

# James 1:1-8

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6/3/2025

## Application

Announcements: Church picnic and baptism this evening 6:00 Debbie Hunstman went to be with the Lord. Viewing today 2-4 here. Memorial service tomorrow in Savannah. Monday at 2:00 chamberlain funeral home mound city. I wanted to briefly address something significant that's made the news this week. Many of you know I've long believed—and preached—that the Constitution protects the freedom of pastors to speak from the pulpit on any matter, including candidates and elections, without fear of violating the so-called Johnson Amendment. This week, even the IRS has formally acknowledged that pastors have the right to speak boldly within the context of our worship services. We don't say this to become political; we say it because Christ is Lord over every realm of life, and we are called to stand for truth wherever it leads. It's a reminder that our ultimate allegiance is not to parties or politicians, but to Jesus Christ, who is King of kings. As your pastor, I'll continue to speak on the issues of our day through a biblical lens—humbly, prayerfully, and without compromise. And I trust you'll continue to be Bereans: searching the Scriptures, testing everything, and standing firm in the faith. Thank you for being a church that loves the truth and seeks first the Kingdom of God.

## Scripture

James 1:1-8 (NKJV) [1] James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad: Greetings. [2] My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, [3] knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. [4] But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. [5] If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. [6] But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. [7] For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; [8] he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

## Illustration

One of the many pitfalls of the social media world we live in is the ability for people to present any version of themselves that they want other people to believe or perceive. You can create a personal package or brand while leaving out the substance of what's underneath the surface. The truth is, people have been doing this long before Social Media through what they wear or how they talk to create an impression.

Faith:

It's the same way regarding our faith. A Christian faith that is professed but never displays the substance or fruit of practical action, repentance of sin, love for others, or forward movement in Christ is not authentic at all; it's merely a facade that someone put on to make an impression; an external religious system that hasn't been fully embraced to change the heart.

James is the book that teaches us what it means to plug our lives into faith in a way that faith, like a power outlet, provides a current that activates our lives to glorify God. When it comes to faith, James 1:4 tells us what God's desired outcome is. James calls it "Genuineness." God's goal for your life is that you develop faith that is more than words or more than a set of doctrines you claim to believe. God will do what it takes to ensure your faith is authentic, that it operates under pressure, and that it bears fruit that will last forever.

## Application

You've heard it said that the furthest distance is the 18 inches between your head and your heart. I would like to argue that the more difficult distance is the 18 inches between your hands. It's great to learn something. It's even greater when that truth convicts and challenges our hearts. But if the conviction doesn't turn into change... if that attitude doesn't, at some point, translate into action, then we might as well not have learned it at all. Later in verse 22 James will continue: "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves." (James 1:22)

As I read the book of James, I reflected on my own life and church life in general, particularly in America. It saddens me to see the degree of tolerance we have allowed toward the schisms in our lives that separate our everyday lives from our proclaimed faith.

I want to say that the book of James does not exist to be legalistic or to burden the Christian with rules in an attempt to earn one's salvation. No, Paul makes it clear that you are not saved or justified by any works of righteousness that you can do, but by God's grace and faith in the finished work of Jesus on the cross. But James will provide this challenge:

## Quote

— Pastor Josh

Good works will never produce genuine faith, but genuine faith will produce good works.

But we are sometimes far too comfortable with the disconnect in our lives between what we claim to believe and what we practice. James, in the strongest sense, tests our profession to see if it aligns with the reality of our lives. I believe this is what Paul was referring to when he wrote:

## Scripture

2 Corinthians 13:5 (NKJV) [5] Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.

Important:

We need to understand that sanctification (the process of becoming holy like Jesus is holy) is a process. But it's a PROCESS that displays PROGRESS. In other words, if you can't look at your life with Christ and see any progress of the character of Jesus developing in you, of strength against temptation, of increasing love for others, of obedience to the Word of God, there is a chance that your professed faith is not genuine.

