdom. Godly wisdom is not looking to start a fight or win an argument.
- “gentle” – Lit. “forbearing.” Lenient as to the duties others owe us.
- “willing to yield” – Lit. “conciliatory.”
- “without partiality” – Lit. “free from judging.” (James 2:1-13)
- “without hypocrisy” – (Greek “anupokritos”) Lit. “without wearing the mask.”
 - God’s wisdom functions well in the light.

3:18 – “righteousness...in peace” – Discord cannot produce righteousness.

- “for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.” (James 1:20)

Chapter 4:

4:1 – “wars and fights” – These stand in contrast to peace produced by the wisdom of God spoken of in James 3:18.

- Prov. 13:10 – “By pride comes nothing but strife...”
- “among you” – Within the Church.
- “war in your members” – Fights without always begin within us.
 - We tend to think that the reason for our problems and conflict with others is based in our circumstances. James is telling us that it is more often caused by ungodly desires within us.

4:2 – “war” – Lit. “military campaign.”

- “lust” – The English word “hedonism” comes from this Greek word. It literally means “personal pleasure.”
 - Greed drives the evil of the world. Chuck Missler used to say that there was not a famine on earth that was not in some way engineered by humans.
- “murder and covet” – Jesus was clear in Matthew 5 that these sins begin within our hearts.
- “do not ask” – We want to receive on the horizontal what could only be given by God.
- “ask” – Making a request known, not demanding and pouting for an answer. (Matt. 7:7-11; 21:22; Luke 11:9; John 15:7,16; 16:23-26)
 - Asking differs control and allows the other to say ‘no.’
 - Jesus prayed, “not my will, but yours be done” in Gethsemane.

4:3 – “amiss” – (Greek “kakos”) Lit. “in an evil manner.”

- The purpose of prayer is not for us to get our will accomplished, but for us to participate in God’s will that He desires to fulfill on earth.
- “spend” – or “waste.” (Luke 15:14)
- “pleasures” – Same word as “lust” in 4:2.
 - It is God’s grace to not always give us what we think we want. Many times, our desires are selfish without us even realizing it.

- 4:4 – “enemy” – It’s not compromise, it’s treason. (1 John 2:15)
- James is equating the love of the world as spiritual adultery.
 - God is too sincere to accept us if we claim to follow Him and yet continue to pursue sin and the world.
- 4:5 – “jealously” – He’s jealous for us, even when our pride and hypocrisy keep us from Him.
- The Holy Spirit demonstrates desire and a will. He is clearly a person and not merely a force or power. (Eph. 4:30)
- 4:6 – “the proud” – Pride is in direct contrast to praying and asking for God’s will to be done.
- “more grace” – So we do not have to fear being honest before this God.
- 4:7 – “submit to God” – This puts spiritual warfare in context. (Jude 1:9)
- “submit” – This is a military term that means “get into your proper rank.”
 - “Resist” – Lit. “stand against.” This is in obedience to God’s will and word.
 - “he will flee” – A definite. (1 Pet. 5:8-9)
- 4:8 – “Draw near to God” – In fellowship.
- “Nearness is Likeness.” (A.W. Tozer)
 - Heb. 4:16 – “therefore come boldly to the throne of grace...”
 - “He will draw near to you” – The closeness of our relationship with God is always determined by our willingness to draw near. He always responds in kind if we draw near to Him.
 - “Cleanse your hands” – Part of submitting to God is removing sin from our lives. (Ps. 24:4)
 - “double-minded” – Lit. “two minds, or schizophrenic.”
- 4:10 – “He will lift you up” – 1 Peter 5:6 adds “in due time.”
- 4:11 – “speak evil” – Lit. “speak against.”
- These are the same wars (with different weapons) as spoken of in v. 1.
 - “not a doer of the law but a judge” – This puts us above the law rather than submitting to it.
 - “the law” – God’s law is fulfilled in love. (Rom. 13:8; Gal. 5:14)
- 4:12 – “Who are you to judge another?” – “Who are you to judge another’s servant?” (Rom. 14:4; see also 1 Cor. 4:5.)
- 4:15 – “If the Lord wills” – You do not determine God’s will in some mechanical way. The will of God is revealed in a living relationship between God and the believer.
- Allowing God the right to overrule in our lives keeps us living dependently on Him.
- 4:16 – “you boast” – Speaking against presumption. Planning is good and right, but always allowing God to overrule when He desires. (Prov. 27:1; Luke 12:16-21)
- “arrogance” – Planning without prayer is pride.
- 4:17 – “knows to do good and does not do it...sin” – Sins of omission.

Chapter 5:

5:1 – “rich” – Unbelievers. The subject group changes in v. 7. (Compare with James 1:10)

- “are coming upon you” – These miseries are certain. (Matt. 19:23-24; Luke 6:24)

5:2 – “moth-eaten” – “but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys ...” (Matt. 6:20)

5:3 – “corroded...will eat your flesh like fire” – The stuff corrodes and it corrodes the user.

- “treasure” – Our treasure is in heaven. (Luke 18:22)
 - “Is it time to receive money and to receive clothing, olive groves and vineyards, sheep and oxen, male and female servants?” (2 Kings 5:26)
 - Money will not be able to deliver anyone from the final judgment of God to come upon this earth.
- “in the last days” – They are not aware of the days in which they are living.
 - We have a short while and few chances left; we ought not to waste it.
 - This is a threat to the rich and a consolation to the poor.

5:4 – “kept back by fraud” – This refers to underpaying or taking advantage of the common laborer.

