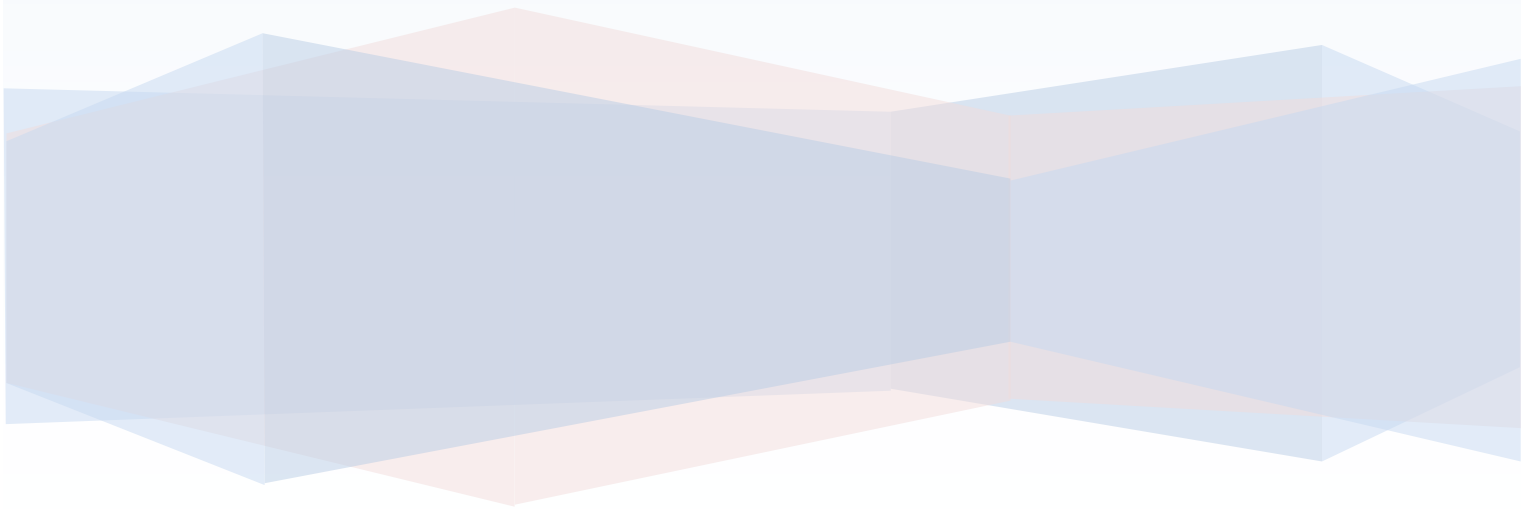


# THE LETTER OF JAMES

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## THE LETTER OF JAMES

### CHAPTER ONE

<sup>1</sup>From James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ to the twelve tribes of the dispersion. Greetings.

<sup>2</sup>Consider it a thing of great value my brothers when you encounter various kinds of hardships <sup>3</sup> just because you know that the testing of your faith will produce perseverance <sup>4</sup>and when perseverance has completed its work in you, you will be completely mature lacking nothing. <sup>5</sup>If anyone is unsure of what to do he should ask God for wisdom with the assurance that God will freely give it to him without thought of reproach – it will simply be given to him. <sup>6</sup>Remember that he must ask in faith without doubting God's promise. When someone doubts they are like a wave of the sea being driven and tossed by the wind. <sup>7</sup>The only thing such people can be guaranteed is that they will certainly not receive anything from the Lord. <sup>8</sup>These kind of persons are double minded and unstable in all their ways.

<sup>9</sup>Those who are considered to have low status in the society should boast in their newfound status in Christ <sup>10</sup>and the person who is rich and has such status should boast about his newfound humility. Human status will fade away as quickly as the beauty of the flowers in a field. <sup>11</sup>The sun rises with its burning heat. The plants become dried up and the flower petals fall to the ground and its beauty is gone. The pursuit of status and wealth will come and go in exactly the same way.

<sup>12</sup>It is a great blessing for a people to endure hardship because when they have stood the test they will receive the crown of life promised to those who love God. <sup>13</sup>It is also important for a person to realize that such tests don't come from God. God is not intimidated by evil nor does he directly test anyone. <sup>14</sup>A person is tested as a consequence of being drawn away by his own evil desires. <sup>15</sup>These desires give birth to disobedience which, if it continues to have its way will lead to death.

<sup>16</sup>I don't want you to be misled my brothers. <sup>17</sup>Every gift that is good and perfecting gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights. He never changes or veers from the way. <sup>18</sup>He brings us to the destiny he has planned for us by means of the word of truth so that we can be a kind of first fruit among other people. <sup>19</sup>Because of this, beloved brothers everyone should be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to get angry. <sup>20</sup>Human anger never produces the righteousness of God. <sup>21</sup>So let us set aside everything that is rotten or wicked and with humility let us embrace the message from God that has been planted within us. It is the only thing capable of producing redemption for our souls.