## Application

The danger of seeing faith as nothing more than a prayer you prayed, a box you check, a t-shirt you wear, or a service you go to is that it creates a disconnect from your everyday life. Many people have separated their Sunday morning faith from their Friday night faith; their weekend faith from their weekly faith. Sunday morning is the time when you: Sing, Study, Serve. The rest of the week, you: Sin, Squander, Saturate yourself in the world. The two never seem to mesh together. We don't want a faith that revolves around the church. We want a church that revolves around the faith of its members. It's only then that we can accomplish truly great things for God's kingdom. If you don't plan on having this type of faith as a Christian, my friend, be prepared because the weeds will grow. They will develop and choke out your faith. At best, you will live your life nominally for Jesus.

## Quote

— CS Lewis

"If you're thinking of becoming a Christian, I warn you, you're embarking on something which will take the whole of you."

However, understand that Christianity is not just about giving things up to follow Jesus. It's about giving up lesser things to gain something far greater. It's about trading the world's trash for heaven's treasures.

James addresses the issue of faith uniquely and brings a balance to what faith is all about. You see, the Apostle Paul also writes about faith. At first glance, when you read Galatians and Ephesians and Paul's defense of salvation through grace by faith and argument against legalism, it seems to contradict James's writing about faith in action and what it accomplishes.

In reality, James and Paul are describing two facets of the same faith; two sides of the same coin. Paul writes about inward faith that leads to salvation, the trust in the sacrifice of Jesus for the forgiveness of sins. James writes about how that inward faith becomes an outward faith unto good works that glorify God and make us more like Jesus.

## Illustration

Think about it in terms of a prescription drug. It's the difference printed on the bottle and the actual outcome of ingesting the prescription. Believing and trusting in Christ is what brings about salvation, forgiveness, and peace with God. But if you really take that medicine, it's going to have some side effects that kill your flesh, but make you spiritually whole.

## Quote

— Robert Murray M'Cheyne

As the great Scottish preacher Robert Murray M'Cheyne once said, "A true faith in Jesus Christ will not suffer us to be idle. No, it is an active, lively, restless principle; it fills the heart, so that it cannot be easy till it is doing something for Jesus Christ."

The book of James addresses how saving faith is practically demonstrated:

Through the trials we face  
Through how we view money  
Through how we handle temptation  
Through how we react to challenging circumstances in life  
Through how we serve those in need  
Through how we treat others who are different from us  
Through how we use our tongue  
Through how we view and confess our sin  
Through how we keep our word

Introduction:

Authorship: Who wrote this book? Most scholars agree that it was neither of the two disciples named James, but James, the half-brother of Jesus and leader in the church in Jerusalem.

IMAGINE: James growing up with Jesus. Mom would always be telling you, "James, why can't you be more like Jesus?"

The Bible teaches us that James, the brother of Jesus, came to believe that Jesus was the Messiah after the resurrection (1 Cor. 15:7). Prior to that, James, like many others, including his own family, had doubts about Jesus' identity and mission (Mark 3:21). Fast forward to Acts 15 – James is a leader of the church in Jerusalem. Church history records that in 62 AD he died a martyr's death. When he said, "Be doers of the Word and not hearers only," he had the right to talk that way. He had grown up with the living WORD, Jesus. He had watched and seen Jesus' life and listened to Jesus' teachings, but now He was worshipping his brother (literally). If you had the clout of being the brother of the Savior and king of the world, Goe in human flesh, how would you introduce yourself?

## Scripture

James 1:1 (NKJV) - James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad: Greetings.

James doesn't flaunt his position or relationship with Christ. Only and always a bondservant.

## Quote

When we humbly acknowledge ourselves as servants and sinners saved by grace, we open ourselves up to be vessels for God's work. When we start to believe that we are more than that, we forfeit our usability.