- The Law demands timely payment of workers. (Deut. 24:14-15)
- “cries...reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth” – God is attentive to the cause of the poor and needy.
 - James 1:26 – “pure religion is to care for orphans and widows.”
- “Lord of Sabaoth” – Lit. “Lord of hosts, or Lord of armies.” (Exod. 3:6)

5:5 – “lived on the earth in pleasure and luxury” – This is especially detrimental when it is the church leadership.

- “luxury” – Lit. “in high style.”

5:6 – “the just; he” – Singular. Speaking of Jesus or the Church (the body of Christ.)

- “he does not resist you” – Until the judgment to come, we are told to submit to the powers that be and turn the other cheek to those who strike us.

- 5:7 – “the farmer waits for the precious fruit” – The minister is in clear view here. (Gal. 6:9)
- “precious” – The farmer is willing to patiently wait for the harvest because of how he values it.
 - “fruit” – A minister’s fruit are changed lives at the touch of God...not money.
 - “latter rain” – The harvest is dependent on the latter blessing. The early rain brings up the stalk; the latter rain brings the fruit to maturity.
 - We are not working merely to get stalks in pews, but fruit from those that come.
 - “waiting patiently” – As only God can produce the fruit we really need and desire.
 - To see ‘ministers’ or ‘ministries’ heaping up treasure in the last days, living in high society, and fattening their hearts for slaughter is especially detrimental.
 - “Beware of false prophets...ravenous wolves.” (Matt. 7:15)
 - “False teachers among you...exploit you with deceptive words.” (2 Pet. 2:1-3)
 - Going after the poor as “easy prey:”
 - Ezek. 34:1-10 – “Woe to the shepherds of Israel that feed themselves.”
 - Christian telemarketing & television that preys on the poor, sensitive, or ignorant.
 - If I need to say “No” twice, my ability to speak English is insulted.
 - Catering to the wealthy as “easy money:”
 - James 2:2-3 – Giving the rich man a chair, or a place of position.
 - Living according to the income of the area in which you are ministering.
 - City data for Selinsgrove & Sunbury.
- 5:8 – “Establish your hearts” – The Blessed Hope is a source of strength to the believer.
- “coming of the Lord is at hand” – The imminent return of Jesus Christ.
 - Jesus spoke of birth pains that precede His return. (Matt. 24:8)
- 5:9 – “grumble” – To speak against, complain, or condemn. (James 4:11)
- 5:10 – “suffering and patience” – Two words I hate seeing next to each other.
- 5:11 – “blessed who endure” – “Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.” (Matt. 5:11)
- “end intended” – Job never gets his questions answered, but does get doubly blessed.
 - “the Lord is very compassionate and merciful” – “For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust.” (Ps. 103:14)
- 5:12 – “above all” – James considers this the more important injunction.
- “‘Yes’ be ‘Yes’” – Jesus said anything more than this is from the evil one. (Matt. 5:37)
 - Ps. 15:4 – “swears to his own harm and does not change”
 - This holding to one’s word is a display of Godly character.
- 5:13 – “suffering” – Speaking more of emotional distress than physical illness.
- “pray” – People love to run to other people for help. Turn to God first.
 - “suffering...cheerful” – We will get both in our lifetimes. Respond appropriately.
 - “sing psalms” – God desires our attention in the good times as well as the bad.

- 5:14 – “sick” – Lit. “to lay down and cannot get up.” The idea is sick to the point of death.
- “let him call” – It is the responsibility of the sick to call...and of the elders to come.
 - Some sick get upset that the pastor didn’t visit, or call them forward in a service, even when they never told the pastor of the illness or procedure in the first place.
 - “elders” – Plural. No one person will get the credit for the miracle if God grants it.
 - “pray over him” – This seems to indicate a private meeting. Jesus never healed to create a spectacle or a circus.
 - “anointing” – More literally “messaging.” (Mark 6:13; Luke 10:34)
 - Jesus condones the use of doctors. (“The sick need a physician...”)
- 5:15 – “prayer of faith” – Lit. “wish of faith.” This is submissive prayer in Jesus name. (1 John 5:14-15)
- “the Lord will raise him up” – God changes things; not “prayer changes things.”
 - “committed sins” – Lit. “habitually committed sins.” (1 Cor. 11:30)
 - Jesus implied that some illnesses are direct results of personal sin.
- 5:16 – “Confess your trespasses” – Our confession should be contained within the sin’s circle of influence. Confession is not to inform, but for healing in the relationship.
- “Confess” – Lit. “to say the same thing.” This means we agree with God on the matter.
 - “trespasses” – Even sins of transgression are permitted to be confessed and forgiven.
 - “effective” – Lit. “on target.”
 - “fervent” – Lit. “bubbling up.”
 - “avails” – Lit. “to have power, to be strong, to be able.”
 - “you neither know the Scriptures nor the power of God.” (Mark 12:24)
 - It is the prayer that has power, not the person. It is as we yield to the things of God that our lives will avail much. We don’t have a blank check from God.
- 5:17 – “nature like ours” – He doubted, failed, and ran away from Jezebel.
- “prayed earnestly” – Lit. “prayed prayers, or prayed praying.”
 - The difference between saying prayers and praying our prayer.
 - Elijah’s prayer was in response to the Word. (Deut. 11:11 - obedience was tied to rain.)
- 5:19 – “Brethren” – This is speaking to the Christians.
- “wanders from the truth” – Gradually slipping from the Word. (John 17:17; Heb. 2:1)
 - “someone turns him back” – Gal. 6:1; 1 John 5:16.
- 5:20 – “death” – This may refer back to v. 14-15 and be speaking of the sick that is nearing death.
- “cover a multitude of sins” – The basis for this is love. (1 Pet. 4:8)