<sup>22</sup>And make sure that you are doers of that message and not people who listen and do nothing resulting in self-deception. <sup>23</sup>If anyone listens to the message from God but does not implement it he is like a person who looks at his face in the mirror <sup>24</sup>and sees what he is really like but then immediately goes away and forgets what he saw. <sup>25</sup>On the other hand, when someone looks into the perfecting and liberating word and then implements it – and does not forget but gets it working in his life - such a person will be blessed in what he does.

<sup>26</sup>Anyone who claims to be spiritual but doesn't control his tongue is deceiving his own heart. Such spirituality is worthless. <sup>27</sup>Spirituality that is pure and sincere in the sight of God the Father is to visit orphans and widows in their hardships and to keep from being compromised by the ways of this world.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

<sup>1</sup>My brothers, do not practice discrimination as you live the life of faith we commonly share in Jesus Christ the Lord of glory. <sup>2</sup>If someone comes into the assembled group of believers with gold rings and expensive clothing and at the same time a man comes in dressed in shabby clothing <sup>3</sup>you might be tempted to say to the man with the expensive clothes, "Sit here with me in a good seat" and to the poor man you might be tempted to say, "Stand over there or sit on the floor at my feet. <sup>4</sup>Such distinctions between people are the result of evil reasoning.

<sup>5</sup>Listen, my beloved brothers, didn't God determine that the poor of this world could be rich in their faith and full inheritors of the kingdom promised to those who love him. <sup>6</sup>When you dishonour poor people in the way I have suggested you forget that it is wealth that creates oppressors and oppression. Such power enables people to drag others before the courts <sup>7</sup>and they are the people who blaspheme the name of the very God you call upon.

<sup>8</sup>You should remember to keep the royal commandment from Scripture: "You must love your neighbour as you love yourself." If you do that you will do well. <sup>9</sup>But when you discriminate against certain people you are committing sin and are deemed a transgressor by the word of God. <sup>10</sup>Whoever keeps the whole law except for one particular part of it is still guilty of transgression. <sup>11</sup>The same God who said, "You must not commit adultery" also said, "You shall not murder." If you do not commit adultery but commit murder you are still a transgressor of the law. <sup>12</sup>You should speak and act according to the Word that produces liberty. It is to this that you must become accountable. <sup>13</sup>Judgment without mercy will be shown to those who refuse to show mercy. It is mercy that triumphs over judgment.

<sup>14</sup>Brothers, what value is there in someone claiming to have faith with no associated deeds? Can this kind of faith save anyone? <sup>15</sup>If a brother or a sister needs proper clothing or has nothing to eat and <sup>16</sup>one of your number simply says “Go in peace and be warmed and filled” but does not give them the material things they need, what kind of empty faith is that? <sup>17</sup>The truth is that faith without associated deeds is not real.

<sup>18</sup>Some among you might say, “You have faith and I have deeds.” How can you show me your faith apart from your deeds? I will show you my faith through my deeds. <sup>19</sup>You say that you believe that God is One. Even the demons believe that – and shudder. <sup>20</sup>If you still foolishly think like this I will show you that faith without accompanying deeds has no reality. <sup>21</sup>Wasn’t Abraham our father justified by his deeds through the offering of his son on the altar? <sup>22</sup>His faith was made visible through his actions. By such faith he was made whole. <sup>23</sup>The Scripture was fulfilled that said, “Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him as righteousness.” He was called God’s friend. <sup>24</sup>So you can see that a man is justified by his deeds of faith, not just by empty faith-words.

<sup>25</sup> It was the same with Rahab the prostitute. She was found to be righteous when she received the messengers and then sent them back by a different way. <sup>26</sup>Just as a body without the spirit is dead, so faith that is not expressed through deeds is dead.

### **CHAPTER THREE**

<sup>1</sup>Not many of you should make the claim to be teachers, my brothers. Be aware that those who teach will be held to a greater level of accountability. <sup>2</sup>We make mistakes in all kinds of ways but if a person does not err in the way they speak such a person is fully mature in every other way. <sup>3</sup>We put bits into the mouths of horses and thus make their whole bodies turn about. <sup>4</sup>In the same way great ships driven by strong winds are turned about by a very small rudder according to the impulse and will of the person at the helm.

<sup>5</sup> In a similar way the tongue is a very small part of a body but is capable of great influence. How large a forest can be kindled by such a small flame. <sup>6</sup>The tongue is capable of creating a fiery world of unrighteousness. It is placed in our bodies with the capacity to be the defiler of the whole body and can set on fire a whole course of nature that is itself set ablaze by hell. <sup>7</sup>We are able to bring all kinds of species under control regardless of whether they fly in the air, walk along the ground or swim in the sea. All of them are being and have been subdued by humans, <sup>8</sup>But it seems that no one is able to subdue the human tongue. It seems to be capable of unrestrained evil and deadly poison. <sup>9</sup>It seems the same tongue is capable of blessing our Lord and Father but also cursing men who are created in his likeness. <sup>10</sup>Is it possible that blessing and cursing could come from the

same mouth? <sup>11</sup>My brothers these things just should not ever happen. The same spring of water doesn't flow fresh and bitter water <sup>12</sup>A fig tree is not able to produce olives or a grape vine produce figs. A salty pool cannot also contain fresh water.

<sup>13</sup>Who among you is considered to have great wisdom and understanding? Let him demonstrate it by his good life and through deeds that come from humble wisdom. <sup>14</sup>If you only have bitter jealousy and self-interest in your heart don't boast about it and misrepresent the truth by so doing. <sup>15</sup>This is not the wisdom that comes from above. This is from the earth, from natural humanity and is demonic. <sup>16</sup>Where there is jealousy and self-interest there is disorder and every evil thing. <sup>17</sup>But wisdom from above is first of all pure, then peaceful, gentle, humble and full of mercy and of the fruits of goodness, impartiality and sincerity. <sup>18</sup>It produces a harvest of righteous for those who make peace by sowing peace.

#### **CHAPTER FOUR**

<sup>1</sup>Where do the internal battles and infightings come from? Is it not from the sensual desires within you that wage war within you? <sup>2</sup>You want things and can't get them. You even kill and covet and still don't get what you want and so you quarrel and fight. <sup>3</sup>You do not have things because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive because you are asking for the wrong things - all you want to do is to indulge your own self-gratifying desires. <sup>4</sup>This is a form of adultery. Don't you realize that if friendship with this world means hostility toward God? If you intend to be a friend of the world you will treat God as your enemy. <sup>5</sup>What do you think the Scripture means when it says, "The Spirit he has caused to live in us has a jealous regard for us?" <sup>6</sup>Still he gives even more grace, therefore he says, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

<sup>7</sup>So submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. <sup>8</sup>Draw near to God and he will draw near to you. Wash your hands you sinners and purify your hearts those who are double-minded. <sup>9</sup>Grieve, mourn and weep and let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. <sup>10</sup>Humble yourselves before the Lord and he will lift you up.

<sup>11</sup>Don't speak against one another brothers. The one who judges or speaks against a brother speaks against and judges the Word of God. If you judge the Word you are no longer a doer of the Word but a judge. <sup>12</sup>There is only one giver of the Word who is also the Judge. He is the one who is able to both save and destroy. Who gives you the right to judge your neighbour?

<sup>13</sup>Come now those who say, "Today or tomorrow we may go into such a city and may spend a year to trade and make a profit. <sup>14</sup>You just don't know what the

next day of your life will bring. Life is like a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes. <sup>15</sup>What you should be saying is, “If the Lord wills and we are still alive we may do this or that. <sup>16</sup>But at the moment you are boasting from your own arrogance. Such boasting is evil. <sup>17</sup>To the one who knows about doing good but chooses not to do it – is a sin.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

<sup>1</sup>Come now, those who are rich, weep and moan over the miseries that are going to come upon you. <sup>2</sup>Your riches have rotted away and your clothing has become moth-eaten. <sup>3</sup>Your gold and your silver have corroded and the fact that they are rusty is evidence against you and will eat away at your flesh like fire. You have stored up earthly treasure in the last days. <sup>4</sup>Behold, the wages that you failed to pay those who harvested your fields are crying out against you. And the cries of the harvesters are being heard in the ears of the Lord Almighty. <sup>5</sup>You have lived upon this earth in luxury and self-indulgence. All you have done is to fatten yourselves for the day of slaughter. <sup>6</sup>You have condemned and killed innocent people who were powerless to resist.

<sup>7</sup>For this reason be patient, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth. He patiently waits for it until the time of the early and latter rains. <sup>8</sup>You should be patient in the same way. Strengthen your hearts because the coming of the Lord is drawing near. <sup>9</sup>Brothers do not grumble against one another so that you will not be condemned. Behold, the judge is standing at the door.

<sup>10</sup>Brothers, take an example from the way the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord; the way they suffered and endured with patience. <sup>11</sup>We deem those who have endured like this as blessed people. You have heard of Job’s perseverance and you saw what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.

<sup>12</sup>Above all things, brothers do not take oaths, neither by heaven nor the earth nor anything else. Just let your “Yes” be yes and your “No” be no so that you will not come under condemnation.

<sup>13</sup>Is anyone among you suffering hardship? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praises. <sup>14</sup>Is anyone of you sick? Let him call the elders of the church and let them pray over him, having anointed him with oil in the name of the Lord. <sup>15</sup>The prayer of faith will save the one who is sick and the Lord will raise him up. If he has committed any sin he will be forgiven. <sup>16</sup>So confess your sins to one another and pray for one another so that you can be healed. The faithful prayer of a righteous man accomplishes great things. <sup>17</sup>Elijah was a man

like us and he prayed a prayer that it would not rain and it didn't rain for three and a half years. <sup>18</sup>Then he prayed again and the heaven gave rain and the earth caused fruit to sprout.

<sup>19</sup>My brothers, if anyone among you is straying from the truth and someone enables him to return, <sup>20</sup>the one who turned him back from the error of his ways will have saved his soul from death and will have covered a multitude of sins.

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