The Audience: The scattered 12 tribes:

Multiple times in history, Israel had been scattered:

722 BC – Assyria and the Northern tribes, 586 BC – Babylonian invasion against the southern tribes of Judah. Now the gospel was spreading to all these scattered people, and Jews throughout the empire were coming to know their true Messiah. Some commentators suggest that James was written prior to the gospel reaching the Roman Centurion Cornelius when the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Gentiles, bringing them into the family of faith. This is why James refers to the 12 tribes, because in the beginning, the church consisted of Jews who received Jesus as the Christ.

James doesn't waste any time cutting to the chase with his audience:

## Scripture

James 1:2-4 (NKJV) "My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing."

## Main Point

### Point 1

True faith requires testing to grow

## Quote

— *Phillips Translation*

When all kinds of trials and temptations crowd into your lives, my brothers, don't resent them as intruders, but welcome them as friends! —Phillips Translation

All joy:

We usually count it all joy when the trials leave, not when they come. Joy is not necessarily happiness. Happiness is a feeling that can often accompany joy, but joy is rooted in a decision to maintain an eternal outlook on something despite its immediate ramifications.

Count it - change your perspective. Determine to see it as a gift to be embraced, not a burden to be escaped. All joy - I believe that Jesus is our model. I personally believe that even in Jesus' most significant moment of sorrow, he let joy lead Him. A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. -Isaiah 53:3 He cried out in great distress and agony in the garden of Gethsemane. He went through unimaginable horrors at the cross. And yet Hebrews tells us.

## Scripture

[Hebrews 12:2] (NKJV) [2] looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Jesus didn't find joy by escaping suffering, but in the midst of it.

When trials come, and they WILL come. When, not if. And notice the nature of the trials:

## Application

Trials - That which is designed to try, test, or prove.

Various – different shapes and sizes. Not all trials look the same

Some come as a surprise, while others are expected. Some are minor annoyances, while others are life-altering events and circumstances. Not only are they various in form, but they also stem from multiple sources and can come for various reasons. Sometimes trials simply arise as a natural consequence of living in a sinful and fallen world. Sometimes, they are a result of our own mistakes or poor decisions. This is why perspective is so important. God desires to use trials to ultimately benefit you.

It sounds a little trite, but it's true:

## Quote

— Pastor Josh

God can turn trials into testimonies when they are received with joy.

Verse 3: knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. 4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

Knowing this, the first thing to note about faith is that faith KNOWS. If you know God, there is a confidence that can be had when facing these difficult trials in life. I wonder if God is at work for your good in the middle of a difficulty.

## Illustration

In golf, there is a term called "A shot over trouble." The "trouble" refers to obstacles that are between the shooter and the hole. It may be a tree, a lake, or a sand trap. If you take a shot over trouble, the golfer has to stay aware of the destination and look at the bigger picture. If he just looks at what's in front of him, the shot becomes impossible. It's the same way in life. Instead of focusing on the source of our trials or the magnitude of our trials, we need to keep our eyes fixed on what the trial ultimately produces.

James tells us that when we change our perspective on trials, we see that the difficulties and challenges we face in life can produce within us patience and ultimately wholeness.

Let's face it, some trials last a while. Patience is needed. If you only focus on your trial, you will become anxious and antsy. You might end up doing something drastic or foolish.

## Illustration

Patience – Hupomone: Hupo – to remain. Mone – under. Patience here does not just mean the ability to wait. It means to have the strength to bear up under the trial without faltering; to remain and not give up.

However, patience is not the ultimate goal. It's only a step in the process.

Verse 4: But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

You know, I wish that we could all wake up tomorrow perfect. But that's not going to happen. Anything beautiful that you see did not just get that way overnight. Even things that are naturally beautiful were not always that way.

Perfect - Not a moral perfection but a spiritual maturity.

## Illustration

Diamonds do not resemble the pictures when they are pulled out of the ground. They must be cut, polished, and put through a rigorous process.

## Illustration

Before they had scientific methods to test gold's purity, ancient goldsmiths would use the reflection method. They would heat the gold and scrape off the impurities. They would continue this process over and over until they could see their reflection in the gold. This is how God works with us. He is making us complete. He is adding to our character those things that we lack. He is strengthening the flabby areas of our faith. Sometimes the only way that is accomplished is through a trial.

