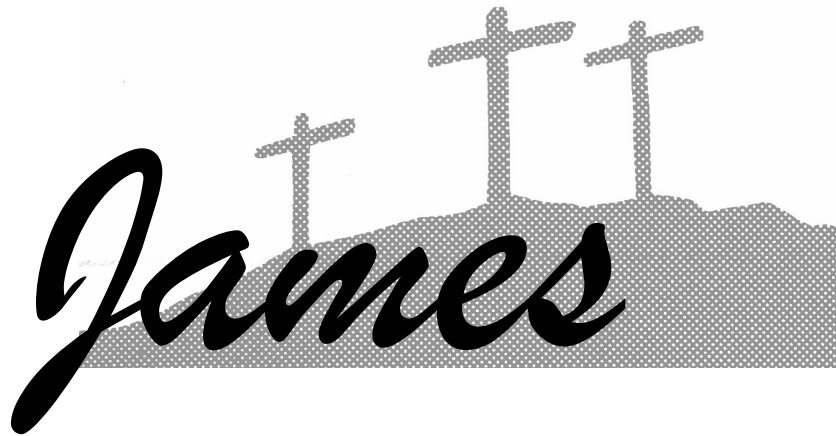




CORNERSTONE BAPTIST CHURCH

EXETER, MAINE

You've got questions? God has answers.



Dr. Wendell Calder

INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

It is always good to keep some basic information in mind when studying a specific Book of the Bible. Our study of the Epistle of James is no exception. An Epistle is a letter and as in any letter you have the person who is writing the letter, the person or group to whom the letter is written and the content or purpose of the letter. Let us briefly examine this book in that light.

A. THE PERSON WHO WROTE IT

Of course the Divine Author is the Holy Spirit as we read in 2 Timothy 3:16-17 and 1 Peter 1:21; but, the Holy Spirit used men of God as the human channels. We read in James 1:1, "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ...". However, there were several men who bore the name "James" in the New Testament.

1. James, the Son of Zebedee

This James was the brother of John and they were nicknamed by the Lord Jesus "Boanerges" or "sons of thunder". He was a fisherman whom Christ called to be a Disciple. He was killed by Herod in AD 44 and was not alive when the Epistle of James was written. (Mark 3:17; Matt.4:17-22; Acts 12:1—2)

2. James, the Son of Alphaeus

We know very little about him except that he was a Disciple. (Matt.10:3; Acts 1:13)

3. James, the brother of our Lord

This James was a great personality in the early church and was Pastor of the church at Jerusalem. James and Jesus have the same mother -- Mary. Jesus was born to Mary conceived by the Holy Ghost before she and Joseph came together and James was born to Mary and Joseph after the birth of the Lord Jesus. It is stated in Matthew 13:55-56 and Mark 6:3 that there were other children born to , Joseph and Mary. One of these was named James and it is this James who is the author of this Epistle. It seems that he did not become a true believer in the Lord Jesus until after the Resurrection. Jesus appeared in person to James after the Resurrection (1 Cor. 15:7) and, I believe, this convinced James that Jesus was really the Savior, the Son of God. It seems that James may have won his other brothers to the Lord because they are mentioned as being present in the prayer meeting in the upper room following the Ascension of Christ (Acts 1). James became a leader in the Jerusalem church and in Gal. 2:9, Paul referred to him as a "Pillar". James was moderator of the church conference described in Acts 15 and when Peter was delivered from prison, he sent special word to tell James of his release (Acts 12:17). He must have been a real man of God to gain the leadership of the Jerusalem church. Tradition tells us that he prayed so much that his knees were as hard as a camel's. I want you to notice how he begins his Epistle -- "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus a Christ...". He does not boast of his position as a brother of the Lord Jesus or as leader of the church at Jerusalem, but simply refers to himself as a servant (bondslave) of the Lord.

B. THE PEOPLE TO WHOM HE WROTE

James 1:1, "...to the twelve tribes that are scattered abroad, greeting." James sends this letter to Christian Jews who had been scattered and were not living outside the land of Palestine. There were many Christian Jews who had been dispersed through persecution and this scattering of the Jews had been predicted by God (Lev. 26:33). This was a method that God used for the spreading of the Gospel in the early church (Acts.8:1,4). However, many of these believers were facing difficult and trying circumstances and James writes to encourage and to exhort them in the Lord. Keep in mind that even though the Epistle is addressed to the dispersed Jewish believers that whatsoever was written aforetime was written for our learning.

C. THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH HE WROTE

I suggest in the outline of the epistle that the main theme is "REALITY IN RELIGION" (James 1:27) and he emphasizes this truth time and time again. We are taught the importance of belief and behavior being in line with each other. James says in effect -- if you are not going to walk the walk, then don't talk the talk. He emphasizes the fact that if you are not going to life it then don't lip it. A great key truth of the book is "...faith without works is dead" (James 2:20) -- a faith that doesn't work is dead faith. The author is showing the necessity of faith in action and is pointing out to these dispersed believers the difference between "professors of religion" and "possessors of reality". It seems that one of the major problems was a failure on the part of many to produce in life what they professed by lip. There was a "spiritual immaturity" evident among these believers and the same problem certainly faces the church of today. So, when we study this Epistle of James, we are dealing with up-to-date material to supply us with the scriptural formula for successful and victorious Christian living. James says: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." (James 1:27). This involved public service (to visit) but above all it involves personal sanctification (keep himself unspotted from the world).

D. OUTLINE OF THE EPISTLE

Title: "Reality in Religion" (Producing Perfection)

Key verse: James 1:27

CHAPTER 1: PATHWAY TO MATURITY (TROUBLE PERMITTED)

Key verse 1:4

- A. Salutation — 1:1.
- B. Situation — 1:2-12
 - 1. Trying of faith — 1:2-3
 - 2. Triumph of faith — 1:4-12
- C. Solicitation — 1:13-17
- D. Solution — 1:18-27
 - 1. Wisdom of God — 1:5
 - 2. Word of God — 1:18-25

CHAPTER 2: PRACTICALITY OF THE MASTER (TRUTH PRACTICED)

Key verse 2:12

- A. Love your brother — 2:1-13
- B. Live your belief — 2:14-26

CHAPTER 3: POWER OF THE MESSAGE (TONGUE PERFECTED)

Key verse 3:2

- A. Selects his words — 3:1-12
- B. Shows his works — 3:13
- C. Shares his wisdom — 3:13-18
 - 1. Earthly wisdom — 3:14-16
 - 2. Eternal wisdom — 3:17-18

CHAPTER 4: PURITY OF THE MESSENGER (TESTING PROFITABLE)

Key verse 4:8

- A. Rebuke of worldliness — 4:1-12
- B. Realization of God's will — 4:12-17

CHAPTER 5: PATIENCE IN MINISTRY (TREASURE PRODUCED)

Key verse 5:8

- A. Period of warning — 5:1-6
- B. Period of waiting — 5:7-12
- C. Period of witnessing — 5:13-20

CHAPTER 1 — PATHWAY TO MATURITY (TROUBLE PERMITTED)**Key Verse - 1:4****A. Salutation — 1:1**

- Submissive Servant — (James a Servant)
- Sovereign Savior — (Lord Jesus Christ)
- Scattered Saints — (Twelve Tribes Scattered)

B. Situation (Problems on the Pathway) — 1:1-12

- The Problem — Spiritual immaturity
- The Purpose — Spiritual Maturity
- The Process — Trials-Testing-Tribulation

1. Trying of Faith — 1:3

- a. Presented in Variety — Various/Diverse — 1:2
- b. Patience in Viewing — Endurance — 1:3-4
- c. Prospect of Victory — Perfect (Mature) — 1:4,6,12

2. Triumph of Faith — 1:4-12

- a. The pathway to perfection (maturity)
 - (1) Regeneration (my brethren) — 1:2**
 - (2) Realization — 1:1**
 - (a) Who he is - Sovereign — 1:1
 - (b) Who I am - Servant — 1:1
 - (3) Responsibility (my brethren) — 1:2**
 - (a) To my Father — (God)
 - (b) To my Family — (family of God)
 - (4) Readiness (ready to face trials) — 1:2-4**
- b. The purpose for problems on the pathway
 - (1) To prove us — 1 Peter 1:7**
 - (2) To perfect us — James 1:2-4**
 - (3) To purify us — 1 Peter 1:7**
 - (4) To prepare us — 2 Corinthians 1:3-7**
 - (a) Touches us
 - (b) Teaches us
 - (c) Toughens us
 - (d) Tenderizes us

C. Solicitation — (Temptations-Solicitation to Evil) — 1:13-17

— Temptation knows no barriers and plays no favorites

- 1. Temptation is Present (every man) — 1:13**
 - 2. Temptation is Personal (note pronouns) — 1:13-14**
 - 3. Temptation is Powerful (brings forth sin) — 1:14-15**
 - a. Desire — (Lust, Drawn Away, Lured Into) — 1:14
 - b. Deception - (Enticed, To Bait the Hook) — 1:14
 - c. Disobedience - (Brings Forth Sin) — 1:15
 - d. Death - (When Finished Brings Death) — 1:15
- (1) Word of Exhortation - (do not err) — 1:16**
(2) Word of Explanation — 1:17
- (a) Impartial**
 - (b) Immutable**

D. Solution (We have a Two-Fold Solution) — 1:18-27**1. Wisdom of God — 1:5; 3:13-18**

— Definition: divine discernment, spiritual perception, right use of knowledge, ability to view life's circumstances from heaven's perspective.

- a. Described — 1:5; 3:13-18
 - (1) Earthly Wisdom — 3:13-18**
 - (a) Strife — 3:14**
 - (b) Selfish (bitter envying) — 3:14**
 - (c) Sensual (carnal) — 3:15**
 - (d) Satanic (devilish) — 3:15**
 - (2) Eternal Wisdom — 3:17**
 - (a) Pure — 3:17**
 - (b) Peaceable — 3:17**
 - (c) Patient — 3:17**
 - (d) Productive — 3:17 -1**
 - (e) No Partiality — 3:17**
 - (f) No Pretense - 3:17**
- b. Desired (let him ask of God) — 1:5
 - (1) Lack of it — 1:5**
 - (2) Longing for it - 1 :5**
 - (3) Lots of if- 1:5**
- c. Delivered (it shall be given him) — 1:5
 - (1) Cures Insecurity (nothing wavering) - 1:6**
 - (2) Calms Instability — 1:8**
 - (3) Conquers Impossibility — Hebrews 11:6**
 - (4) Centers in Infallibility — 1 Corinthians 1:30**

2. Word of God — 1:18-27

— Three titles for the Word of God:

- Word of Truth — 1:18
- Engrafted Word — 1:21
- Perfect Law of Liberty — 1:25
 - a. It is permanent — Mark 13:31; 1 Peter 1:23-25
 - (1) Promises not shaken — 2 Corinthians 1:20**
 - (2) Prophecies not shaken — 2 Peter 3:3-4**
 - b. it is powerful — Psalm 119:11; Hebrews 4:12
 - (3) To produce the new birth (able to save) — 1:21**
 - (a) Reproves the Sinner — Hebrews 4:12**
 - (b) Regenerates the Seeker — John 5:24; Romans 8:1**
 - (c) Refreshes the Saint (Blessed) — Psalm 50:5; James 1:25**
 - (d) Reveals the Savior — John 16:13-15; 5:39**
 - c. It is practical — 1:18-27
 - (4) To produce new behavior**
 - (a) Sin is Revealed — 1:23-25**
 - (b) Sin is Removed (Lay aside) — 1:21**
 - (c) Saint is Rejoicing (Blessed) — 1:25**

We must have:

- a. Captivated Ears (Swift to hear) — 1:19
- b. Controlled Tongue (Slow to Speak) — 1:19
- c. Calm Spirit (Slow to Wrath) — 1:19
- d. Clean Heart (Put Away) — 1:21,27

Key Verse of the Epistle — James 1:27 — Two Types of Religion**1. Vain Religion — Worthless — No Value — Empty — 1:26**

- a. The Denial — (seems religious - hypocritical)
- b. The Deception — (deceives his own heart)
- c. The Declaration — (this religion is vain)

Vain Religion offers:

- No Provision
- No Pardon
- No Peace
- No Prospect

2. Valid Religion — Pure Genuine — Authentic — Real — 1:26-27

- a. A tongue that is controlled — 1:26
- b. A touch that is compassionate — 1:27
- c. A testimony that is clean — 1:27

Valid Religion (Biblical Christianity) affects my:

- Communication — 1:26
- Conduct — 1:27
- Character — 1:27

THERE IS A GREAT DIVORCE TODAY BETWEEN BELIEF AND BEHAVIOR!

CHAPTER 2 – PRACTICALITY OF THE MASTER (TRUTH PRACTICED)**Key Verse – 2:12****A. Love your brother – 2:1-13****1. The Exhortation (No Respect of Persons) – 2:1**

—Dr. Lehman Strauss: Never Show Favoritism based on a person's...

- a. Possessions
- b. Position
- c. Personality
- d. Pedigree

— A real test of our faith is how we treat other people

2. The Example – 2:2-4

— Two men attending church. They were judged based on outward appearance.

3. The Examination – 2:5-13

- a. The Principle: passion toward all with no partiality toward any. 2:8
— The royal law: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.
- b. The Process: judged by the law of liberty. 2:12
- c. The Pronouncement. 2:9,13

(1) You commit sin – 2:9

(2) You receive judgment without mercy – 2:13

— Charles Swindoll:

- Let Scripture be your standard – 2:1-2
- Let love be your law – 2:8
- Let mercy be your message – 2:13

B. Live your belief – 2:14-26

— There is no act of grace in the heart where there is no activity of grace in the life.

— Will the real phony please stand up?

— Two key questions introduce this section:

(1) What is the use of saying you have faith unless you prove it with your actions? 2:14

(2) Will this kind of faith save any one? 2:14

— James versus Paul, is there a contradiction?

— Romans 3:28 — Justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

— James 2:24 — You see how by works a man is justified and not by faith only.

— Paul: the Root — God's part — Justification.

— James: the Fruit — Man's part — Validation.

— By faith, righteousness is declared.

— By works, righteousness is demonstrated.

1. Essential Faith — Ephesians 2:8-10; Romans 5:1

- There are over 150 verses in the New Testament that base salvation on faith (believing God).
- Definition of faith: belief; complete trust; something believed with strong conviction.
- Faith is belief in action.
- Faith is the link that binds our nothingness to His almightiness.
- There are a thousand ways to please God but not one without faith. Hebrews 11:6
- Faith perceives the invisible, believes the incredible, receives the impossible!
 - a. Commence by faith — Salvation — Gal. 2:16; Rom. 5:1, 10:17; Eph. 2:8-10
 - b. Continue by faith — Service — Galatians 2:20; 2 Corinthians 5:7
 - c. Conclude by faith — Satisfaction - 1 Peter 1:9

2. Experiential Faith (Genuine Faith) — 2:17,22

— Charles Swindoll:

- It is not indifferent: People of genuine faith become involved in the lives of others. 2:15-16
- It is not independent: There will be a marriage of faith and works. 2:17
- It is not invisible: “To Show” means to bring to light; to display; to exhibit. 2:18
- It is not intellectual: Not a “mental assent” to the gospel but “heart consent”. 2:19-20

3. Evidential Faith — 2:21-26

— Illustration: He uses two different people.

- a. Abraham: Male, Jew, Friend of God — 2:25

(1) Basis of Faith — 2:23

(2) Behavior of Faith — 2:21

(3) Benefits of Faith — 2:23

- b. Rahab: Female, Gentile, Harlot — 2:25

(1) Basis of Faith — Joshua 2:9

(2) Behavior of Faith — Joshua 2:15-16

(3) Benefits of Faith — Joshua 6:25

— Wherever you find separation you find death.

- Separation of the soul from the body: physical death.
- Separation of the soul from God: spiritual death.
- Separation of works from faith: dead faith.

FAITH: FORSAKING ALL I TRUST HIM. HE IS TRUSTWORTHY!

CHAPTER 3 — POWER OF THE MESSAGE (TONGUE PERFECTED)**Key Verse — 3:2****A. Selects his words — 3:1-12**

- James mentions the tongue in every chapter.
 - A controlled mouth means a controlled man.
 - The tongue reveals the condition of my heart. Matt.12:34—35
 - 1. Power to Regulate (direct) — Proverbs 18:21; 3:3-4**
 - Illustration: Horse (Bit) — 3:3 Ship (Rudder/Helm) — 3:4
 - Our words can direct (steer) others into the right or the wrong path.

Helpful or Harmful	Blessing or Blight
Sweet or Sour	Careful or Careless
Heal or Hurt	Deliverance or Destruction
 - 2. Power to Ruin (destroy) — Proverbs 16:27; 3:5-8**
 - illustration: Fire (spark) — 3:5,6 — Animal (poison) — 317,8
 - If your lips would keep from slips, five things observe with care
 - Of whom you speak, to whom you speak, and how, and when and where
 - 3. Power to Refresh (delight) - Romans 15:32; 3:9-12**
 - Illustration: Fountain (sweet/bitter) — 3:11
 - Fruit Tree (same fruit) — 3:12
 - A fountain cannot produce two kinds of water.
 - A fruit tree cannot produce two kinds of fruit.
 - *Proverbs 4:23 Keep thy heart with all diligence for out of it are the issues of life.*
 - Who controls my tongue?
 - a. A Satan controlled tongue.
 - (1) To Blame (we even blame God!) — James 1:13-14**
 - (2) To Boast (just a word can cause division) — James 3:5,14**
 - (3) To Blaspheme — 1 Peter 3:10; James 3:10; 5:12**
 - Illustration: Peter's denial of Christ.
 - b. A Savior controlled tongue.
 - (1) To praise — James 3:9; Psalm 148, 149, 150**
 - Doxology: Praise God from whom all blessings flow!
 - (2) To pray — James 1:5-6; 5:13-18 (the fervent prayer to God)**
 - (3) To Proclaim — James 5:13; Acts 1:8; Psalm 107:2**
 - Key: Romans 6:13 — Yield your members to the Lord.
- Formula for control of the tongue:
 - A purpose to pursue. Psalm 17:3; Psalm 39:1
 - A prospect to ponder. Matthew 12:34-37
 - A prayer to pray. Psalm 19:14; 141:3

B. Shows his works — 3:13

— This was covered along with James 1:5 on the subject of wisdom of God.

C. Shares his wisdom — 3:13-18

— This was covered along with James 1:5 on the subject of wisdom of God.

CHAPTER 4 — PURITY OF THE MESSENGER (TESTING PROFITABLE)**Key Verse — 4:8****A. Rebuke of Worldliness — 4:1-12**

The word “world” is used three ways in the Bible:

- World of Mankind (people) — John 3:16
- World of Materialism (things) — 1 John 2:15-17
- World of Morals (system) — Romans 12:2

○ Fighting in the Church:

- The Cause: Lust (selfish desires) — 4:1-3
- The Characteristics
 - Unsatisfied Pleasure — 4:2
 - Uncontrolled Passion — 4:2
 - Untapped Potential — 4:2
 - Unanswered Prayer — 4:2, 3
- The Condemnation: friendship with the world — 4:4
 - Destroys Fellowship — 4:4-7
 - Denies our Faith — 4:4-5
- The Cure: the Grace of God — 4:6-11
 - Hebrews 4:16; 2 Corinthians 12:9; Romans 5:20
 - A Precept — (Something we are not to do) — 4:8
 - A Promise — (Something God will do) — 4:8
 - A Principle — (Something God will do if we do what He says) — 4:8

1. The Victory we claim — What we escape!

- a. The Flesh — 4:1-3
- b. The World — 4:4-5
- c. The Devil — 4:7

2. The Venture we choose — What we enjoy!

- a. God’s Grace — 4:6
- b. God’s Guarantee — 4:8-10
 - (1) *Of His Presence — 4:8*
 - (2) *Of His Promotion — 4:10*
- c. God’s Guidance — (the will of God) 4:13-17

Christ — The Christian — The World

- We have a beautiful picture of this relationship in the prayer of our Lord recorded in John 17
 - We are saved out of the world. John 17:6
 - We are still in the world. John 17:11
 - We are to be separate from the world. John 17:14,16
- We are sent into the world. John 17:18
- The world is my preaching ground, not my playground!

Four-fold test to determine if something is right or wrong

1. Test of Expediency — 1 Corinthians 6:12
 - Expediency = Helpful, Profitable, Beneficial
 - Question: Will this be profitable in my life?
2. Test of Enslavement - 1 Corinthians 6:12
 - Question: Does it make me its slave?
3. Test of Edification — 1 Corinthians 10:23
 - Edification = To build up, to support, to enhance
 - Question: Does it build me up as well as others?
4. Test of Example — 1 Corinthians 8:9-13
 - Question: Does this set a good example for others?

B. Realization of God's will — 4:13-17

— The will of God is not a matter of getting man's will done in heaven but rather God's will done on earth!

- Attitude toward the will of God — 4:13-17
 - Disregarded it (planned without seeking God) — 4:13
 - Disobeyed it (sought it but refused to do it) — 4:17
 - Did it (simply said we will do what God says) — 4:15
- Aspects of the will of God - Acts 21:1-14
 - Preparation - Acts 21 :13 (Paul said "I am ready")
 - Persecution - Acts 21:13; 2 Timothy 3:12 (Paul was ready if need be to die for the will of God)
 - Person - Acts 21:13 (note: for the name of Jesus Christ)

— Definition: The will of God is a living relationship between Christ and the believer! (Wiersbe)

1. A Description of the Will of God - Romans 12:2

- a. it is perfect - Romans 12:2
- b. It is practical — James 4:13-17
- c. it is personal — James 4:15; Psalm 143:1
- d. It is pleasurable - Psalm 40:8; Romans 12:2
- e. It is provable - Romans 12:2

2. A Discovery of the Will of God - Ephesians 5:17

- a. Meditate - Joshua 1:8 (soak in the Scriptures)
 - (1) Open your Bible**
 - (2) Observe your Bible**
 - (3) Obey your Bible**
- b. Dedicate - Joshua 1:16-18 (surrender yourself)
 - (1) Say - We will do - Joshua 1:16**
 - (2) Send - We will go - Joshua 1:16**
 - (3) Speak - We will hearken - Joshua 1:17**
- c. Investigate - Joshua 2:1 (spy out the situation)
 - (1) All Opportunities (possibilities)**
 - (2) All Options (potentials)**

(3) All Obstacles (problems)

d. Initiate — Joshua 3:1-5; Psalm 37:23 (step of surrender)

(1) Prepared Way — Joshua 3:4 (may know the way)

(2) Perfect Walk — Joshua 3:5 (sanctify yourselves)

(3) Promised Wonders — Joshua 3:5 (tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you)

e. Eliminate - Joshua 7:11-21 (sin must be settled)

(1) Recognize sin — 1 John 1:9

(2) Repent of sin — 1 John 1:9

(3) Remove sin — 1 John 1:9

3. A Decision for the Will of God — 1 John 2:17; Ephesians 6:6

a. Decision to follow Him — Luke 9:23

(1) Denial — Deny himself

(2) Death — Take up his cross

(3) Daily — Do it daily

(4) Direction — Follow me

b. Decision to be faithful to Him — 1 Corinthians 4:2

c. Decision to finish with Him — Acts 21:13; 2 Timothy 4:7

Five Rules when playing with God (Charles Swindoll) James 4:13

- Selfishly choose your own time and schedule.
- Select the location that pleases you.
- Limit your stay to please yourself.
- Arrange your activities to work for your own benefit and pleasure.
- Predict your profit and boast about it.

THE MOST CONTENT PLACE IN THE ENTIRE WORLD IS IN THE CENTER OF THE WILL OF GOD!

CHAPTER 5 — PATIENCE IN THE MINISTRY (TREASURE PRODUCED)**Key Verse — 5:8**

- The epistle opens with “Be Patient” — 1:3, 4
- The epistle closes with “Be Patient” — 5:7-8,10—11

A. Period of Warning — 5:1-6

This chapter is filled with problems:

- Economic — Poor deprived of wages 5:4
- Physical — Physical affliction 5:13-16
- Spiritual — Spiritual Departure 5:19-20

This chapter is filled with prayer — 5:13-18

Laws of Sowing and Reaping

- Every man who sows expects to reap.
- Every man who sows expects to reap the same kind as he sows.
- Every man who sows expects to reap far more than he sows.

1. The Process — 5:4

- a. Dishonest: kept the wages of the workers — 5:4
- b. Deceptive: Influenced court decisions — 5:6

2. The Procedure — 5:3-5

- It is a sin to acquire wealth in a wrong manner. It’s also a sin to use it wrongfully.
 - a. Kept it for themselves 5:3
 - b. Kept others from being a blessing 5:4

3. The Product (witnesses against them) — 5:1-4

- a. Wealth 5:3
- b. Withheld Wages 5:4
- c. Workers 5:4

B. Period of Waiting (Patience, Endurance) — 5:7-12

- The coming of the Lord is stated three times:
 - (1) Coming of the Lord 5:7
 - (2) Coming of the Lord 5:8
 - (3) The Judge standeth before the door 5:4

- He uses three illustrations of patience:

- (1) The farmer — 5:7-9
 - Secret: God is producing a harvest in our lives. A ripe harvest takes time and effort.
- (2) The prophets — 5:10
 - They suffered" yet they endured.
- (3) Job - 5:11
 - First God humbles him and then God honors him.

- Warren Wiersbe: When you find yourself in the fire you need to remember God’s hand is on the thermostat!

—Remember: The will of God will never lead you where the grace of God cannot sustain you!

- How should I react when unjustly treated?
 - (1) Be Patient — God is always on schedule — 5:7-8
 - (2) Be Practical — Establish: prop up, shore up — 5:8.
 - (3) Be Positive — Do not complain or carry a grudge — 5:9-10
 - (4) Be Persistent — Endure: do not quit — 5:11-12
 - Note: James 5:12 (swear not) = do not make vows and promises in difficult times that you do not plan to fulfill.
- Lessons to be learned when unjustly treated. Do not let your focus be:
 - (1) On the problem (if we do it will bring anger)
 - (2) On you personally (become filled with self—pity)
 - (3) On another person (become fault-finding)
 - (4) On the present (miss what God is trying to do).

C. Period of Witnessing (Prayer mentioned. 7 times) — 5:13-20

Note: In the life of the mature believer singing and suffering go together — a song in the night!

1. Prayer for the suffering — 5:13

- Afflicted, in trouble. Suffering in the difficult circumstances.
 - a. God transforms troubles into triumphs.
 - b. God transforms problems into praise.
 - c. God often changes the circumstances but more often he changes us so we can handle the trial.
 - d. God gives sufficient grace in difficult times — James 4:6; 2 Corinthians 12:7-10
 - Only God can cause us to sing in the midst of suffering.
 - Paul and Silas in the Philippian Jail. Acts 16:25

2. Prayer for the sick — 5:14-16

- Does God heal?
- Does God always heal?
- Does God heal when there is sufficient faith?
- Does God heal when there is no faith?
- Sometimes God gets more glory through the illness than through the cure
 - a. Person is sick because of sin.
 - Tense of the verb = “If he has been constantly sinning.”
 - Sickness is God’s discipline for the sin in his life. 5:15-16
 - b. Person confesses his sin. - Confessed in the presence of the elders. 5:16
 - c. Person is healed by the prayer of faith.
 - The “prayer of faith” can only be prayed when the corporate church leadership is convinced it is God’s will to heal this person. 5:14-15

3. Prayer for the supernatural — 5:17-18

- Elijah prayed and God literally closed and opened the heavens.
- In your prayer life:
 - Be Practical
 - Be Persistent
 - Be Passionate
 - Be Perceptive

4. Prayer for the straying — 5:19-20

There are differences of opinion whether or not these verses refer to the unsaved or a saved person. There are truths that can be applied to either one. However, I feel it refers to a believer who has wandered away from the Lord and the person is being used of God to see that person restored to fellowship. The verb "err" means "to wander" and suggests a gradual moving away from the truth.

- a. The commencement — 5:19
— They have wandered from the truth.
- b. The commission — 5:19-20
— Allow God to use you to see this person turned around from the error of his way.
- c. The conclusion — 5:20
 - (1) Delivered from Sin
 - (2) Directed for Service

We often cannot trace the hand of God but we can always trust the heart of God!

Five characteristics of a mature believer

- Patient in testing — James 1
- Practices the truth — James 2
- Power over the tongue — James 3
- Purity in testimony — James 4
- Prayerful in trouble — James 5

Question: Is my religion vain or valid? James 1:27