Peter adds a little extra commentary on this process. He writes:

## Scripture

1 Peter 1:6-7 (NKJV) In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

This is again why perspective is so important. Who would ever go on a diet if they had no reason or understanding of why they were doing it? However, if you're looking at the results and have a goal in mind, there are ways to find joy in the diet because you can see that it's worth it in the end.



NOTICE: the word “Let” - But let patience have its perfect work (vs. 4). Faith knows, but the second thing about faith is that faith also trusts. Faith knows, but faith also trusts that God is behind the scenes working things out for my favor. I promise you, if you walk with Jesus and trust in God through your trial, you will come out better on the other end of it. If you fight against God and turn your back on Him, chances are that trial will last a lot longer due to your rebellious heart.

Verses 5-8: Paul discusses wisdom in the context of trials.

## Main Point

### Point 2

Faith Requires Heavenly Wisdom

## Scripture

James 1:5-8 (NKJV) [5] If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. [6] But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. [7] For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; [8] he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

The promise of receiving from God is directly related to wisdom. Wisdom is something that God is longing to give, and when facing a difficult trial, it's something

Wisdom is different from knowledge. Knowledge teaches us the right way, but it's up to us how to apply the knowledge to the situation for the right outcome. Oftentimes, some of our trials might have been avoided if we had asked for wisdom in the first place.

## Illustration

EXAMPLE: “I bought a brand new Lexus even though I just got laid off and have all my credit cards maxed out. Oh God, save me from this trial!” Perhaps if we had asked for God's wisdom before buying the car and maxing out the credit cards, we could have avoided the situation!

The good news is that it's never too late to ask for wisdom. And God promises to give it, but only to those who ask with faith.

There is no point in asking God for wisdom that you don't really believe He is going to give you, or you have no intention of applying to your situation. You have to be willing to receive the answer of wisdom and walk in it, whether your flesh likes it or not. If you doubt that He will give it, or doubt the wisdom itself, choosing your own wisdom above his, you're essentially calling His omnipotence, omniscience, and character into question. I've found the following principle true about humanity:

## Quote

— *Pastor Josh*

Many people want the outcome of God's wisdom without the application of God's wisdom.

## Illustration

How's God helping you through that trial? Answer: He's not, and it's horrible! I prayed sincerely for His help and for Him to give me answers. Then I went and talked to the pastor. He told me some mumbo Jumbo about changing certain habits in my life and gave me scriptures. Then I spoke with my friend, and he said the same thing. They just don't understand my situation. How is all that supposed to help?

People who doubt God for wisdom are given two descriptions here:

Wave of the sea tossed and driven by the wind: A wave has no ability within itself to control where it is going or how long it lasts. It is always influenced and directed by its environment. It rolls up to the shore, and as fast as it was there, it's gone. A person of faith is not controlled by his or her environment but instead is directed by the Lord and His wisdom. They don't make excuses about how everything is someone else's fault. Instead, they are led in a specific direction by the Lord, and they can stay on course and not be moved. That person will endure through the trial. A double-minded person, unstable in all their ways: Double-minded – to face in opposite directions. One face is looking to God, and the other face is looking to the world. By giving so much attention to both, they are never able to give 100% to God. They are in a constant state of tug-of-war between what they want and what God wants. Therefore, they are unstable and inconsistent. Always up and down and easily swayed by their emotions or circumstances.

## Application

GOOD NEWS: When we do ask in faith and sincerity, God gladly and freely gives. He gives LIBERALLY (There's plenty to go around) and WITHOUT REPROACH. Reproach - An expression of disapproval or disappointment. When we ask for wisdom, God doesn't respond in anger or disappointment that we need wisdom. EXAMPLE: My son is learning to mow the lawn. I'd rejoice to give him instruction if he has a question about seeing swirls all over the yard because he thought he could figure it out himself!

Conclusion: