

The Book of
James

A Commentary by
Max Klein

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Edited by SawokProductions

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The author has studied under the teaching ministry of R. B. Thieme Jr., his faithful pastor for over 30 years. During that time Max has learned many biblical principles and doctrinal truths which have given him a clear understanding of the spiritual life. It is this spiritual life that Max desires to explain in simple written form.

Preface

Before you begin your Bible study, if you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, be sure you have named your sins privately to God the Father.

If we confess our [known] sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our [known] sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

You will then be in fellowship with God, filled with the Holy Spirit, and ready to learn Bible doctrine from the word of God.

God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in [the filling of] the Spirit and [Biblical] truth. (John 4:24)

If you have never personally believed in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, the issue is not naming your sins. The issue is faith alone in Christ alone.

He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey [the command to believe in] the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him. (John 3:36)

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James

Authorship of the Book of James

James was written circa 45 AD from Jerusalem to the Jews scattered throughout the Roman Empire and beyond. James, the author of this epistle, was the step brother of Jesus Christ (Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3) namely, they had the same mother. Though they were in the same home, James remained an unbeliever even throughout the public ministry of Jesus Christ, “for not even his brothers were believing in Him” (John 7:5). However, we know that James and his brothers became believers sometime between the Resurrection and the Ascension since they were praying in the upper room the day after the Ascension (Acts 1:14). This explains why the resurrected Christ appeared to James: “then he appeared to James” (1 Corinthians 15:7). Jesus knew that if James saw him in a resurrection body he would realize that his step-brother was the Savior and Messiah and then would explain these things to his brothers, who would also believe.

After Paul’s first missionary journey, he attended a council in Jerusalem. At this council, the apostle Peter was one of the leaders (Acts 15:6), but it was James’ final opinion which was approved by the council (Acts 15:13, 19-20 cf. Acts 21:25). When Paul wrote Galatians during his second missionary journey in circa 53 AD, he confirms that this same James in Jerusalem was indeed the step brother of Jesus Christ (Galatians 1:19, 2:9). In Luke’s record of Paul’s trip to Jerusalem after the 3rd missionary journey circa 58 AD, he mentions James first and then the other pastors (Acts 21:17, 18). He does so because it is correct protocol to mention the leader first. Further evidence of James authorship of this epistle is provided by the early church fathers, Origin (185-253), Eusebius (265-340), and Jerome (340-420) who all state without doubt that James, the stepbrother of Jesus was the author of this epistle.

The Word of God is alive and powerful, sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and the spirit, and of the joints and the marrow and is a critic of thoughts and intents of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12)

All Scripture is God-breathed and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be mature, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Study to show thyself approved, a workman that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.
(2 Timothy 2:15)

Chapter One

In chapter 1 James addresses two different categories of believer. In 1:2-18, James is giving instruction to those Jewish believers who had learned some doctrine, and in 1:19-25 those who had rejected learning doctrine altogether. Even though the first group had learned some doctrine, they were either inconsistent in learning and so did not possess a cohesive system of doctrine in their souls, or they possessed sufficient doctrine but lacked the humility to apply it to their experience. So, even though these Jewish believers possessed some metabolized doctrine, they were spending much of their time out of fellowship and consequently failing in their spiritual lives, in some cases even developing mental illness (verse 8).

As for those who had rejected Bible doctrine, James commands the solution: “be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger” (1:19). These believers must find a qualified minister of God’s word and listen to him consistently if they intend to advance spiritually.

1:1. James, a slave of God the Father and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes who are in the dispersion, be happy.

Even though James is the step brother of the humanity of Jesus, he does not mention this. James could have used his relationship with the Lord to seek recognition or influence, but he realizes that a genetic relationship with the humanity of Jesus is not an issue in the spiritual life. Rather than calling Jesus his brother, he calls him his Lord. This is the attitude of humility.

As a slave of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, James realizes that he is to serve them; he is not on this earth to do his own will, but the will of the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. James became an honorable servant of the Lord and for this reason was martyred by the order of the high priest, Albinus according to Josephus.¹

1. *Antiquities*: book 20, chapter 9

James is writing to the Jewish believers scattered throughout the Roman Empire in order to solve their ignorance regarding many facets of the spiritual life. Occasionally, these believers would come to Jerusalem on certain feast days. Through conversations with them James came to realize that they had many unsolved problems and were failing in their spiritual lives, and so he decided to write an epistle that would first reveal and enumerate these problems and then explain the solutions.

The Greek word *χαίρειν* (*chairein*) was used as a greeting in personal letters, just as many people today use the English word “Greetings” when writing to a friend. However, this is not a personal letter, but a doctrinal message. As a doctrinal message, *chairein* should be translated with its actual meaning *rejoice* or *be happy* since happiness is a major theme in the book of James (1:2, 12, 25; 4:9; 5:11).

1:2. My brethren, consider it all as happiness whenever you encounter various tests,

The Greek verb *ἡγέομαι* (*hegeomai*) means to think, to consider and to regard. Correct thinking requires the recall of doctrine from memory, and application of that doctrine to experience so that a rational decision may be made, and a correct response (action) may be executed. Therefore, it means to employ knowledge rationally and objectively to ones situation. To consider means to think carefully in making decisions. To regard means to value, to honor and to revere. In other words, we should place the highest value in applying God’s word to our pressures, problems, adversities and other kinds of undeserved suffering so that we may have happiness even under the most extreme testing.

Many people, both unbelievers and believers alike, confuse pleasure with happiness. Happiness is related to thinking in regard to the spiritual life, unlike pleasure which is related to feelings and emotion, and is not part of the spiritual life (God does provide many pleasures for the believer’s enjoyment and there are good feelings and emotion in ones responses to the spiritual life.) Pleasure is a state of feeling pleased, a satisfaction derived from what is to one’s own liking, a frivolous enjoyment all of which are unrelated to the biblical word *καρὰ* (*chara-*

joy, happiness). Romans 14:17 clearly defines this contrast between pleasure and happiness: “For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and happiness (*chara*) by the agency of the Holy Spirit.” Eating and drinking may produce a good feeling, whereas the happiness produced from the spiritual life is the result of thinking divine viewpoint. True happiness does not depend on circumstances, environment or pleasure of any form, but comes from the correct application of Bible doctrine to the believer’s experience.

There is nothing wrong with most pleasures if you are functioning correctly in your spiritual life. For example it should be a pleasure for a husband to have sex with his beloved wife. On the other hand, if pleasure is in any way related to the function of the sin nature and distracts the believer from his relationship with God, then of course it is wrong and destructive to the spiritual life. 2 Timothy 3:4 describes believers out of fellowship as “lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.”

Metabolized doctrine applied to suffering, pressure and trouble produces happiness in the soul. Usually, the greater the suffering, pressure and trouble the greater is the happiness. In other words, divine thought in the soul is more powerful than any physical or mental discomfort or pain. With pleasure, the opposite is true. Suffering, trouble and pressure may remove a pleasure or reduce its enjoyment for it is very difficult for pleasure to coexist with mental or physical pain. Happiness is related to the mind; pleasure is related to the body. Paul affirms this in his epistle to the Thessalonians: “having received the Word under much pressure with happiness from the source of the Holy Spirit” (1 Thessalonians 1:6b).

1:3. knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance [staying power: the capacity to remain under pressure with happiness].

Faith in God and his plan comes from metabolizing the Word, “Faith comes from hearing and hearing by the word of Christ” (Romans 10:17). Once you have metabolized a certain amount of knowledge your faith must be tested. Successfully using faith in applying God’s promises, principles, and doctrines to your problems, pressures and suffering produces endurance, staying-power in your soul. Generally, when you

are facing some difficulty you must be quick to apply a Biblical principle or promise to this situation, otherwise you will find yourself reacting to the problem with emotional and mental-attitude sins, and so getting out of fellowship. This application of doctrine to your situation strengthens your fellowship; you have successfully lifted and wielded the shield of faith (Ephesians 6:16).

Each time you successfully use the shield of faith to pass a test, you become stronger. This power enables the believer to handle more difficult pressures, problems and sufferings in the future. Therefore, pressures, problems and undeserved suffering in life are not your enemies, but your best friends. Without these pressures and undeserved sufferings your faith cannot be tested. If faith is not tested there is no development of endurance in the soul, and without this capacity to remain under pressure with happiness, you cannot advance to maturity.

1:4. And endurance [staying power] must have her complete accomplishment [finishing the spiritual life] that you may be complete [mature] and whole in all parts [that you may be undamaged in all parts of the soul] being deficient in nothing [in the soul].

The Christian who advances through all of the tests in the spiritual life will eventually reach spiritual maturity. The mature believer has a cohesive, unified, healthy soul which lacks nothing, whereas the believer who lives a life of emotional imbalance (emotions controlling the mentality) and stress will not possess a healthy cohesive mentality. The believer under the control of his emotions will enter into either moral or immoral degeneracy, which hinders the correct functioning of the mind (James 1:6-8). On the other hand, the mature believer does not lack anything in his soul. He possesses a healthy soul with tremendous happiness and wisdom. He possesses unconditional love towards mankind, personal love toward the members of the Godhead, and for the humanity of Christ. Motivated by this great love in his soul, he possesses the highest motivation that a human being can possess in life.

The Greek structure can be rather confusing to understand sometimes. So, let's rearrange verses 2-4 to make it easier to understand. In effect we are putting the participle clause at the end rather than in the middle:

My brethren, consider it all as happiness whenever you encounter various tests that you may be complete [mature] and whole [in all parts] being deficient in nothing [in the soul] knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance [staying power: the capacity to remain under pressure with happiness], and endurance [staying power] must have her complete accomplishment [finishing the spiritual life].

1:5-6a. If anyone of you [Jewish believers with some metabolized doctrine] lacks wisdom, let him ask from God who gives to all generously, and reproaches not, and it shall be given to him, but let him keep on asking by means of faith [faith-rest drill in prayer] without doubting.

Wisdom comes from understanding the spiritual life, and knowing how the doctrines and principles of the spiritual life can be applied to ones experience. This wisdom generally comes naturally to a Christian who is learning and metabolizing the Word of God. For example, if a Christian masters the doctrine of the sin nature, he should naturally possess a certain amount of wisdom about himself and others. However, some Christians have a hard time understanding and applying the Word of God to their experience even though they possess doctrine. They have some knowledge of the Word of God, but they don't understand the spiritual life and how it applies to life. Their failure relates to one or more of the following reasons:

1. They lack cohesive knowledge of God's plan.
2. They don't have knowledge of the mechanics of application.
3. They lack spiritual strength.
4. They lack humility.

These believers may pray for wisdom and this prayer will be answered. In some cases God answers this prayer by providing a qualified communicator of his word. In other cases, the answer may come in some form of great suffering or other type of pressure to remove the arrogance and replace it with humility. With humility and metabolized doctrine in his soul, the believer will become wise.

1:6b-8. For he who doubts is like a wave of the sea constantly being agitated by the wind [stress in the soul] and being tossed here and there [tremendous instability]; that kind of person must stop presuming that he will receive anything [of the greater blessings] from the Lord. A believer with a split personality [διψυχος / dipsuchos] is unstable in all his ways.

The Christian who grows in grace and in knowledge becomes strong in the application of God's word by faith. However, the Christian who does not execute the spiritual life, but rather functions continuously out of fellowship (in reversionism) with its attendant emotional rebellion will have a difficult time praying effectively. Agitation in the soul and instability in life become his lifestyle. Instead of functioning under God's authority, which nurtures a healthy cohesive and unified personality, he develops an alternate or secondary personality or personalities.

There are three Biblical words which will tell the complete story regarding mental illness. Paul introduces the first stage of mental illness with the use of the Greek word σαρκικός (*sarkikos*) (1 Corinthians 3:3). Both Greek words σαρξ (*sarks*) and *sarkikos* have the meaning of flesh, and both are used as metaphors for the sin nature, since the sin nature resides in the cell structure of the body². However, the Greek word *sarkikos* is slightly more technical. It means to be controlled by ones sin nature and while in this state to develop a dual personality. This word tells us how the majority of mental illnesses occur. A person who functions constantly under jealousy may develop a secondary personality around a lifestyle of jealousy. A person who functions constantly in

2. See *Fellowship with God, Volume Two*, by Max Klein (p23-25)

fornication may develop a secondary personality around his lifestyle of fornicating etc.

If a person functions too long under some particular sin, he will eventually develop a mental illness such as dissociation, schizophrenia etc. James describes this here in verse 8 as the split-soul (*dipsuchos*) or the split personality. If the person persists, he will become completely insane (שִׁגְעוֹן / *shigaon*). Moses uses this Hebrew word to describe what happened to many of the believers of the Exodus generation (Deuteronomy 28:28).

This process is the way of the reversionistic believer. Reversionism is the way of life the believer chooses when he turns away from God's plan, will, and purpose for his life and returns to a former belief, a former viewpoint, a former modus operandi. The reversionist has not lost his salvation but he is under the influence of Satan's cosmic system. By his own volition he involves himself in sin and evil and suffers the consequences of self-induced misery and divine punishment. Reversionism takes place in 8 stages, as follows:

1. Reaction and distraction: When the believer reacts to people or to his circumstances, it is because he is being distracted by sins related to emotion and arrogance such as jealousy, bitterness, vindictiveness, implacability, hatred, vilification, self pity, inordinate ambition and competition, worry and fear, maligning, judging and gossip etc.

Also, the believer is distracted from his spiritual life by possessing false values. Anything that is more important than learning and executing the spiritual life is a false value. False values lead to false priorities. If the believer has false priorities, he will organize his life around those false priorities and be distracted from God's plan. Reaction and distraction produces unhappiness which leads to stage two.

2. The frantic search for happiness: The believer can only be happy when he is fulfilling God's plan for his life. However, the believer out of fellowship doesn't realize this and so tries to find happiness by seeking to gratify his lusts. A lust is any desire originating from the sin-nature and has many different forms. For example, the believer may develop a

particular lust pattern for power, approbation, crusading (trying to force his personal beliefs and ideas onto others), wealth, chemicals (alcohol and drugs), sex or crime. Even more subtle pleasures such as a desire for an active social life or a desire to travel may originate from the sin nature. Though none of these things are able to produce happiness in the believer's life he is convinced that they will. He is deceived by his own sin nature; he deceives himself.

3. Operation Boomerang: Whether the believer succeeds in obtaining the object of his lust or not, his unhappiness will only intensify. If he obtains his objective, his unhappiness intensifies because it did not bring him the happiness that he was expecting. On the other hand, if he does not obtain his objective, he remains convinced that it will make him happy, and so continues in his attempt to get it. He throws the boomerang again and again, but he never hits the target, instead it always comes back to hit him in the head. The frustration of constantly failing to obtain happiness only intensifies his unhappiness.

4. Emotional revolt of the soul: Seeking pseudo-happiness which results in frustration and depression leads to stage four: emotional revolt of the soul. This is where the believers thinking, decisions and action are all subordinate to emotion. If he feels good, he thinks he is spiritual. If he weeps when singing a hymn, he must love God. If he feels that he loves a person of the opposite sex, he proposes marriage. There is no divine thought circulating in the soul. The reversionistic believer does not make decisions on the basis of truth or principle, but on subjective thinking, feelings and emotions. He has no control over the emotional sins such as fear, worry, self pity etc. He rejects confession of sins and the learning the word of God, because these things are mental processes and as such do not stimulate him emotionally. As emotion fortifies its dominance over the mentality of the soul, it becomes more and more difficult for the believer to reverse his downward spiral.

Christians under emotional revolt of the soul become very arrogant and self centered. In their arrogance they demand things from God and people. When they are suffering either through their own self-induced misery or from divine discipline they assume that they can pray

to God to remove their suffering. They think that it is God's will to pray for the removal of their suffering when in fact the solution lies in the correct use of their own volition.

5. *Permanent negative volition:* As a result of the first four stages of reversionism, the believer suffers loss of Biblical priorities, Biblical norms and standards and loses control of his life and destiny. This can lead to permanent negative volition toward learning God's word. If the believer rejects learning God's word, he can never understand God's will, plan and purpose for his life. Therefore, anything he does is not from divine power, but from human power. As a result, all his works are dead works and human good, totally unacceptable to God (1 Corinthians 3:12-15). He is operating in the energy of the flesh rather than in the power of metabolized doctrine and in the power of God the Holy Spirit.

In his rejection of God's word he will become arrogant; he will become proficient in the use of the arrogant skills, so called because they are something that one practices so well that they come to use them without even thinking, just as one rides a bicycle. There are three arrogance skills, namely:

1. Self justification ("I have a right to sin; I'm not responsible for my sins")
2. Self deception (regarding sin, happiness, and spiritual status)
3. Self absorption (completely controlled by his emotional sins)

Under self-justification they are not taking responsibility for their sins. This automatically brings about self-deception; these believers lie to themselves regarding their spiritual status. They assume that they are great believers when in reality they are totally failing in the spiritual life. Without the power of the spiritual life, these believers succumb to emotional and mental sins. This is the third arrogance skill of self-absorption. These believers do not understand the spiritual life (verses 2-4; 9-12); some are even accusing God regarding their temptations and sins (verses 13, 14).

6. *Blackout of the soul:* Since the believer in the 6th stage of reversionism has little or no metabolized doctrine in his soul, he has no protection against believing false information. In this status, the believer will believe Satan's false propaganda (Ephesians 4:17, 18; 1 John 2:11, 1 Timothy 4:1). Only truth in our stream of consciousness is an adequate defense against false doctrine. False information believed and stored in the stream of consciousness will eventually remove all truth previously learned and stored there.

7. *Scar tissue of the soul:* At this point there is no truth in the compartments of the soul: no truth in the frame of reference, memory center, vocabulary storage, categorical storage, conscience, momentum, and wisdom departments (Ephesians 4:18; Jeremiah 7:25-27). Whatever truth resided in the soul in the past has now been forgotten and replaced by the false principles and beliefs. The soul was designed to function on truth, not in falsehoods. In this state the believer is extremely antagonistic to the truth and to those who teach the truth. By rejecting Bible doctrine he has rejected the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16) and thus confirms his own hatred toward his God and Savior (Matthew 6:24).

8. *Reverse process reversionism:* This is the final stage of reversionism, a combination of gates 6 and 7. Everything that is worthwhile and valuable in life is rejected. Everything that is useless, nonsensical and evil is accepted. Prolonged residence in reversionism causes a rejection of all mandates and a complete reversal of all priorities and norms and standards related to the protocol plan of God.

The normal, wholesome believer has a unified, cohesive, integrated stream of consciousness. The normal believer functions under perception, metabolization and application of Bible doctrine. In verse 8, James introduces the concept of the split personality, using the term *dipsukos* (double soul). The split personality is formed through dissociation, a process which destroys the cohesiveness, integration and unity of the soul. In dissociation, certain aspects and activities of the personality escape from the control of the believer and become separated from the stream of consciousness and the primary personality. As a

result a second or alternating personality is formed, and in some cases multiple personalities.

Vulnerability to a split personality and schizophrenia is based on three factors: conversion of the outside pressures of adversity into the inside pressure of stress in the soul, the continuous function of the sin nature, and the functioning of the believer in moral or immoral degeneracy.

The Christian functioning in moral degeneracy emphasizes morality and Christian service, but does not metabolize and apply doctrine. Therefore, he does not grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord. He only lusts for such things as power, approbation, and social life in the Church. He is very arrogant about his morality and Christian service, yet has no control over mental and verbal sins. He may sing numerous hymns, pray hundreds of prayers in a week, and praise God a thousand times a year, but he does not have a harmonious relationship with Him.

On the other hand, the immoral Christian seeks his happiness by seeking to gratify more overt lusts such as sexual, chemical (alcohol, drugs), criminal lust etc. He also ignores developing a harmonious relationship with the members of the Trinity and therefore is just as miserable as the moral degenerate. Both the moral and immoral degenerate can become psychotic through the development of multiple personalities.

Once a believer has developed a split-personality, recovery will be difficult, but not impossible. In order to recover, he must become a very diligent student in learning the Word of God from a qualified pastor. Through his application of the Word he will develop his love for God, which then gives him the strongest motivation to overcome his favorite lust and sin. As he metabolizes God's word the scar tissue is gradually removed. As this scar tissue is removed from his conscious mind and garbage is removed from his subconscious, he will become more stable and effective in his spiritual life.

Remember that scar tissue is developed through sin and rejection of the truth. Every time a person rejects the truth, scar tissue is formed in his soul. This makes him increasingly more insensitive to the truth. Each

time the Pharaoh disobeyed God's command to free the Jewish people, he developed scar tissue in his soul "he hardened his heart." Just as scar tissue on the finger tips makes a person more insensitive to heat, so scar tissue in the soul made the Pharaoh more insensitive to God's commands. So, each time he rejected God's command, God would have to bring about a more severe plague to penetrate the scar tissue (insensitivity) of his soul.

1:9. The poor believer must boast [celebrate] in his high station [position].

Every church age believer has equal privilege and equal opportunity to execute the spiritual life in the Church age. Furthermore, he has perfect equality with all other Christians to receive the eternal decorations with their accompanying wealth.

There is neither Jew nor Greek (gentiles), there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:28)

"Neither Jew nor Greek (gentiles)" means that in God's plan, race and culture are not issues. If you think that you are better than other Christians because of your race or culture etc., you are arrogant and have failed to metabolize and apply the information from this verse. "Neither slave nor free" means that in God's plan social and economic status is not an issue. If you feel inferior to other Christians because you have what you think is a menial job, you are arrogant (arrogance is not only a condition of feeling superior to others, but is the condition of self-absorption, being inordinately obsessed with one's own feelings and self-image.) According to God's thinking, all legitimate work is honorable. "Neither male nor female" means that in God's plan gender is not an issue. Christian males and females are equally royal priests and have equal opportunity to glorify God to the maximum. Whether male or female, every Christian has equal opportunity to develop love for the Lord, to share in his happiness, to receive promotion in time, and to receive eternal decorations and greater blessings which will glorify God forever.

Many poor Christians react to their economic status with self pity, jealousy and bitterness etc. Many times they lust for the possessions of the wealthy. This distracts them from executing their spiritual life. Rather, the poor person must learn and then appreciate the 40 spiritual assets which were given to him at salvation³, appreciate the phenomenal spiritual life that can give him the greatest happiness and love, a permanent happiness that comes from a harmonious relationship with God and is totally unrelated to his economic status. He must learn about the tremendous decorations which God has provided in the eternal state for the believer who executes his plan in time. If the economically poor believer learns of the assets and blessings he receives at salvation, in the spiritual life and in eternity future, he would stop focusing on the things of this passing world.

1:10, 11. And the wealthy believer must boast in his humble circumstances, because as the flower of the grass, it [the flower: the possessions and glory of this world] shall pass away. The sun rises with a scorching heat and withers the grass, the flower falls, and the beauty of its appearance perishes; so also the wealthy person in all of his pursuits [of business] shall wither [enter into spiritual decadence].

The wealthy believer must constantly remind himself and others (boast) that the things of this world are only a temporary wealth (his humble status). He must also constantly remind himself that only through fulfilling God's plan will he be able to obtain eternal wealth. However, it is more difficult for the wealthy believer to continue learning and applying the Word than it is for the poor believer because of all the additional distractions related to his responsibilities and pleasures. He becomes so preoccupied with the things of this world that he fails to realize what his real purpose in life is. Such values as wealth and property, promotion and power, success and approbation, social life and romance must not be number one on the Christian's scale of values. If they are, that believer will never succeed in the spiritual life and will never share God's happiness. Even though King David had all these things, they were not so

3. See *Old Sin Nature vs. Holy Spirit*, by R.B. Thieme, Jr., Appendix C

important to him. His relationship with God was the key to his life. "His (Solomon's) heart was not wholly devoted to the Lord his God, as the heart of his father, David had been" (1 Kings 11:4b). Both Abraham and King David were very wealthy and became two of the greatest believers in the Old Testament. There is nothing wrong with possessing wealth as long as it does not distract the believer from developing a harmonious relationship with God. Wealth is not the problem; the problem is greed and making the pursuit of wealth the first priority in one's life. The only wealth a believer can take with him to heaven is his Christian loved ones and spiritual wealth. The wealthy believer must constantly remind himself and others (boast) that the things of this world are but a temporary wealth (his humble status), and that only through fulfilling God's plan will he be able to obtain eternal wealth.

Possessing wealth is a humble status since wealth is one of the easiest things to lose. Wars, economic disaster, business failure, serious illness and criminals can deprive a person of his wealth. Furthermore, even if one is able to retain most of his wealth during his life, he can not take it with him. However, if the Lord gives wealth to a promoted believer, no person or situation can remove it. This should orient the wealthy believer to the grace of God. This orientation along with the correct scale of values of the spiritual life should produce a humble attitude within the soul.

1:12. Happy is the believer who endures testing, for having become approved he shall receive the wreath of life, which he [the Lord] has promised to those who love Him [enduring devotion and respect for the Lord Jesus Christ].

The greatest happiness comes to the believer who completes the spiritual life, because in doing so he obtains the happiness which God has designed for the mature believer. The happiness of spiritual maturity is a system of integrity and thinking, a happiness not dependant upon people or things, but related to loving God the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Since the mature believer has both enduring devotion and respect for God, he has the power, the inner strength to

handle any test or suffering in life. After the believer develops a personal love for Jesus Christ, he will receive his final test in life, then upon passing this test he will be approved by the Lord and receive “The Wreath of Life”. This decoration is awarded to invisible heroes for maximum production of divine good through the execution of the protocol plan of God, and through the fulfillment of his responsibilities related to his spiritual gift, his ambassadorship, and his royal priesthood. The Wreath of Life is awarded for consistent filling of the Holy Spirit, consistent perception of Bible doctrine, and consistent use of the problem-solving devices resulting in the completion of the spiritual life.

Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Note that the devil is about to cast some of you in prison that you may be tested, and you will have special persecution ten times [the Greek word may also be translated days, but that is not the meaning here]. Keep on being faithful even until death, and I will give you the Wreath of Life. (Revelation 2:10)

When a military man or athlete received a wreath in the Greek world or in the Roman Empire, he would also receive great benefits and tremendous wealth. Each wreath included monetary reward, freedom from taxes, children educated at public expense, and a statue of the person erected in the public square. The wreath is used by analogy for the greatest honors and blessings God can give to believers.

Many Christians associate happiness with success, wealth, travel, sex, marriage, children, or with some other pleasure in life. If the believer wants to have the happiness that God wants him to have, he must eventually discard these false ideas.

1:13. Let no one say when he is being tempted, I am being tempted from God, for God is not capable of being tempted from the source of evil, neither does God tempt any man.

Temptation comes from ones sin nature and from people functioning as Satan’s agents, but never from God. Since God’s

character is perfect and since temptation is related to sin, God can never tempt anyone, nor can he be tempted by any evil creature.

However, God does *test* the believer. At the Red Sea and in the Sinai Peninsula, he tested the Exodus generation many times regarding their trust in him (Exodus 14:9; 15:22, 23; 16:4, 5; 17:1, 2 etc.). He tested Paul’s grace-orientation by permitting a demon to administer some type of terrible suffering (2 Corinthians 12:7-9).

1:14, 15. But each one is tempted when he is lured away [enticed] and entrapped by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived [becomes pregnant: the believer makes the decision to sin] it gives birth to sin [the believer has committed the sin], and when the sin has become fully grown [the believer continues to involve himself in this sin over a long period of time], it brings forth death [the sin unto death].

The analogy here is to a woman tempting a man into fornication or adultery. Metaphorically, lust is personified as a seductress. She tempts him by her seductive body and speech arousing in him hope of great pleasure and happiness. If the man listens to this Siren while gazing upon her form too long, he will soon be entrapped.

Lust always promises a person pseudo happiness. “Being carried or lured away” is the concentration on some lust. The believer becomes “entrapped” when the lust becomes so overwhelming that there is no hope of escape.

Temptation from lust is not sin. The source of sin is volition, the exercise of freewill in decision making. Sin occurs after the believer consents to some lust. A believer may be tempted by monetary lust, but if he rejects that temptation he has not sinned. However, if that lust motivates him to rob a bank, and he does (i.e. he consents to lust), he has committed the sins of greed and robbery.

If a Christian does not learn the spiritual life and develop love for the God, he will never gain enough motivation to bring his sin nature under control. Each believer tends to have a favorite sin such as jealousy, worry, fear, gossip, fornication, self pity etc. Year after year the believer commits that same sin without any regard for God and his plan (the believer’s favorite sin or sin grows into adulthood). In his love for that

believer, God will increase His punishment to that believer step by step. However, if the believer does not respond to the discipline and allows his sin to become fully grown, God will make a sovereign decision to take that believer to heaven; this is called ‘the sin unto death’ (Romans 8:13; Numbers 21:6; 1 John 5:16).

1:16. Stop being deceived, my beloved fellow believers.

The use of the Greek negative μή (*mey*) together with the present active imperative expresses a command to stop doing something that is already taking place. In other words, James knows that these believers are already being deceived, and so commands them to stop being deceived. The only way these Christians can obey the command is to first confess their sins and then to learn, metabolize, and apply the word of God on a consistent basis.

Since these Christians were blinded by their arrogance, with emphasis on the second arrogance skill of self-deception, James attempts to bring them back to reality. He does this by first calling them ‘beloved’ (ἀγαπητος / *agapetos*). Jesus Christ is called beloved (Matthew 3:17), and since we are in union with Christ we are therefore the objects of God the Father’s love also. We are the objects of the same love that God the Father has for the Lord Jesus Christ. If the believer appreciates that he did not place himself in union with Christ, and did nothing to earn the title ‘beloved’, then he can recover from the arrogance of self-deception. Grace orientation always helps the believer return to correct thinking about himself.

1:17. Every intrinsically-good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of Lights, from whom there is no variation or shadow of turning [or slightest variation].

Because God is perfect, so every provision and aspect of his plan for the believer is also perfect, including testing (James 1:2-4). Like gold, God’s gifts always have intrinsic value. Salvation, the spiritual life, the resurrection body and the Wreath of Life will always have intrinsic value. Bible doctrine, also a gift of intrinsic value, is the thinking of God,

thinking which meets the perfect standard of God’s essence and is clear in its meaning as it comes from heaven: “there is no variation or shadow of turning.”

1:18. By his will he brought us forth by means of the Word of Truth so that we [Jews] might be a certain first fruits of his creatures [human race]: know this, my beloved brethren [fellow Jewish believers].

How did James and these Jewish believers get saved? They were saved by the word of truth, namely the Gospel. The Jews were a kind of first fruits, for just as a portion of harvest was set aside for God, so the Jewish people and nation were set aside to serve the Lord. They were used by God as his agents for conveying His message of salvation to the world, teaching His Word to believers, forming the canon of scripture and providing the blood-line through which the humanity of Jesus Christ would come into the world in fulfilment of that message.

The clause “know this my beloved brethren” belongs in this verse. Please keep in mind that in the original manuscripts there were no verse divisions. By writing this clause, James was reminding the Jewish believers that they were to appreciate the content of this verse, and we Gentiles also. If we appreciate the Word of God, our Savior, and our spiritual life, we should also be thankful to the Jewish race as agents of God.

1:19. Consequently, every person must be prompt to hear [listening to a qualified pastor], slow to speak [good manners, strict academic discipline and concentration in Bible class], slow to anger.

“Prompt to hear” means being properly motivated, possessing correct values, and being filled with the Holy Spirit when the believer is listening to his pastor-teacher. God has set up a system of authority within the local church, which functions when the congregation with humility accepts the authority of their pastor. This is the system God has designed for the spiritual growth of believers. This does not mean one cannot read the Bible for himself, but it does mean that the believer is dependant upon a qualified pastor for his spiritual growth.

“Slow to speak” means to possess good manners, strict academic discipline and concentration under the filling of the Spirit as one listens to the Word being taught. It also means to be slow to say to oneself, *I don’t believe this*. The student of the Word needs to have an objective attitude, getting all the facts before he decides to reject something that he has never heard before. Some Christians reject truth being taught because it conflicts with some false information in their souls.

“Slow to anger” means to remain objective and in fellowship even though you do not understand or do not agree with something taught by a pastor or theologian. Never become angry over someone’s message. If you do, you will not be able to accurately evaluate the teaching. In summary: be prompt; be slow; be slow!

1:20. For the anger of the individual believer does not achieve righteousness from God.

Many Christians have false ideas regarding the spiritual life in their stream of consciousness. This in itself is not a serious problem since it can be corrected through correct teaching. However, if a believer assumes that he understands the spiritual life perfectly when in fact he does not, he will usually be impossible to teach. This Christian will react with anger to correct teaching which disagrees with his false perception of the spiritual life. He will never achieve the experiential righteousness that comes to the believer who understands and executes the spiritual life.

The Christian should always have a humble attitude when listening to the teaching of the Word. He should assume that he has many things yet to learn. He should be slow to judge a message until he gets all the facts and ponders them very carefully.

1:21. Therefore, remove all pollution and excess of evil [from your lives: naming of sins to the Father (rebound) with the implication to stop sinning and functioning in evil], receive in humility the implanted Word [metabolized doctrine], which keeps on being able to deliver your souls [in time of pressure or adversity].

All problem solving begins with Rebound (naming ones sins to God the Father)⁴ and the filling of the Holy Spirit, followed by the application of doctrine. We must remove all sin from our lives. A believer with constant anger or bitterness in the soul cannot grow spiritually. He must name his sins, and keep moving. Once the believer is restored to fellowship, he must apply doctrine to the person or situation that caused him to react. If not, he will not be able to stay in fellowship for long.

Many times emotional and mental sins (pollution in the soul) motivate evil. Jealousy may motivate murder; anger and hatred may motivate civil disobedience; bitterness with its accompanying malice may motivate fornication. Murder, civil disobedience and adultery are not only sins, but also evil since they attack the principles which God has ordained for the proper function of society.

Whenever a believer in fellowship remains obedient to the authority of the Holy Spirit while under pressure, he develops more humility. His obedience results from his desire to please God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, and motivates him to apply the problem solving devices to his problems, pressure and any disasters which he may face in life. These applications towards God and toward his experiences are able to protect his soul from the stages of reversionism.

As the pastor communicates the Word accurately, the Holy Spirit teaches that doctrine to the human spirit. From the human spirit it is transferred to the staging area of the soul where it is understood academically (gnosis). Up to this point the believer is a hearer of the Word. However, if the believer believes the truth being taught, the Holy Spirit converts this academic knowledge into metabolized knowledge (epignosis). Metabolized knowledge in the memory is the implanted Word.

The Greek word σοζω (*sozo*) means to save or to deliver. If the believer has metabolized doctrine in the memory compartment of the stream of consciousness, his soul will be delivered in time of pressure through the application of that doctrine. If the believer does not possess doctrine in his stream of consciousness, he will be defeated and

4. See *Rebound and Keep Moving*, by R.B. Thieme Jr.

controlled by his sin nature. Only doctrine resident in the believer's soul can deliver him in time of great difficulty.

1:22. But become doers of the Word [an applier of the Word] and not hearers only, constantly deceiving yourselves.

This verse does not say, “become doers of deeds”, nor does it say “become doers of Christian service.” “Doers of the Word” are believers who constantly learn and metabolize biblical truths and doctrines, and correctly apply that doctrine toward God and toward their experiences. For example, Abraham was a “doer of the word” for it says in James 2:21, “Was not Abraham, our father justified by his accomplishments when he offered up Isaac on the altar?” Abraham was not performing good deeds or any form of Christian service, rather he was obeying a command from the Lord. He honored and glorified God by trusting in information previously given to him by the Lord.

Since Abraham's everlasting posterity was promised through Isaac (Genesis 17:16,19), he knew that Isaac could not remain dead. “In Isaac your descendants shall be called” (Hebrews 11:18b). Therefore, Abraham reasoned that God would resuscitate his son after he had been sacrificed (Hebrews 11:19). Whenever the believer applies doctrine by faith to a situation, he has accomplished a great thing before the Lord.

Now it came about after these things [after a lifetime of learning doctrine], that God tested Abraham and said to him...‘Take your son, your uniquely born son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about’. So Abraham got up early in the morning and saddled his ass, and took two of his young servants with him and Isaac his son....and went to the place where God had told him....and Abraham instructed his young servants, ‘Stay here both of you with the ass. I and the young man will go as far as there, and we ourselves will worship, and we [plural: Abraham and Isaac] will return.’...When they reached the place about which God had told them about, Abraham built an altar there and....laid his son on the altar, on

top of the wood. Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the Angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, ‘Abraham, Abraham!’ And he answered, ‘Here I am.’ And he said, ‘Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you have respect for God, since you have not withheld your son, your uniquely born son from me.’ (Genesis 22:1-12)

At the time that Abraham went to Mount Moriah to offer his son, he was approximately 120 years old. He had been a believer anywhere between fifty and a hundred years depending on when he had become a believer in the 3rd Dynasty of Ur (Ur of Chaldeas). If Abraham had been saved at the age of 20 in the 3rd Dynasty of Ur, he would have been a believer for about a hundred years.

Then, he had believed [Hiphil perfect in the Hebrew takes us back to the third Dynasty of Ur] in the Lord [the Lord Jesus Christ] and he [God] reckoned it [faith in Christ] to him as righteousness [imputed righteousness]. (Genesis 15:6)

Salvation is by faith, not by works. This is confirmed in Romans 4:2, “For if Abraham was justified by works, he has grounds [a basis] for boasting, but not before God.” When James mentions that Abraham was justified by works, he is not contradicting Paul. Paul is talking about Abraham's salvation (justification because of imputed righteousness), whereas James is explaining the greatest victory in Abraham's spiritual life (justification because of experiential righteousness). There is up to a hundred years difference between these two events.

Therefore, Abraham was justified (proved to be experientially righteous), not because he was a hearer of the word only, but because he was a doer of the word. “Hearers of the word only” are Christians functioning like the Exodus generation. Although they listened occasionally to Moses, they did not metabolize sufficient doctrine, change their priorities, develop humility and integrity, develop capacity for life, love and happiness, did not use the faith-rest drill and did not develop a love for God. For this reason they constantly grumbled and

complained against Moses and God until they died the sin unto death in the desert. Some Christians listen to and metabolize some truth, but they never get to the point where they understand and live the spiritual life. They are hearers of the Word, but not doers.

“Doers of the Word” are those believers who use Rebound whenever they need to be restored to fellowship. They have a great spiritual life related to such dynamic functions as: the filling of the Holy Spirit, using the faith-rest drill, grace orientation, doctrinal orientation, spiritual self-esteem / having a personal sense of destiny, personal love for God the Father, unconditional love for all humanity, sharing the happiness of God, and occupation with the Lord Jesus Christ.

1:23, 24. For if anyone is a hearer of the Word, and not a doer, he is like a person who observes his natural face in the mirror, for once he glances at himself [listens to a few good messages], he takes off [doesn't return to the Bible class] and immediately forgets what sort of person he was [what he saw in the mirror: namely a spiritual failure].

The natural face is the face with which you were born. It is an idiom meaning to see yourself as you really are. When you look into a mirror, you see yourself as you really are. When the Christian learns the Word, a mirror is formed in his soul, which lets him see himself as he really is. Many Christians do not understand the spiritual life and consequently they are not living the spiritual life. Occasionally, a Christian in this category may enter a church where the spiritual life is being explained accurately. At that time, he may see himself as he is really is, a spiritual cripple. However, instead of coming back for more accurate teaching on the subject of spirituality, he doesn't. So, he immediately forgets what sort of person he is, and eventually, without the necessary inculcation, will also forget everything else he learnt while he was there. For this reason he will again enter into a state of self-deception, thinking once again that he is a good Christian.

1:25. But he who looks intently into the perfect instruction of freedom [learning about the spiritual life], and has persisted [in the perception of the Word], not having become a forgetful hearer, but a

doer of accomplishment [executes the spiritual life] will be happy in what he does [because he is occupied with the Lord Jesus Christ and knows that everything he does is pleasing to the Lord].

The Hebrew word תורה (torah) and the Greek word νόμος (*nomos*) have the following meanings: instruction, teaching, doctrine, and law. In this passage *nomos* should be translated *doctrine* or *instruction*. The believer who concentrates consistently on the Word will come to understand the freedom of the spiritual life; the freedom to execute the will and plan of God; the freedom to develop a tremendous relationship with God based upon memory. It is important that a believer not forget the important teachings of the Word of God. “Not becoming a forgetful hearer” means that the advancing believer's rate of learning must exceed his rate of forgetting.

If a person wants to become fluent in some language but only studies one or two hours a week, he will never reach his objective. This is because every week we forget a certain amount of information. One or two hours of study may prevent someone from forgetting what he has already learnt, but would not advance him in his learning. To advance in learning a new language, for example, would require studying and revising for at least an hour a day. The same is true if you wish to advance in the spiritual life. If you want to develop a wonderful relationship with God, you must be very aggressive in the intake and application of the Word, studying at least an hour a day to maintain forward momentum.

1:26. If anyone assumes that he is religious [having a great spiritual life based on his works], and does not bridle his own tongue, he deceives his own heart [stream of consciousness], this ones religion is empty.

The Greek adjective θρησκευος (*threskos* / religious) and noun θρησκευια (*threskeia* / religion) describe a system of activity with God in mind, whereas the spiritual life involves the believer's entire person namely his thinking, motivation, decisions, speech and actions. Often moral Christians who do not understand the spiritual life think of

themselves as being great believers because they are performing many religious acts. In effect these moral Christians are performing many good deeds and Christian services in a state of carnality. Their actions are often good, but their thinking and motivation are incorrect. Unfortunately, they call their morality, good deeds and Christian service the Christian way of life. They are redefining the spiritual life to fit their false concepts of spirituality. This is legalism. Morality must be learned from the Mosaic Law and applied to our lives since it is necessary for orderly function and blessing in society, for both unbelievers and believers, but morality, good deeds and Christian service are no substitute for the spiritual life.

When Christians out of fellowship with God live a pseudo-spiritual life based on morality, good deeds and Christian service, they can only become self-righteous. This is a human righteousness not related to God's word and grace. The spiritual life requires that Christians understand the significance of imputed righteousness so that they do not compete with it. Imputed righteousness explains why Christians go to heaven, and are personally loved and blessed by God. After understanding this, believers can begin to develop an experiential righteousness based upon humility. The experientially righteous believer does not judge and malign other Christians, but the self-righteous believer considers it his right, even his responsibility to do so.

Christians often perform many functions related to Christianity, but actually have no spiritual life. These Christians think that they are great because they attend worship service and prayer meetings, perform Christian service, and give ten percent of their income to their local church. When the believer thinks this way, he becomes very self-righteous and arrogant, "having a form of the spiritual life, but denying its power" (2 Timothy 3:5a). Being righteous in his own eyes, he thinks he has a right to judge, malign and to gossip about other people. He never blames himself for his sins of judging, slander etc., rather he justifies his sins related to his tongue. In this way he deceives himself. This man's religion has no virtue, no humility, and no integrity since everything he thinks and does is related to his self-righteousness.

1:27. A pure [virtuous] and unpolluted [free of sins] religion from God and the Father is this, to visit [help] the orphans, helpless widows in their affliction, to guard yourself from the pollution of the world.

An advanced believer with doctrine in his soul and love for the three members of the Trinity has true compassion for the unbeliever's soul as well as true compassion and concern for the needy and helpless. However, self-righteous believers functioning under a pseudo-system of spirituality may pretend to be concerned or even get very emotional for the orphans and widows, but in reality there is no true compassion and love in their souls. True love and concern for people is a capacity which is developed only through the execution of God's plan.

Chapter Two

2:1. My brethren [born-again Jews], stop possessing a faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the glory, with an attitude of partiality.

“Possessing a faith” is a reference to the spiritual life of these Jewish believers. These believers should be free of prejudice and partiality for they had believed in Jesus Christ who was totally free of these faults. The humanity of Christ loved his neighbor (in this case the entire human race) as himself and took their place on the cross. Furthermore, in eternity past, the Son of God was completely impartial regarding his desire for the human race.

This is good and acceptable in the sight of our Savior, God [the deity of Jesus Christ] who desires all mankind to be saved and to come to a metabolized knowledge [ἐπίγνωσις/ *epignosis*] of the truth, for there is one God [in essence] and the one person [the Son], even a mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus who gave himself a ransom-substitute for all, a statement brought out as a testimony [the Gospel] in its own time [received at the right time]. (1 Timothy 2:3-6)

In the original Greek, the word order is different from the English. Reading from the Greek of 1 Timothy 2:3 it states *our Savior, God* (του σωτηρος ημων θεου / *tu soteris hemon theou*). *God* is the antecedent of the relative pronoun *who* (ος) which begins verse 4. Therefore, verses 3 and 4 are revealing the desire of the deity of Jesus Christ in eternity past, not his humanity. What was the desire of the Son of God in eternity past? What was his reason for becoming the God-Man? He desired that every person in all of history be saved since he had unconditional love and impartiality for the entire human race. Furthermore after their salvation, he desired that all believers would come to a metabolized knowledge of the truth (verse 4), namely, to fulfill their spiritual life.

The desire of the deity of the Son of God was based on thought, not emotion. All correct desire is based upon correct thinking. In verse 5 we have the decision of the Son of God to become a mediator that he might accomplish his desire to provide salvation for the entire human race and a spiritual life for all who would accept the gospel. In verse 6 we have the action of the Lord Jesus Christ. This passage teaches the correct order between thought and action: first there must be correct thinking; second there must be correct decision; and third, there must be correct action.

Since the Lord Jesus Christ is perfectly and equally fair to each member of the human race, so too should the believer. The Lord Jesus Christ does not treat wealthy and influential people differently from those who are poor and lacking influence.

2:2-4. For if a man comes into your assembly [ones place of worship] wearing a gold ring and dressed in fine clothing, and simultaneously there comes in a poor man wearing shabby clothing, and you give your attention [preferential treatment] to the one wearing fine clothes and say to him, ‘Sit down here deservedly’ [seat of honor], and you say to the poor man, ‘you stand over there’ or ‘you sit on the floor by my feet,’ have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil motivation?

Discrimination has no part in God’s policy toward mankind. God offers salvation to every member of the human race.

The righteousness of God [is] through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe for there is no distinction [no partiality] for all have sinned [at birth by the imputation of Adam’s sin] and fallen short of the glory of God [failed to meet the standard of God’s righteousness]. (Romans 3:22, 23)

Furthermore, God’s plan does not discriminate against any believer. In the Church age we all share equal opportunity and privileges under our royal priesthood. In the spiritual life, race, culture, economic status, social status and gender are not an issue.

There is neither Jew nor Greek [Gentiles], there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:28)

When believers assemble to hear the Word of God, they should be treated equally. When the leaders of a Church treat wealthy Christians better than poor Christians they are catering to the value-standards of the world rather than to the perfect standard of God. As noted in the verse above race, culture, economic, social and gender distinctions do not exist in the spiritual life.

2:5. Listen [take note], my beloved brethren. Did not God choose [elected in eternity past] the poor of this world to be rich in doctrine and heirs of the kingdom [believers who will receive the greater rewards in eternity] which He has promised to those who love Him?

Being economically very poor does not imply that the believer is spiritually immature. On the other hand, being very wealthy does not imply that the believer is a spiritual giant. Mark records the story of a very poor widow who was a mature believer.

Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and began watching the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. And he noted that many rich people were there contributing large sums. Now a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny. Jesus called his disciples and said to them, 'I tell you the truth, this poor widow put more money than all the rich contributed to this treasury. For they all gave from their surplus; but she gave out of her poverty. She put in everything she owned, all that she had to live on.' (Mark 12:41-44)

The Jews didn't have offering-plates, instead they had a place in the temple where you brought your money. The poor woman in this story had no husband and apparently no family. From the Lord's

explanation of this woman's spiritual giving, we can reconstruct her spiritual life. This woman had a wonderful life based on her relationship with the Lord and her confidence in him. She knew that as long as the Lord had a purpose for her life he would faithfully provide for her daily needs. She was not concerned about putting all her money into the offering box for she was not security-conscious as most people are today. Her security was in the Lord.

Many women in this situation of extreme poverty and loneliness would have reacted with self-pity or bitterness. However, it is obvious that this woman did not react to her difficult situation otherwise she would not have had such a phenomenal spiritual life. This believer had learned something that very few believers ever learn. She had solved the problem of loneliness through her harmonious relationship with God. She did not feel sorry for herself, nor was she trying to attract any self-pity. She was not complaining in any way. She apparently was isolated from all social activity and had no loved ones to take care of her. She was in the hands of the Lord under the faith-rest drill. She was oriented to grace and doctrine. She knew that as long as God had a plan for her life, she would remain alive even though she now walked away from the temple treasury broke. So, not only did she demonstrate faith in God's plan and provisions for her life, but her giving to the temple treasury was motivated by her personal love for God.

The Lord's attitude in this matter was very different from those in the ministry today. The Lord looks upon the attitude and motivation of the soul, whereas many in the ministry look upon the size of the contribution. From the pulpit many pastors emphasize and encourage giving and even imply that the more a person gives the better is his spiritual life.

All believers both poor and rich have been chosen by God to be rich in doctrine and to become heirs. However, only those Christians who develop a love for Jesus will become joint heirs with him, receiving the eternal rewards and blessings reserved only for those believers who love the Lord (James 1:12).

And if children, and we are, also heirs: on the one hand heirs of God [the Father], but on the other hand joint heirs of Christ provided that if we suffer with him [receiving great inheritance depends upon our execution of the spiritual life], we may also be glorified with him [receiving our inheritance glorifies God].
(Romans 8:17)

In other words if we want to be joint heirs with Christ, we must complete this spiritual life, as did the humanity of Jesus Christ.

2:6-7. But you [reference to the usher and the assembly that demonstrated partiality] have insulted [dishonored] the poor. Is it not the rich who oppress you and personally drag you into court? Do they not keep on maligning that honorable name [Christ] by which you have been called [Christian]?

As Christians we are ambassadors of the Lord Jesus Christ; we represent him. If we do something dishonorable, we dishonor his name. The Lord is perfectly fair to every member of the human race; he is completely impartial. So, if we treat someone unfairly, we dishonor his name and person.

Some of the wealthy citizens in Corinth were abusing their power and influence by seizing certain poor people and dragging them into court without due process of law. Apparently, the rich person who entered this assembly was guilty of that abuse, whereas the poor person in this case was an honorable Christian. Even so, the attitude of the usher and the members of this congregation favored this wealthy person in order to gain something from him.

This same group of wealthy individuals in Corinth was also profaning the honorable name of Christ. Even so, the Christian usher and others in the assembly who had received their name *Christian* from Christ were showing partiality to these profaners.

2:8. If however, you are fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture [Leviticus 19:18], “you shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you are functioning honorably [rightly, nobly].

The Royal Law: Definition and Description

The royal law is found in three dispensations: the Old Testament dispensation of Israel, the dispensation of the Hypostatic Union and the dispensation of the Church Age, and in each dispensation the degree of fulfillment is different. The royal law cannot be executed by believers in the Old Testament on the same high echelon as was obtained by Christ, nor on the same echelon as is possible by Church Age believers. The royal law was not called “the royal law” until the Church Age, but it is mentioned first in Leviticus 19:18, “Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people [Jewish citizens], but you shall love your neighbor as you love yourself; I am the Lord.”

The Royal Law in the dispensation of Israel

Old Testament believers were to treat their fellow citizens kindly, fairly and righteously as they would treat themselves, and if faced with some injustice from their fellow-citizens, they were to use their faith and put the matter before the supreme court of heaven rather than seek revenge (Deuteronomy 32:25). However, these Jewish believers did not have the filling of the Holy Spirit, nor did they have the same amount of doctrine that Jesus Christ possessed and the Church Age believers have available to them. So, with these limitations, they were never commanded to love their enemies and to pray for them.

The complete fulfillment of this royal law could not occur until the dispensation of the hypostatic union. It was God’s intent that the royal law be revealed in the dispensation of Israel, but not be completely fulfilled until Jesus Christ would go to the Cross, becoming a substitute for all his enemies and receiving the punishment of their sins.

The Royal Law in the dispensation of the Hypostatic Union

The royal law received its name from the Lord Jesus Christ who is the highest form of royalty that has ever existed or ever will exist in all of human history. As God, he possesses eternal divine royalty; as the Son of David, he possesses the greatest human royalty. The royal law

was waiting, as it were, for perfect royalty to come along and to apply the command of Leviticus 19:18 to the entire race. Impersonal love for all mankind became a part of the spiritual dynamics in the soul of Jesus Christ by which he willingly received the imputation of every sin in human history: “And he went a little further and he fell on his face and prayed, saying, ‘My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me, yet not as I will, but as you will’” (Matthew 26:39).

To fulfill the royal law, to love your neighbor with unconditional love⁵, requires integrity. To fulfill the royal law to the maximum degree requires maximum integrity. So, the royal law could only be fulfilled to the maximum by one person only, namely the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of King David and future King of kings.

Jesus quoted the royal law in the time of the dispensation of the hypostatic union:

“Honor your father and your mother and love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matthew 19:19)

“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” And He replied to him, “ ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your thinking.’ This is the greatest and foremost commandment. The second is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ ” (Matthew 22:36-39)

In these two great commandments we have exactly what occurred on the Cross. Because of His personal love for God the Father, he accepted the judgment for every sin in human history. He applied “love your neighbor as yourself” to every member of the human race.

The Royal Law in the dispensation of the Church

For Jesus Christ on the cross, the word *neighbor* was extended to the entire human race. “And he himself is the propitiation for our sins,

5. Also known as *impersonal love* because having unconditional love toward another person does not require that we know them on a personal basis.

and not for ours only, but also for those of the entire world” (1 John 2:2). He was able to accomplish this extremely difficult work because he had obtained the greatest possible human virtue and humility developed from the spiritual life given to him. We now have the same spiritual life that he possessed and used during his time on the earth. This means that we too can love all believers, friend or foe, and even the most decadent members of the human race with unconditional love, just as Christ did.

In Luke 6:27-36, Jesus was talking to the people of his time. He gave some principles and applications regarding impersonal love.

“But I say to you who are listening to me, keep on loving your enemies, do good to those who hate you; bless those who curse you; pray for those who abuse you. To the one who slaps you on the cheek [insults you], offer him the other also. Furthermore, from the man who takes your robe [coat], do not keep back your tunic [shirt]. Give to everyone who asks you [though common sense is required, as this would be disastrous in some countries] and stop demanding the return of your goods from him who takes them. And just as you desire that all men do to you, do to them likewise. Furthermore, if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners [unbelievers] love those who love them. Even if you do good things to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners [unbelievers] do the same. If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive it back, what credit is that to you? Even sinners [unbelievers] lend to sinners expecting to be repaid in full. But love your enemies and do good things and lend without expecting to get anything in return and your reward will be great, and you will be sons [worthy sons] of the Most High because he himself is benevolent toward the ungrateful and the evil. Be merciful [this is grace thinking leading to action; different from compassion which is usually based on emotion] as your Father is merciful.” (Luke 6:27-36)

Motivated by personal love for God the Father, the believer is able to apply impersonal love toward all mankind. In so doing, the Church Age believer fulfills the royal law under the principle, *a right thing done in a right way is right*. Therefore, instead of trying to solve the problems of interpersonal relationships by sin, we solve it through the function of the wonderful spiritual life which has been given to us. Paul recognized this when he wrote, “For the entire Law is fulfilled in one doctrine, ‘you shall love your neighbor as yourself’ ” (Galatians 5:14). He went on to say:

Bless those who persecute you; bless and curse not. Rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep. Be thinking the same things [divine viewpoint] toward each other. Do not be thinking in terms of arrogance, but associate with humble people. Stop being wise based on your own estimation. Never pay back evil to anyone. Respect what is honorable in the presence of all mankind. As much as depends on you; live in harmony with all mankind. Beloved, stop avenging yourselves, instead give place to the punishment of the justice of God for it is written, ‘Punishment belongs to me, I will repay,’ says the Lord. So if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink, for by doing this you will pile burning coals on his head [leaving the way open for the justice of God to punish him]. Stop being conquered by evil, but conquer evil by means of [divine] good. (Romans 12:14-21)

Principles related to the Royal Law

1. Impersonal love, called the Royal Law in James 2:8, is a major problem solving device of the spiritual life.
2. When you try to solve a problem with a sin, you will compound the problem and bring much discipline upon yourself.
3. Instead of reacting to sin by committing a sin, impersonal love confronts sin with a divine solution.
4. In order to fulfill the royal law, the integrity of the person undergoing the test must be greater than the obnoxiousness of person causing the test.

The believer’s integrity includes both his motivational virtue from his personal love for God, and his functional virtue which is expressed in his impersonal love for all mankind.

5. We were given a unique spiritual life when we became royalty at salvation. Those who live according to the royal law in time will have the most fantastic blessings in eternity.

2:9-11. But if you show favoritism [partiality], you sin and are convicted by the law [the royal law of Leviticus 19:18] as lawbreakers. For whoever keeps the whole law [Mosaic Law] and yet stumbles at just one point has become guilty of breaking all of it [after a fair trial]. For, he [Moses] who said, “Do not commit adultery” also said “Do not murder.” If you do not commit adultery, but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker [of the Mosaic Law].

Innocent until proven guilty

In both verse 10 and 11, the Greek word γινομαι (*ginomai* / to become) is used. The word of God agrees with the principle that one is innocent until proven guilty. Therefore, it doesn’t say “is guilty,” and it doesn’t say “you are a lawbreaker.” Under proper jurisprudence, if a person is found to be guilty, he has *become* guilty; he has become a lawbreaker.

Breaking the Mosaic Law

When a person in Israel broke the Mosaic Law, he was tried and punished either under the judicial system of Israel or under the supreme court of heaven. In either case one was innocent until proven guilty. Of course, a violator of Leviticus 19:18 was tried by the supreme court of heaven. In such a case, one member of the Godhead would preside over the case. After the presiding judge had listened to the testimony of the three perfect eye witnesses and reviewed all the facts, the case would be decided and the person would be pronounced guilty.

Legalism based on the Mosaic Law

Many Jewish Christians at this time were trying to keep the Mosaic Law as the spiritual life of the Church Age (this legalism is what eventually stifled the spiritual dynamics of the Jerusalem Church). As a matter of fact many of these Christians assumed that they had kept the Mosaic Law perfectly, yet they were in violation of Leviticus 19:18 because they had committed mental murder and in some cases mental adultery. By stating the principle that if one breaks the law at one point he is guilty of breaking the whole law, James was able to reveal to them that they had become lawbreakers of the Mosaic Law. In so doing, James attempted to discourage their legalism and to focus their attention toward the genuine spiritual life. The spiritual life of the Church Age is not found in the Mosaic Law with its Levitical Priesthood and ritualistic system, rather it is found in the New Testament epistles and functions under a new priesthood, the royal priesthood established by Christ. This spiritual life as found in the Church Age is executed under the filling of the Holy Spirit and is called the “The Law of Freedom.” (James 2:12)

No one can keep the Mosaic Law perfectly

Adultery and murder are used here as examples because both can be committed by action or by thought, or both. Even though most Christians have not committed adultery and murder overtly, many have committed mental adultery, and most Christians have at some point hated someone which is mental murder (1 John 3:14-15). At that point the person has failed to keep the Mosaic Law.

In Matthew 19:16-25 we read of the dialogue between a rich young man and the Lord Jesus Christ. In his arrogance, the rich young man assumed that salvation is obtained by being moral and doing good deeds. He also assumed that he had kept the Mosaic Law perfectly.

19:16 Now behold a man came to him and said, “Professor, what good thing must I do to obtain eternal life?”

Many people ask questions not because they are seeking answers, but for

other reasons. In this case, the young man just wants to hear Jesus confirm what he already assumes to be true, namely that he has kept the Mosaic Law perfectly, and so is saved.

19:17 And he replied to him, “Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good [Jesus Christ]. If you desire to enter into life [enter into eternal life by doing good deeds], keep the commandments [all of them, perfectly].”

Since the Lord realized that he was not seeking the truth, he answers his question with a question. Even though the young man wasn't seeking the truth, the Lord tried to direct his thinking in the right direction by challenging his incorrect thinking about doing good deeds for salvation. When the Lord made the statement that “there was only one good person,” the Lord Jesus Christ was challenging the arrogant attitude the man had about himself, for he wanted to achieve salvation by works. He was probing to see if the young man understood anything about the virgin birth, hypostatic union, impeccability and perfection of Christ, and how all of these things relate to salvation. In any case, the wealthy young man apparently knew nothing about these theological truths, or had rejected them, and certainly was not interested in salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. To the contrary, when Jesus stated that there was only one good person, this man in his arrogance assumed that Jesus was talking about him, the rich young ruler! A humble unbeliever would have realized that he himself was a sinner and would have desired to know about Jesus Christ, the one perfectly good person, the only person with perfect human integrity, and the only one who has fulfilled the Mosaic Law perfectly.

19:18-20 The man inquired, “Which ones?” Jesus replied, “You shall not murder; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness [in court]; you shall honor your father and mother, and you shall love your neighbor [the ones a person has contact with] as yourself.” And the young man answered, “All these, I have kept. What do I still lack?”

The young man had no interest in gathering information regarding Jesus Christ and so flippantly asks “which ones?” Because of his self-righteous arrogance, he loved his pseudo-righteousness and therefore had little respect for the Lord. He just wanted his assumed perfection to be recognized; he was convinced that he had kept all the laws of God perfectly.

In arrogance, he was blind toward his own sins and failures. Although he did overtly keep the first five mandates mentioned, he did not keep the last one. The first five require morality to fulfill them overtly. The last one requires virtue, a virtue that only the spiritual life can manufacture. Since the young man was arrogant, he had no virtue, and as an unbeliever he could never possess the necessary standard of virtue to love all of those with whom he had daily contact. In fact, he despised his fellow man; he was perfect, and they were vile sinners in his eyes.

Jesus Christ stated five mandates related to morality, for he knew that the rich young man had kept them overtly at least and was very moral, but the last command, the sixth one, he had not kept. As Christ mentioned one through five the man’s arrogant confidence increased, but upon hearing the sixth command, he lied in order to maintain his deception of perfection. Since Jesus Christ is God, he knew that this young man did not love his neighbor as himself. However, in order to get the young man to admit that he didn’t, the Lord commanded him to distribute his wealth to the poor.

19:21, 22 And Jesus said to him, “If you desire to be perfect and you do, go and sell your possessions and give them to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then [return] here and follow me.” After the young man heard the instruction, he departed grieving for he possessed a lot of property.

Jesus Christ recognized that this man strove to be perfect through his own ability and apart from the grace of God. Since this man sought to be saved through his own perfection, Christ had to demonstrate to him that he wasn’t perfect.

This man grieved because he knew that he had failed to keep the Mosaic Law and so failed to be perfect. The recognition of his

imperfection should have turned his attention to the Lord Jesus Christ who was the only perfect person. Unfortunately, the young rich man was not interested in salvation by grace and so departed. The Lord never had the opportunity to give him the message of salvation.

Any person who attempts to obtain salvation or please God through any system of morality, religion or other system of human works has rejected God’s policy of grace and has become involved in legalism, which is further defined in the following principles:

1. Both religious unbelievers and believers can become very skilled at practicing legalism, a system of works related to self-righteousness.
2. There are certain commands of the Mosaic Law that an individual would never violate. A self-righteous person will build his system of works around these commands and ignore the commands which he is violating.
3. Self-righteous and legalistic people tend to forget that all sins are an offense against God.
4. The legalist emphasizes the commandments he keeps. The honest and objective person takes note of the commandments he breaks, and applies doctrine to rectify the situation.
5. The legalist minimizes his own sins and weaknesses but maximizes his strengths. On this basis, he builds a system of self-righteousness by which he condemns others, maximizing their sins and weaknesses while minimizing their strengths.
6. Violation of any part of the Law makes the person a breaker of the Law. The same is true regarding the laws of a nation. If you violate one of the laws once in your life and are sentenced, you become a criminal.

2:12. So, keep on speaking, and keep on acting as those who are going to be evaluated [judged] by the law [system] of freedom,

These Jewish believers are now being commanded to apply the principles taught thus far and so execute the spiritual life that they might be prepared to meet the Lord Jesus Christ after the Church resurrects. After the Resurrection of the Church (the Rapture), the Church Age believer will be evaluated (judged) in accordance with what he achieved with the spiritual life given to him.

The spiritual life of the Church Age is called the law [system] of freedom since it enables the Christian to serve the Lord. God has given us the power of the Holy Spirit and the power of his word that we might be able to serve him effectively. Without this power, we would be slaves to our sin nature, to Satan, and to his cosmic system.

Being free to serve the Lord also means that we are not accountable to other people regarding our spiritual life. This means that no pastor has the right to coerce the members of his church into performing Christian service, or ask questions regarding what you are doing to serve the Lord. As a believer functioning as a royal priest you have complete privacy and freedom to serve the Lord, without intrusion and interference from other believers, regardless of their position in the local church.

2:13. because judgment [of human good after the Rapture] without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful [the believer with no grace function in time]. Mercy [grace in action] triumphs over [boasts at the] judgment [the evaluation]!

The Lord Jesus Christ will judge, namely destroy all the human good produced by Christians, even though that human good helped people and was appreciated by them. God despises human good just as much as he does sin (Isaiah 64:6) so will show no mercy toward the production of human good. Rewards at the Evaluation (Judgment) Throne of Christ are based on grace function: grace-perception and grace-application of the problem solving devices.

Since verses 12 and 13 deal with the Evaluation Throne of Christ, a few points of application should be noted.

1. The Evaluation eliminates the need of Christians evaluating Christians. If Jesus Christ will evaluate the life of every Christian at that time, then why do Christians need to judge other believers in time?

But you, [weak believer, but advancing] why do you judge your brother [advanced believer]? Or you also [advanced believer], why do you despise and regard with contempt your brother

[weak believer]? For we will all stand before the Evaluation Throne of God [the Lord Jesus Christ]. (Romans 14:10)

2. Jesus Christ will judge human good and evaluate the Christian's genuine production under the filling of the Spirit.

We must all appear before the Evaluation Throne of Christ that each of us may be rewarded for his accomplishments through his body on the basis of what he has done, whether good [divine good produced in fellowship] or worthless [human good produced out of fellowship]. (2 Corinthians 5:10)

3. It will be a time of loss or gain of reward:

For, no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, or straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day [the day of Evaluation] will show it because it is to be revealed by fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work - if any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward [escrow blessings⁶ for the eternal state], if any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss [of his escrow blessing for eternity], but he himself will be saved, yet in this way as through fire [God will not permit the believer to enter the eternal state until after his human works have been burned].

(1 Corinthians 3:11-15)

4. At this time the believer in his resurrection body can be denied rewards, but he cannot lose his salvation. The conditional sentences in verses 2 Timothy 2:11-13 are all first class types and state facts.

Faithful is The Word [a title of the deity of Christ]. If we died with him and we have, we will live with him. (2 Timothy 2:11)

6. See *Christian Suffering* by R. B. Thieme Jr., Chapter 9

If we endure [keep advancing spiritually through the pressures and tests of life], we will rule with him [in the millennium]. If we deny him [fail to reach maturity through his word], he will deny us [rewards in eternity]. (2 Timothy 2:12)

The believer is going to receive rewards from the Lord Jesus Christ or be denied rewards depending on whether he has fulfilled God's plan for his life or not. The phrase "if we endure" means constantly learning Bible doctrine and successfully applying it to the pressures and problems of life, without becoming distracted. To endure also means metabolizing doctrine until one has developed reciprocal love for the members of the Trinity. The believer who continues advancing spiritually to a state of spiritual maturity will be appointed to reign with Jesus Christ in the Millennium:

Furthermore, the winner, the one who keeps my assignments unto the end [of physical life of the individual believer], I will give to him authority over the nations. (Revelation 2:26)

The Word of God is the thinking of Jesus Christ. If you refuse to make the Word of God your number one priority in life, you are denying Jesus Christ and so you will be denied eternal rewards when Jesus Christ evaluates all believers after the Rapture.

If we are unfaithful, he remains faithful for he cannot deny himself. (2 Timothy 2:13)

Even though a Christian may be totally unfaithful to Jesus Christ in time, he is still in union with Jesus Christ. Therefore, if Jesus Christ were to reject the believer (take away his salvation), he would have to reject himself since the believer's union in Christ is eternal. To state that Christ would take away a believer's salvation is absurd and blasphemous.

5. The reversionistic believer will not receive any rewards at the Evaluation Throne of Christ, Hebrews 6:7-12:

For the ground [the advancing believer] having drunk the rain which often falls upon it [consistent perception from the teaching of the pastor-teacher], and producing a harvest of crops [spiritual production] useable by them [the Godhead], because of whom [the Godhead], the ground [the believer's soul] is cultivated; obtains blessing from the source of the God [the winner believer receiving his escrow blessing]; But when the ground [the believer failing in his spiritual life] is producing thorns and thistles [areas of reversionism where you hurt others], and near to being cursed [near the sin unto death] whose end is for burning [just as the farmer burns off the thorns and thistles from his field so also human good produced out of fellowship will be burned]. But, beloved, we have been convinced of better things [the spiritual life as explained in the epistles is better than the temple and its system of shadow worship] concerning you, and things accompanying salvation even though we are speaking in this way [the writer had been speaking to them harshly in verse 6]. For God is not unjust to disregard your work [now talking to the pastors] and also the love which you yourselves have demonstrated toward his Person, having ministered the Word with reference to the saints [all believers are called saints], and continue to minister the Word of God [if the pastor loves the Lord, he will study diligently and teach his flock]. And we [pastors] deeply desire that each believer individually demonstrate the same devotion [diligence to doctrine], moving toward the full assurance of confidence [in the spiritual life] until the end [termination of your life]. So that you do not become apathetic toward doctrine, but instead become imitators of them [spiritual heroes of past], the ones who through faith [perception and application] and persistence, inherit the promises [the greater blessings for time and eternity]. (Hebrews 6:7-12)

6. The athletic games of the ancient world are used to illustrate the Evaluation Throne of Christ:

Do you not know that those who run in a stadium [race] all run [all Church Age believers], but only one [the winner-believer] receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain [the prize]. Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-discipline in all things. Therefore, they do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable one [eternal blessings for the winners]. Therefore, I run in such a way as not without aim [a fixed goal]; I box in such a way as not beating the air, [Paul avoided the frantic search for happiness by remaining under the will of God; every one of his punches hit the target]. But I impose strict self-discipline on my body and make it my slave lest somehow after having preached to others, I myself should be disqualified [from escrow blessings]. (1 Corinthians 9:24-27)

7. Rewards at this evaluation of the Christian way of life are based upon grace function. (James 2:12, 13)

Principles related to grace and mercy

1. The believer who does not live by grace cannot be rewarded by grace.
2. When the believer fails to function under grace, he will be merciless; he will have no production of mercy i.e. no grace application.
3. Grace activity, e.g. practicing mercy, only occurs when the believer has metabolized doctrine in his soul and functions under the authority of the filling of God the Holy Spirit.
4. Good deeds produced under legalism or emotion will be destroyed.
5. Only grace with its production (mercies) will be able to boast at the Evaluation Throne of Christ.
6. Grace production glorifies the source of grace. Therefore, God is glorified when the believer is rewarded at the evaluation.

2:14. What is the benefit [advantage], my brethren, if [third class conditional sentence] anyone alleges that he has faith, but does not have production? Faith is not able to deliver him [under pressure or testing], is it? No, of course not!

The third class conditional sentence asserts that throughout the church age many Christians will allege to live by faith, but because they lack metabolized doctrine, spiritual strength and humility, they are not able to produce in their spiritual lives (2 Timothy 3:16, 17). Verse 14 begins with the question, “What is the profit?” and verse 16 ends with the same question. This is because verses 15 and 16 are the illustration of the principle found in verse 14. Verses 15 and 16 are an illustration of a believer with faith, but with an ineffective spiritual life, and therefore no genuine Christian production. At the end of this chapter, Abraham and Rehab are presented as examples of believers who possess metabolized doctrine, spiritual strength and humility. With their spiritual strength and humility, they were able to apply the doctrine residing in their souls to the pressures of life.

Explanation of faith

Faith must always have an object if it is to produce a result. In order to obtain salvation we had to believe in Jesus Christ. The perfect Savior was the *object* of our faith. After salvation doctrine must be the object of our faith. Faith without metabolized doctrine in the stream of consciousness is useless. Romans 10:17 states: “Faith comes from hearing, and hearing from the communicative Word of Christ.”

Many evangelists shout to the unbeliever, “Believe in Jesus Christ!” but they do not explain anything about the person and work of Jesus Christ. How can the unbeliever be expected to trust in someone he knows nothing about? Some ministers preach from the pulpit, “Brethren, have faith!” yet they do not teach the doctrines of Scripture well. The believer’s faith is useless unless he has an object for that faith.

In order to apply doctrine to a difficult situation, several things are required. First, one must have sufficient knowledge in his stream of consciousness to handle the problem at hand. This knowledge includes understanding the procedures (problem-solving devices) by which one makes application. Second, one must have the necessary spiritual strength to apply the knowledge that he possesses. Spiritual strength is derived from metabolizing a wide range of biblical subjects. In order to

obtain maximum strength, the believer must master all the subjects of Scripture. Finally, one must possess the necessary humility to obey the mandates of God. Humility comes through learning to obey God's will, just as the humanity of Jesus Christ had to learn to obey God's will (Hebrews 5:8, Philippians 2:8), however, many times the believer must also learn obedience through severe divine discipline (Hebrews 12:6). In summary, the believer must acquire knowledge, strength and humility.

2:15-16. If a male believer and a female believer exist insufficiently clothed and deficient of daily nourishing food, and any one of you might say to them, "Go in peace, be warm, keep on being filled and satisfied", but you do not give them those necessities for the body, then what is the benefit?

The specific reason for the extreme poverty of this couple is not given since this is an illustration. Because of economic disaster and persecution, situations like this occur many times in history. Christians with doctrine in their souls and functioning under the filling of the Holy Spirit would graciously help this destitute couple. They would realize that this is God's will for them. They would consider it a great honor to help other members of the royal family in time of economic disaster or persecution etc.

However, self righteous Christians who function under a pseudo spiritual life have no capacity for dealing with a situation like the one presented here. Self-righteous believers are always hypocritical. Therefore, what they say and what they think is two different things. They don't really care about others, but they only mouth empty words, "Go away in peace, be warm, be satisfied, may God bless you." Christians who are not living the spiritual life are always irrational. Words don't put food in the stomach or clothes on ones back.

2:17. Even so, if the faith does not have production, it is dead [a corpse], according to itself.

This is a reference to the carnal believer in verses 14-16. "According to itself" is an expression which means that faith without

doctrine in the soul cannot produce; it is dead. Faith always requires an object to be effective. At salvation the object of faith was the Lord Jesus Christ. In faith-perception the object of faith is the Word of God. When one listens to, and understands, the Word of God under the filling of the Spirit, he has comprehension in the staging area of the soul. If the believer believes that the doctrine he comprehends is true, then the Holy Spirit can metabolize that information into the various compartments of the heart (recognized as the right lobe of the soul), ready for application. This process is called faith-perception. From this location, faith-application must take place. In faith-application, the believer applies this metabolized knowledge towards God and the experiences of life. Faith without an object is useless.

As we studied on page 6, every Christian with a normal soul has faith, but if they lack Bible doctrine there can be no production. They may be involved in a lot of Christian service, but without doctrine in their souls they not only express a lot of false ideas about Christianity and the spiritual life, but their desire to do Christian service will be from incorrect motivation. So, Christians who hustle for the Lord without doctrine produce nothing but wood, hay and stubble (1 Corinthians 3:12-15). Their production is worthless.

2:18. But someone [a strawman] will say, "You keep on having faith, but I have works; begin to show me your faith without works, and I will show you my faith by my works."

James understood well the debater's technique used by the Greeks. In their debates the Greeks would often introduce a hypothetical conversation. The speaker in the hypothetical conversation was called the *strawman*.

Many believers contend that one does not need to spend a lot of time learning God's word, but instead just demonstrate ones faith through Christian service. These people completely ignore the importance of metabolized doctrine in the soul. They do not understand that faith must have an object; that the faith in the soul of the believer is dependant upon doctrine in the soul for effective function.

Furthermore, the strawman assumes that because he cannot see the production, it does not exist. However, as we have taught many times before the greatest production is invisible, for example: loving God, using the Faith-rest drill, appreciating and applying grace, privately offering prayer and loving all people with impersonal love, just to name a few invisible productions of the spiritual life.

In this passage the strawman is the unbelieving Judaizer who is able to produce morality and other human good, but has no relationship with God. The unbelieving Judaizer is comparing his life with the Jewish believer who is failing in the spiritual life. The Judaizer believes in God, but not in the Lord Jesus Christ. So, the Judaizer is saying in effect “since my life is better than your life, my faith in God is better than your faith in Jesus Christ.” The strawman here attacks the faith of the believer who lacks production. In reality both the Jewish unbeliever and the Jewish believers are failing. The unbelieving Judaizer is failing for he lacks a correct object for his faith, namely the Lord Jesus Christ. The Jewish believer is also failing. Some are failing for rejecting faith-perception, others for failing to apply in faith-application.

In verse 19, James demonstrates that Judaism is wrong:

2:19. You believe that God is one, does that do you any good? The demons also believe and shudder with fear.

The belief of Judaism is deism, which is belief in the existence of God. While belief in the existence of God could bring a person to listen to the Gospel, this belief alone does not save. In reality the Judaizers have faith without production. They have faith in God without salvation.

The original Greek sentence “does that do you any good?” (καθως ποιεις / *kathos poieis*) is a question, not a statement. When the writers of the New Testament wrote, they used uncial (capital) letters, and wrote without the use of accents, breathing marks and punctuation. Accents, breathing marks and punctuation are not inspired by God but were added many centuries later for convenience. Generally, the insertion of accents and punctuation by these scholars was very good, but not perfect. In this case they should have inserted a question mark after this sentence.

James is going to demonstrate by comparison that the Judaizer’s faith in the existence of God does not produce salvation since the demons also believe in the existence of God, yet they “shudder with fear.” The demons had rejected God and his plan in their pre-historic angelic rebellion. Although the demons have rejected God’s plan for them, their knowledge of God is much more accurate than the knowledge of the Judaizers. The demons know that there are three members of the Trinity and that the Lord Jesus Christ is the God-man, while the Judaizers reject both of these truths. However, both the Judaizers and the demons have rejected God’s plan.

The Jews hated the demons, so this comparison is an insult. James points out that the faith of the demons is greater than the faith of the Judaizers. The Judaizer’s faith produces only human good and self-righteous arrogance, but the knowledge and faith of the demons produces fear and trembling. The demons know that some day they will face eternal judgment in the Lake of Fire (Matthew 25:41).

2:20. But [δε / *de*] are you willing to learn, vain [empty, without truth] man, that faith apart from production is useless [unemployed]?

The Greek particle *de* introduces a contrast between the Judaizers and the demons discussed in the previous two verses, with the Jewish believer who does not possess sufficient metabolized doctrine in his soul. For this reason, his faith is unemployed. In order for faith to be employed, it must have an object. When the soul is full of metabolized doctrine, faith can apply that doctrine toward God and toward the experiences and pressures of life.

In order to acquire a soul full of God’s truth, the Jewish believer must be willing to listen to the Word of God as taught by a prepared pastor. He must be willing to listen consistently over a long period of time, and then apply that doctrine to his spiritual life. This is how the believer is able to keep his faith usefully employed.

2:21. Abraham, our father, was he not vindicated [demonstrated experientially righteous] by his accomplishments [deeds] when he offered up Isaac, his son, on the altar? Yes, he was.

This sentence in the Greek expects an affirmative answer since the question begins with the negative particle *ou*. Therefore, it should be answered “Yes, he was.”

A Greek grammar rule states that the action of the aorist participle precedes the action of the main verb. The aorist participle is ἀναφέρω (*anaphero* / offered up); the main verb being δικαιόω (*dikaioo* / vindicated). So, Abraham first offered up Isaac, and then he was vindicated, demonstrated worthy to receive the highest possible decoration.

Abraham was 75 when he entered the Land as a believer; he was 100 when he had Isaac, and he may have been 125 when he obeyed the mandate to offer his son, for Josephus tells us that Isaac was 25 years old at the time of this test. So, Abraham was a believer for at least 50 years when this took place. Abraham was given this test because he was prepared by his spiritual growth over those 50 years or more. He possessed great experiential righteousness resulting from knowledge of doctrine, spiritual strength, and obedience to God. In offering up his son Abraham had to concentrate particularly on the doctrine of resurrection (Hebrews 11:19).

2:22. Do you see how his faith [use of the faith-rest drill] kept on working together with his accomplishments [deeds], and out from his accomplishments his faith [use of the faith-rest drill] was brought to completion [τελειωω / *teleioo*].

The Greek word συνεργεω (*sunergo*: kept on working together with) is a progressive present of duration meaning that his use of the faith-rest drill began sometime in the past and continued up to some point defined in the context, namely the offering of Isaac. The greater ones faith-rest drill, the greater is ones deeds and accomplishments. Abraham maximized the use of the faith-rest drill resulting in great accomplishments. For this reason, he will receive the highest decoration given in the Patriarchal period.

The faith-rest drill works together with accomplishments to achieve spiritual growth and ultimate completion of the spiritual life. God provides the tests, the believer with doctrine in his soul then applies that doctrine to the test. If he successfully passes the test there will be an

accomplishment. As one progresses in the spiritual life, his testing becomes more and more difficult producing greater and greater accomplishments. Throughout Abraham’s spiritual life he faced many tests which helped bring him to spiritual maturity. Then when he was a mature believer God tested his faith again by means of a great promise. At that time both he and Sarah were sexually incapable of producing offspring, but God told Abraham that if he believed he would have a son he was to remove his foreskin, which he did. At that moment he and Sarah were sexually revived, and within that very year Isaac was born. Then approximately 25 years later he was tested regarding the offering of his son which he also passed.

The accomplishment of Abraham’s obedience to God’s command to offer Isaac demonstrated that Abraham had completed the highest level of the faith-rest drill. The Greek word *teleioo* means to be perfected, to be brought to completion, to attain an objective. He had attained his spiritual objective by having completed the spiritual life of the patriarchal period.

2:23. And the Scripture [Genesis 15:6] was fulfilled which said, “Abraham believed God [equivalent to the reasoning of the faith-rest drill as found in Hebrews 11:19], and it was evaluated to him for righteousness [Abraham reached the highest level of experiential righteousness when he passed this test on Mount Moriah]”, and he was called the friend of God [2 Chronicles 20:7; Isaiah 41:8].

Genesis 15:6 records the salvation of Abraham, “And he had believed in the Lord [the Hiphil perfect breaks off the narration of the previous verse and takes us back to when Abraham was a Gentile living in the Third Dynasty of Ur], and he [God] credited it [his faith] to him as righteousness [imputed righteousness].” Using Abraham as the pattern for Jewish salvation, Paul quotes this passage from the Septuagint:

Therefore what has Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, obtained? [he obtained (discovered) the righteousness of God through faith] What then shall we say [what is our conclusion]? For if Abraham was justified [declared righteous

and qualified to live with God] by works, he has a basis for boasting, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? ‘Now Abram believed in God [the Lord Jesus Christ], and it [his faith in Jesus Christ] was credited to him for righteousness’.
(Romans 4:1-3)

Since the use of faith in the spiritual life is an extension of the faith used in salvation, the Holy Spirit inspired James to apply Genesis 15:6 to Abraham’s tremendous faith-victory on Mount Moriah even though this verse was originally applied to Abraham’s salvation. As a result of reaching the highest level of spirituality in the patriarchal period, Abraham was given the order of the “Friend of God” the supreme title for recognition of spiritual greatness in the Old Testament.

So James is explaining this greatness of Abraham’s spiritual life, as does the writer of Hebrews:

By means of faith [application of metabolized doctrine] Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac as a sacrifice. Being the one having received the promises [of the Abrahamic Covenant] he offered up his uniquely born son [Isaac’s birth was unique as it resulted from the sexual revival of both Abraham and Sarah]. To him it was said ‘Through Isaac your seed will be called.’ Abraham reasoned [thinking of the faith-rest drill] that God was able to resurrect from the dead and as a type [an illustration of resurrection] he would receive him [Isaac] back from the dead (Hebrews 11:17-19).

2:24. Keep on seeing that out from the source of production mankind receives vindication, and not out from the source of faith alone.

God gives mature believers very difficult tests. When the mature believer passes these tests, it is proof that he had the professional knowledge, spiritual strength and the humility to do so. His spiritual status was demonstrated by the accomplishing of a very difficult test.

2:25. Likewise [ὁμοίως / *homoios*], was not Rahab the prostitute also vindicated [proven to be experientially righteous] by production, when having received the messengers she sent them forth in another way?

Verse 23 tells us that Abraham had demonstrated his great spiritual life when he offered up Isaac. Now, the Greek word *homoios* (likewise) is telling us that Rahab was also a mature believer. Being identified with Abraham means that she was definitely one of the greatest believers ever. Also, she is listed in the Hebrews ‘hall of fame’ (chapter 11) as one of the great believers of faith.

When Rahab met Salmon, she was no longer a prostitute but had entered the rope manufacturing business. If she had remained a prostitute, she would not have needed to be in such a business. Furthermore, her conversation with the two Jewish spies, and her tremendous courage demonstrated her ability to walk by faith and her desire to please the Lord. When Rahab met Salmon, she was already a great believer.

Having a sinful and evil past does not prevent one from becoming one of the greatest believers in history since all believers can recover from sin and evil through the confession of his sins. Once the sinful and evil believer has recovered fellowship, he can begin to move in the right direction, and if he continues to do on a consistent basis he will some day love the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, the only thing which prevents greatness in the spiritual life is the unwillingness to learn and execute God’s plan; the unwillingness to dedicate ones life to knowing, appreciating, respecting and obeying God. Sin may temporarily distract the believer, but ignorance completely prevents the believer from ever knowing and loving God.

2:26. For as the body without life [πνεῦμα / *pneuma*] is a corpse, so faith apart from production keeps on being a corpse.

The Greek word *pneuma* has the following meanings: breath, influence, life, spirit, (The Holy) Spirit, soul and lifestyle. In English we have the expression “to give up the ghost,” namely, to die; the Greeks had a similar expression *pneumata aphiemi* “to give up life.” The life of a person is found in his soul. So, when the soul departs from the body,

the person becomes a corpse. Human life can only exist in the body with a soul. Just as the body operates through the soul to sustain human life, so faith must operate through metabolized doctrine to produce a spiritual life. Without metabolized doctrine in the soul, there is no spiritual life.

Chapter Three

3:1. Stop becoming [stop presuming to be] many teachers, my brethren, knowing that we [teachers of the Word] will receive greater punishment.

The Greek negative μή (*me*) with the present imperative means to stop doing something which one is doing. Many Jewish believers were interfering with the functions and responsibilities of the one communicating God's word. Since this is a violation of God's structure of authority, James commands them to stop immediately.

James reminded these believers that the pastor of a local church receives much more discipline than the believer in the pew. The more responsibility and authority God gives to an individual, the more he expects of that individual. If that individual fails, the Lord will give greater discipline. The communicator of God's word has great responsibility regarding the spiritual growth of believers. Since the spiritual growth of believers is extremely important, the pastor is severely disciplined if he fails in his responsibility to his congregation.

How to become a teacher when one is not a teacher:

1. Promote yourself as an expert, having greater knowledge and authority than your pastor. Comment to your friends how wrong the pastor is on this or that point. Then give the correct viewpoint based on your knowledge (If your pastor communicates the Word of God consistently, some of you will accumulate much knowledge and be tempted to arrogance, and even succumb to it. In your arrogance you will assume that you now know more than your pastor even though you have learned all of your information from him).
2. Be sporadic in attending the services taught by the pastor or quit altogether, but stay-on as a Sunday-school teacher, youth minister, or some other position in the church so you may continue to influence others with your teaching.

3. Set yourself up as the final authority on what the pastor ought to teach and how he should teach it.
4. Teach biblical information contrary to the teaching of your pastor. You could do this by communicating to members of the congregation at social gatherings, at young people's meetings, or whenever you have an opportunity to give a devotional or testimony. In this way you can undermine the message and the authority of the pastor.
5. Advocate the false concept of church authority called *the plurality of elders*. Then inform others that you are an elder and as an elder, you have the same authority as the pastor or even more.
6. Finally, when you realize that you have been unsuccessful in influencing the church and gaining the recognition you desired, leave the church and tell all of your friends that you are not going to come back until the pastor makes the necessary corrections about this or that.

If a pastor is not fulfilling his responsibility of studying and teaching, the Lord will punish him. God doesn't need your help, so don't get between the pastor and the discipline of the Lord. Whether your criticism of his teaching is correct or not, if you are undermining the authority of the pastor, you will receive severe discipline for interfering with spiritual authority and God's chain of command. If you do not agree with the teaching of a particular pastor, leave that assembly quietly without saying one word of criticism to anyone.

3:2: Now, we all stumble [a reference to sinning] in many ways. If someone does not stumble [sin] in what he says [can control his tongue] and some do not, this one is a mature person able to control [guide with a bridle and bit] the whole body [his entire person].

Every believer sins, but the mature believer has the knowledge, motivation and the capacity to avoid the sins of the tongue. So, it would be extremely rare for a mature believer to commit a sin related to the tongue. If a mature believer gets angry, he immediately names that mental sin and therefore is not tempted to use his tongue to malign that person towards whom he had momentarily directed his anger.

Since the mature believer has the emotional stability to control his tongue, he also has the emotional stability to control his entire body. This person does not allow emotion to control his soul; he reasons from biblical principles and doctrines stored in his mentality.

3:3: If we thrusts bits into the mouths of horses that they should obey us and we do, also we can change the direction of [guide, control] their entire body.

Putting a bit into a horse's mouth and making the proper adjustments can be a rather trying experience. Usually, the person stands alongside the horse's head pulling the bit into the horse's mouth (the person must be careful not to lose a finger in the process, or to get his foot stomped on, a favorite trick of the horse). Once the bit is in the mouth, the bridle must be pulled over the ears and adjusted. If the bridle is too loose, the horse will control the bit with his tongue and the rider will have no control over the horse. If the bridle is too tight, the bit will press severely against the corners of the horse's mouth causing injury which will develop into calluses. The adjustment must be just right so that when the rider reins the horse, mild pressure is placed against the sensitive portion of the mouth, enabling the rider to control the horse with minimum effort and without injury to the horse's mouth. Through this tender spot the rider is able to control the head of the horse, and therefore the whole body of the horse, since a horse naturally follows his head. If one wants a horse to turn to the right, he reins the horse so that the head will be turned to the right, and then the body will naturally follow. This same concept is used to stop a runaway horse. One merely turns the horse's head causing the horse to move in a circle. Then you turn the head more causing the horse to move in tighter circles until he stops.

Just as a bit controls the entire body of a horse so doctrine controls the entire body of the believer. The horse wants to do what he wants to do, but through the proper use of the bridle and bit, man can get the horse to do what he wants. The believer also wants to do what he wants to do, but through training in humility and Bible doctrine metabolized in the soul of the believer, God gets the believer to do his will.

The horse has more power in his neck than a man has in his entire body, yet a man can control a horse through a bit and bridle. The horse's mouth is the link between his brain and his bodily strength. If one can control the horse's mouth, he can control the horse's strength. With a person, it is the same. The person who is able to control his tongue, by means of biblical truth and humility in his soul, is also able to control his entire body (his entire person).

3:4. Behold, the ships also being so large and propelled under the influence of strong winds; yet they are turned about with a very small rudder, toward what direction the will of the pilot determines.

The tongue is a very small part of the body yet it has great influence. So also the rudder of a ship is a very small part of the whole, yet it has great influence over the ship.

1. The rudder illustrates the tongue.
2. The pilot (helmsman) represents the soul expressed through the tongue.
3. The ship is the body / life of the believer.
4. The winds that propel the ship are the environment and circumstances in the life of the believer.

Just as an inexperienced helmsman can easily lose control of the whole ship through incompetent steering of the rudder, so too the reversionistic believer lacks control over his life as expressed through the sins of the tongue. On the other hand, just as the experienced helmsman competently steers the rudder, so the mature believer wisely controls his tongue.

3:5. So, also the tongue is a small part of the body but keeps on boasting great things [causes a lot of trouble]. Behold, how such a small fire burns up such a large forest!

It takes just a little match and an entire forest is burnt down. Just as a fire is extremely destructive so also the tongue can destroy people,

marriages, businesses, churches and other organizations, including whole nations.

3:6. And the tongue is a fire [very dangerous and destructive], the cosmos of wickedness [Satan's organized system], and is placed in the structure of our anatomy as that which contaminates the entire body [causes the person to become evil], and sets on fire the cycle of existence [verbal sins ignite a chain reaction which can involve every category of sin], and is being set on fire by the agency of Gehenna [a reference to Satan].

Cycle of existence

If the soul is filled with mental attitude sins and lust-functions, then the tongue will express these things, contaminating all who are willing to listen. For example, a person with jealousy may slander a fellow member of his congregation. He mentions this gossip to 20 other members of the congregation causing them to get out of fellowship. In turn, these 20 people, already full of self-righteous indignation and judgment communicate this slander to the remaining members of the church. Eventually, the slandered individual succumbs to the pressure of the congregation's ostracism and commits suicide, then his bitter children seek revenge upon the members of the congregation, and soon the entire church is destroyed. All this was started by just one person with an evil tongue.

Gehenna refers to the Valley of Hinnom which was south of Jerusalem. This is where idolatrous Jews sacrificed their children to Molech (2 Kings 23:10; Jeremiah 7:31; 19:2-6) and later where they continuously burnt their garbage. Since a fire burned there day and night, the Valley of Hinnom (Gehenna) became a popular metonym for the Lake of Fire (Matthew 5:22, 29, 30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33). The Jewish word is brought into the Greek as Gehenna. So, Gehenna is a reference to the Lake of Fire (Revelation 19:20; 20:10).

Comparing the phrase "by agency of Gehenna" with Matthew 25:41, we can conclude that the cycle of existence of evil has its source from Satan himself. This reasoning is further strengthened in our

context by the use of the word *cosmos*, since Satan is the ruler of the *cosmos* (Luke 4:5-7; John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11). Verbal sins of the tongue, the catalyst for the cycle of existence, are associated with Satan's cosmic thinking and his final destination, the Lake of Fire.

3:7. For every species of beasts [wild mammals generally quadrupeds but includes whales as well] and of birds, and of reptiles and of marine life is subdued [controlled], and has been subdued [controlled] by means of the essence [soul] of mankind.

People have subdued and brought under control every kind of wild animal, feathered-vertebrates, reptiles and water breathing vertebrates in the sea. People have even tamed the elephant, leopard, cheetah, lion, certain reptiles such as the snake and young alligators on occasion, dolphins and parakeets just to mention a few. The lion's speed, agility and strength are much greater than man; he can run the hundred yard dash in 5 seconds and can throw a calf over a 12 foot thorn fence, yet even so he has been subdued and even tamed by man. Even though 2cc. of neurotoxins from the venom of a king cobra can kill approximately 5000 people, man has subdued him, the largest and most aggressive of the poisonous snakes. However, as far as I know no one has ever tamed the rhinoceros. He can be controlled, but apparently he is too dumb to be tamed. In any case all lower creation has been *subdued* by the thinking ability of man, though not all have been tamed.

3:8. But no one of mankind is able to subdue [control] the tongue, an unstable, restless evil, filled with death bringing poison [venom].

Man, using his soul, has learned to devise ways to control lower creation, yet he has still not devised a way to control his tongue. Only through maximum doctrine, wisdom and humility in the stream of consciousness can this be accomplished.

The tongue of a reversionistic believer is analogous to a fang, filled with fatal venom. When pressure is placed on his venom-filled soul, loaded down with mental attitude sins, the mental attitude sins are squeezed through his poisonous tongue expressing themselves through

judging, slandering and gossiping. These venomous verbal sins strike the victim causing much harm.

Summary of verbal reversionism:

1. In this analogy the mental attitude sins are the venom of the soul while the tongue is the fang which carries the venom to the victim. When a carnal believer is under pressure he strikes out at his victim with his tongue, for example with vilification and slander.
2. The sins of the tongue manifest the unhappiness and restlessness of the reversionistic believer, who has deep and wide emotional and mental swings. This is why he will praise a person one moment and the next moment strike with that same tongue.
3. In contrast to the failing believer, the mature believer has no venom in his soul. His tongue expresses capacity and enthusiasm for life and love in all of its categories.

You may not be as great a Christian as you think. If you are full of mental attitude sins and are constantly striking other people with criticism, judging, maligning, slandering and gossip, then you are a venomous snake, a total failure in the spiritual life.

You should cause other people to shudder, just as one shudders when he sees a poisonous snake. They should back off from you and run as far from you as they can. However, most Christians don't realize how evil mental and verbal sins are, therefore they neither shudder nor run from your presence. In many cases they feel safe in your presence and may even consider you a wonderful believer and seek your friendship.

3:9. By means of this [the tongue] we speak well of [praise] the Lord and Father, and by means of this [the tongue] we keep on execrating [judge, malign, gossip about] mankind, having come into being according to the likeness of God.

The great believer praises the Lord Jesus Christ and God the Father from his genuine love for them; the reversionistic believer in

hypocrisy also praises the Lord and Father but only to impress people. Therefore he always makes an effort to be seen singing hymns, praying loudly and to be heard uttering “Praise God!” at every opportunity, yet he continues to judge, gossip and slander his fellow believers.

3:10. Out of the same mouth [reversionistic believer] emanates blessing and cursing [execrations]. My brethren, there is no need for these things to come to pass in this manner.

The reversionistic believer hypocritically praises God yet constantly disobeys him by maligning his fellow Christians. The spiritual life is not a lifestyle of hypocrisy and evil, but a lifestyle of honesty, integrity and happiness. Furthermore, there is no excuse for failing in the spiritual life since God has provided the means for all Christians to become great.

3:11, 12. Does [μητι / *meti*] a well [fed by a spring] emit out of the same opening sweet and bitter water? My brethren, can [μη / *me*] the fig tree produce olives or can the vine produce figs? Neither can salt water produce fresh.

The Greek particles *meti* and *me* found at the beginning of these two verses introduce rhetorical questions. The answers are naturally understood since nature is always consistent. However, the believer under reverse process-reversionism is inconsistent and hypocritical, a well emitting both sweet and bitter water. From his tongue one hears both sweet things (for example praising both God and people) and bitter things (judging, maligning, gossip etc.).

The fig tree was the national tree of Israel while the olive tree was the national tree of the Athenian Greeks. Just as a fig tree cannot produce olives, so Jewish parents cannot produce Greek children. Yet a believer - an ambassador of Christ and in union with Christ - is able to produce evil. This is the inconsistency of the believer. He is a fig tree producing olives and a vine producing figs. His life is the equivalent to a salt lake which is unable to produce the fresh water of the spiritual life.

3:13. Who is wise [learned, possessing insight to discern the true nature of a situation] and an expert [a master of a subject, a possessor of perfect knowledge] among you? Demonstrate from his honorable manner of life his production in a humble state [grace orientation] of wisdom.

All great believers have great knowledge and wisdom, but that wisdom can easily be corrupted by arrogance. So, this believer must be diligent to keep metabolizing the word, to fulfill all his responsibilities in life and to stay under all legitimate systems of authority. These functions will assure him of maintaining his humility.

3:14. But, if you have bitter jealousy and strife [contention based upon selfish, inordinate ambition] in your right lobe, and you do, stop being arrogant [against others] and stop lying against the truth [Bible doctrine].

When a believer is functioning under bitter-jealousy, he has no application of doctrine and grace to his experience. He is totally preoccupied with self, extremely arrogant. Although he may consider himself a great believer he is lying against the truth.

3:15. This wisdom [pseudo wisdom] is not descending from above, but is earthly [Satan is the ruler of this earth], soulish [from ψυχικος / *psuchikos*, a term used for unbelievers, here a reference to human viewpoint], coming from demons [through demon influence].

The cosmic system: Satan's classroom for demon influence

Demon influence is thought transference of demonic doctrine to the soul of the believer or unbeliever. This occurs when the unbeliever rejects the Laws of Establishment and the gospel, and when the believer rejects the spiritual life. Truth protects people from demon influence which is the invasion of the soul with false thinking. Since God did not create his creatures with false thinking, demon influence is the policy and principles developed by Satan after his fall, first to deceive the angels in the pre-historic Angelic Conflict, and later to deceive man

throughout the Appeal Trial of Satan.⁷ As the leader of all fallen angels and the current ruler of planet earth, Satan has been able to compile a cosmic system (referred to in the New Testament by the Greek word *κόσμος* / *cosmos*); an entire sphere of thoughts, opinions, speculations, false doctrines, panaceas, plans, policies, and objectives by which he seeks to control the world which he rules. The unbeliever is protected from demon influence by the laws of divine establishment. The believer is protected from demon influence both by the laws of divine establishment and by a thorough understanding of the principles and doctrines of the spiritual life.

As unbelievers we were all influenced by Satanic thinking, some more than others, “in which sphere [spiritual death] you formerly walked [as unbelievers] according to the order [lifestyle] of the cosmic system [*cosmos*]” (Ephesians 2:2a). However, as believers we can only be influenced by Satanic thinking when we are out of fellowship and walking in the darkness of Satan’s sphere of influence.

The one who says that he is in the light, yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now. The one who loves his brother abides in the light and there is no stumbling in him. (1 John 2:9, 10)

Hatred, and indeed any form of personal sin removes the believer from God’s system of light and transfers him into Satan’s system of darkness. Once inside Satan’s cosmic system, the believer’s rejection of the truth creates a vacuum through which demonic doctrine enters.

Therefore, I say this and I insist because of the Lord that you no longer walk just as the Gentiles walk in the vacuum of their thinking. (Ephesians 4:17)

Learning truth in God’s system of light protects the soul from cosmic influence, but rejecting truth in Satan’s system allows false thinking to be accepted into the soul like dust being sucked into a vacuum.

7. See *Christian Suffering*, Chapter 10

In 1 Corinthians 2:5, the term “wisdom of man” illustrates demon influence in the cosmic system through the Greek culture and religion.

False thinking is very destructive to the soul

But the Spirit [God the Holy Spirit] explicitly communicates that in latter periods of time [the Church Age (especially when the client nation is in decline) and the Tribulation (no client nation exists to restrain evil)], some believers will fall away from doctrine, giving attention to deceitful spirits [false teachers], even doctrines from demons. By the hypocrisy of liars [the facade of sweet and pleasing words, and the warm personality of false teachers] they are seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron [good norms and standards are destroyed]. (1 Timothy 4:1-2)

Having been darkened [false thinking entering the soul] in their understanding, they have been alienated from the life of God through the ignorance which is in them [no truth in their souls] because of the hardness of their hearts [scar tissue in the stream of conscience caused through rejection of truth]. (Ephesians 4:18)

Through his cosmic system, Satan has provided a communion table

You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and at the same time the cup of demons. You cannot partake of Lord’s Table [Eucharist] and [at the same time] the table of demons. (1 Corinthians 10:21)

In other words, the believer who rejects consistent perception of truth may not literally participate in a communion service for Satan but in effect he will come to respect and even worship the thinking of Satan. Therefore, we have a warning to Church Age believers in 1 John:

Stop loving the cosmic system or anything in the cosmic system. If anyone keeps on loving the cosmic system, the love of the Father is not in Him. Because all that is in the cosmic system,

the lust of the flesh [sin nature], the lust of the eyes, and the arrogant pattern of life, is not from the Father but is from the cosmic system. (1 John 2:15-16)

3:16. for where there is jealousy and strife, there is disorder, [instability of reversionism] and every evil practice [gossip, judging, Christian activism etc.].

Christians who live a life of jealousy and strife are under emotional revolt of the soul. Their constant gossip and judging is a sign of their failure to execute the spiritual life; their political activism is a sign of their failure to understand the spiritual life along with its priorities and objectives.

3:17. But wisdom from above is first of all pure [undefiled by cosmic thinking], and producing inner benefit [tranquility, harmony], reasonable [fair], teachable [because of authority orientation], full of mercies [extensive use of grace], divine good production, impartial [without prejudice], without hypocrisy.

“Wisdom from above” describes the thinking of the believer influenced by God’s thinking, in contrast to the previous 3 verses which describe a believer functioning under Satan’s system, the wisdom of the cosmos (demon influence).

3:18. Now, the harvest of righteousness is sown [daily perception of doctrine] in tranquility, to the ones producing tranquility [having a harmonious relationship with God].

If the believer desires maximum production which results from experiential righteousness in the soul, he must place great emphasis on learning God’s word. Learning doctrine is analogous to sewing righteousness in the soul (metabolized doctrine in the soul). As this righteousness is applied toward God and man, production and harvest come. Only the believer with a harmonious relationship with God will reap a maximum harvest.

Chapter Four

4:1. What is the cause of strife among you, and what is the source of quarrels among you [individual antagonisms]? Are they not caused by and from the source of your lusts which wage war within your members [parts of the sin nature]?

Strife, vicious verbal fights, and individual antagonisms are motivated by lusts from the sin nature. When volition yields to these lusts, it brings about sin. For example, monetary lust is fertile soil for such sins as avarice, jealousy, deception, lying, bribery, anger, hatred, bitterness, malice, and even murder. This combination of lust and sin naturally leads to confrontations. The following information about the sin nature was taken from *The Plan of God* by R.B. Thieme, Jr. pages 7-15.

“The sin nature so utterly contaminates mankind that no one can approach God’s perfect essence or please Him. Although not a part of the soul, the sin nature is the center of rebellion toward God, the source of temptation to disobey God. The sin nature seeks to influence and control the soul. This depraved nature came into existence as a direct result of Adam’s original sin.

Therefore, just as through one man [Adam] sin [the sin nature] entered into the world, and [spiritual] death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned. (Romans 5:12)

The sin nature resides in the cell structure of the body and is passed genetically by procreation from Adam to the rest of the human race (Romans 6:6; 7:5, 18). With the exception of Jesus Christ, every person is born with a sin nature...The sin nature has an area of weakness from which all temptation for personal sin originates...In addition to sins from your area of weakness, your sin nature also has an area of strength from which you produce good deeds. Called human good, these deeds are performed in the power of the “flesh.”

Both believer and unbeliever using their own volition produce human good. The good deeds produced by the believer under the control of his sin nature are indistinguishable from the good deeds performed by an unbeliever...There are two trends of every sin nature; one toward asceticism (self-denial) leading to self-righteousness; the other toward lasciviousness (self-gratification) leading to licentiousness. Generally, a person will move in the direction of his habitual trend when he is under the control of the sin nature. That is why there are ascetics on the one hand, and hedonists on the other. However, there is no fixed pattern. One can have a general trend toward asceticism and sometimes move toward lasciviousness, or be lascivious and suddenly develop an area of self-righteousness...Another characteristic of the sin nature is the lust pattern. What is lust? Lust is an illicit, sometimes insatiable desire. This desire is such an intense motivator that lust can consume you and influence all your thoughts and actions. Approbation lust, the desire to be recognized, to promote oneself is the most basic motivation...Approbation lust leads to power lust. Once people begin to get attention, they desire to organize those who give them attention so that they can control and manipulate them. Some people are consumed with sexual lust which they often substitute for romantic love. Others have materialism lust, a condition that consumes many in our society with the insatiable desire for possessions. There are other lusts, but these are the basic ones.”

4:2a. You keep on lusting [ἐπιθυμέω / *epithumeo*], and do not have [the tranquility and happiness of the spiritual life].

The Greek word θυμός (*thum-os*) has a variety of meanings such as spirit, desire, impulse, intense feeling, and anger. Its cognate noun, ἐπιθυμία (*epithum-ia*) means a natural or impulsive desire for sex or food, and also has a philosophical connotation of man in conflict with rationality. In this passage, the Greek verb *epithumeo* means to irrationally desire or long for something, to lust for something in a vain search for happiness outside of God’s plan.

4:2b. You murder and are jealous, consequently you are not able to acquire [the spiritual life].

James picks one overt and one mental sin to represent their respective categories. Murder is the worst of the overt sins since it deprives a person of the right to complete his destiny in life. Jealousy, as we will see, is one of the worst if not *the* worst mental sin.

Murder

Murder (Hebrew word: רָצַח / *ratzach*) is the unlawful killing of a person with malice aforethought (Numbers 35:16-18). The motivation to murder comes from one or more of the following areas of arrogance: self-righteousness, jealousy, conspiratorial, criminal, crusader, political, iconoclastic arrogance and the arrogance related to unhappiness.

Murder is both a sin and a crime invented by Satan to attack human freedom and self-determination and so is prohibited (Exodus 20:13). As a crime it should be punished by the national entity, God’s agent for the punishment of crime (Genesis 9:5-6; Leviticus 24:17; Romans 13:4; Matthew 26:52). If not, God will punish murderers directly.

Punishment for killing innocent people

People who murder, as well as animals who kill people, are to be executed (Genesis 9:5). Animals are responsible for their acts; whereas humans are responsible for both their decisions and their acts. Mental illness is therefore not a permissible excuse under correct jurisprudence because even a mentally ill person chooses to be motivated by lust and makes a free-will decision to murder. “Whoever sheds man’s blood [whether sane or insane], by man [the judicial system] his blood shall be shed [capital punishment]” (Genesis 9:6).

Our Lord’s rebuke to Peter in the garden was a warning against crime. Peter was neither a police officer nor a soldier functioning under the laws of government. He put himself above the law of the land when he tried to murder the arresting officer: “Then Jesus said to him ‘Return

your sword to its scabbard, for all who draw the sword [in crime], shall die by the sword [by capital punishment]’ ” (Matthew 26:52).

Killing of animals for food

Man has the right to slaughter animals for food: “Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you; I give all to you, as I gave the green plant” (Genesis 9:3, 1 Timothy 4:3, 4).

Killing in defense of ones nation

The soldier represents his country while functioning impersonally and professionally. It makes no difference whether the soldier kills a good or bad soldier, Christian or unbeliever, Christian or unbeliever, for he must do his job and kill impersonally, not emotionally. A soldier functions professionally to preserve the freedom of his nation. He must kill the enemy soldiers as per 1 Samuel 30:7-17 and 2 Samuel 10:7-19, whereas only God has the right to command the killing of women and children which He did in the Old Testament when an entire people were totally evil (Joshua 8:1-29). Since it is wrong for a member of the human race to command the killing of women and children in war, no honorable military man deliberately kills civilians. However, as a consequence of warfare, many civilians do suffer injury and death. Even though this does occur, one must always remember that the justice of God is always fair, his omniscience has all the facts and his omnipotence has control over all matters and situations involved in war.

Israel, as the first client nation, was commanded to be prepared for war (Numbers 1:2, 3). There comes a time when it is right for a nation to go to war and wrong for it not to, as declared in Ecclesiastes 3:8b, “There is a time for war and a time for peace”. If you don’t prepare in peacetime for war, you will lose your freedom when war comes.

Killing in battle is not murder. The Hebrew word for murder as found in Deuteronomy 5:17, “You shall not murder [רצח / *ratzach*],” is never used in a military context. Note the different Hebrew verbs used in the following passages:

A time to kill [הרג / *harag* : to kill in order to protect self and loved ones from criminals or in defense of ones nation], and a time to heal, (Ecclesiastes 3:3)

When the Arameans of Damascus came to help Hadadezer, king of Zobah, David killed [נכה / *nacah*] 22,000 Arameans.
(2 Samuel 8:5)

For many fell slain [חלל / *chalal*] because the war was of God
(1 Chronicles 5:22)

God himself both advocates and instigates war when it is justified, and He personally prepares great military men to fulfill his purpose as he did David.

Blessed be the Lord my rock who trains my hands for war and my fingers for battle. (Psalm 144:1)

He [God] trains my hands for battle so that my arms can bend a bow of bronze. (2 Samuel 22:35)

Jesus Christ Himself holds the record for killing in battle: “...and struck 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians...all were dead” (Isaiah 37:36). But our Lord will break His own record at the Second Advent when He returns to terminate the Armageddon campaign (Revelation 14:20, 19:11, 15; Isaiah 63:1-6; Ezekiel 39:11-13; Joel 2:20). In the meantime, we can be assured that despite man’s best efforts to create a universal world peace, there will always be “wars [hot wars] and rumors of wars [cold wars]” (Matthew 24:6).

Satan rejected truth and became a liar and murderer

“Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot listen to my word [they were blinded by arrogance and so didn’t like the truth which the Lord communicated]. You are from your father the devil [unbelievers], and the

desires of your father you wish to accomplish [to kill Jesus Christ]. He was a murderer from the beginning [of human history]; furthermore, he [Satan] does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he communicates the lie, he speaks from his own [person], for he is a liar and the father of it [the lie].” (John 8:43-44)

Not as Cain who was motivated from that evil one [the devil] and consequently he murdered his brother with a sacrificial knife. And why did he murder him? Because his deeds [he was self-righteousness and so rejected the truth of the gospel] were evil, but the deeds [based on God’s plan of truth] of his brother were righteous. (1 John 3:12)

Believers do Murder

The idea that believers are incapable of murder is as ludicrous as thinking that believers do not have problems in marriage. After salvation, since the believer does not lose his soul, he doesn’t lose his free will; likewise, since he doesn’t lose his body, he doesn’t lose his sin nature which resides in the cell structure of the body. As a mature believer and one of the greatest believers in the Old Testament, David provides us with the classical illustration of a believer-murderer (2 Samuel 11:1-17; 12:9). Furthermore, he murdered a mature believer, Uriah the Hittite, his noblest and possibly his best general.

Peter in writing to Christians (1 Peter 1:1-3) and in recognizing that Christians are capable of murder, gave the following admonition: “Make sure that none of you suffer as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler” (1 Peter 4:15).

In his first epistle to the Church, the apostle John teaches the principle that hatred is mental murder (1 John 3:15). This means that when a Christian hates another Christian, he is mentally murdering that believer. The Christian way of life is much more difficult than the life of the unbeliever and therefore places any Christian who fails to live the Christian life under a lot of stress. Also, the believer who thinks he is living the Christian life, but is not, becomes self-righteous and arrogant. It

should therefore not be surprising that there are more mental murderers among Christians than unbelievers and that many Christians also commit homicide. This is exactly what John is saying. Unfortunately, many English translations give completely the opposite meaning to this verse. The theologians who translated this verse could not accept the idea that Christians murder, so they deliberately changed the translation. The correct translation below follows the Greek exactly. If you understand this verse correctly, you understand that John is saying that many Christians murder!

Everyone who hates his brother [a Christian hating a Christian, and many Christians do] is a murderer. And you know that every conceivable [the meaning of the Greek word ‘all’ without the article] murderer does not [a Greek adverb] have eternal life residing in him [all murderers are not necessarily Christians].
(1 John 3:15)

This verse is composed of two sentences. The first sentence very clearly states that if a Christian hates another Christian, he is a murderer. In the second sentence the Greek word ‘no’ is not found, rather the Greek adverb ‘not.’ So, the second sentence of this verse should be translated as we have done so above. However, in many translations the translators mistranslated the second sentence to contradict the first which doesn’t make any sense at all.

Jealousy

Jealousy is a mental sin of arrogance characterized by fear, suspicion, possessiveness and resentment. Motivated by fear, the jealous person fears rivalry and the loss of the affection. Motivated by suspicion, he imagines that the one he alleges to love has been acting unfaithful. If the jealous person feels that he has been betrayed, he becomes resentful and even bitter.

True love requires freedom, but the emotional and jealous person does not permit others to love from freedom. He insists and even demands it. The jealous person is totally insensitive regarding the

feelings of others and will crush their volition without a qualm. Jealousy is irrational, demanding, vicious and tyrannical.

Jealousy is the basis for inordinate competition in romance, family relationships, professional life, politics, social life and sports. Jealousy combined with power and approbation lust produces strife, conspiracy, revolt, and war. If a jealous person does not receive what he demands, he becomes resentful, hateful, bitter and implacable.

The constantly jealous person has no capacity for any relationship in life. Jealousy is more than a mental attitude sin; it is complete preoccupation with self and demands exclusive devotion. This preoccupation with self eliminates any grace orientation toward people and God.

A tranquil right lobe is life to the body, but jealousy is rotteness to the bones. (Proverbs 14:30)

Wrath is fierce; anger is a flood; but who can stand against jealousy? (Proverbs 27:4)

But, if you have bitter jealousy and strife [contention based upon selfish, inordinate ambition] in your right lobe, and you do, stop being arrogant [against others] and stop lying against the truth [doctrine]...For where there is jealousy and strife, there is disorder [instability] and every evil practice [gossip, judging, Christian activism etc.]. (James 3:14, 16)

4:2c. You quarrel and fight and you do not have because you do not ask [failure to pray].

The apostate believer does not pray and so fails in his responsibility to pray. Apostasy is the cause; failure in prayer is a result. Therefore, if a person is going to solve this failure regarding prayer, he must first solve the problem of apostasy.

All Scripture is God-breathed and is profitable for teaching, for rebuke, for correction, for training in righteousness [experiential righteousness and virtue], that the man of God

might be proficient [capable], having been well equipped [prepared by advancing in the spiritual life] for every good work [Christian service, such as prayer] (2 Timothy 3:16, 17).

The only Christian who is qualified (equipped) for Christian service is the spiritually prepared and righteous believer. Spiritual growth must precede spiritual production. In this passage verse sixteen precedes verse seventeen, spiritual preparation precedes service.

4:3. You ask but you do not receive because you ask for yourself that you may squander it on your lusts [in your frantic search for happiness].

The Christian life must include correct thinking and motivation. If a Christian makes a prayer-request based on ignorance and false motivation, how can an omniscient and righteous God grant such a request! In verse two the apostate believer didn't pray. In this verse the apostate believer prays, but with evil motivation.

4:4. You adulteresses [unfaithful believers, male and female], do you not know that love for [friendship with] the world is hostility toward [alienation from] God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world [the reversionist], appoints himself an enemy of God.

The Greek noun for adulterer is *μοιχος* / *moichos*, but in this verse the feminine form of the noun (*μοιχαλεις* / *moichalis*) is used. When the Church age believer is unfaithful to the Lord through his (her) friendship with the world and his (her) love for it, he (the Church age believer) is called an adulteress.

Worldliness is a system of thinking. The Greek verb *κοσμεω* (*cosmeo*) means to arrange, to rule. In the New Testament 'cosmos' refers to Satan's organized rulership over the inhabited world of unbelievers. As ruler of the world Satan does everything he can to convince the people of his kingdom that his thinking is best, not the Lord's. Since the Christian lives in Satan's world, he will be exposed to the thinking of Satan, and if he learns God's word, the thinking of the

Lord as well. At that point, the believer must decide whether to accept the thinking of the Lord or the thinking of Satan.

In which sphere [spiritual death] you formerly walked [as an unbeliever] according to the lifestyle of this world [cosmos: Satan's system of thinking], according to the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit [Satan] who is now operational [working] in the sons of disobedience [unbelievers and reversionistic believers]. (Ephesians 2:2)

Stop loving the world [cosmos] or anything related to it. If anyone keeps on loving the world, the love of the Father is not in him. Because all that is in the world - the lust of the flesh [the sin nature is the source of lust],⁸ and the lust of the eyes [motivational arrogance], and the arrogant pattern of life [functional arrogance] - is not from the Father but from the world [cosmos]. (1 John 2:15-16)

Also stop being conformed to this age [human history influenced by Satanic thinking], but be transformed by the renovation of your thinking that you may prove what the will of God is, namely the good [divine production], the well pleasing [the will of God is always well pleasing to him], and the mature status quo [completing the spiritual life]. (Romans 12:2)

For a detailed study of Satan and his system, please read the booklet "*Satan and Demonism*" by R. B. Thieme, Jr.

4:5. Or do you presume that the Scripture speaks to no purpose against jealousy [James 3:14-16; 4:2]? The Spirit who indwells us, pursues us with love [επιποθεω / *epipotheo*] and gives us greater grace.

8. The sin nature is an integral part of every human being and resides in the cell-structure of the human body. The sin nature is composed of an area of strength producing pseudo good; an area of weakness producing sin; trends towards moral degeneracy (legalism) and immoral degeneracy, and lust patterns.

In most Bibles, the translation of this verse makes no theological sense. This is mainly because the verse division is incorrect. There are two false sentence divisions, one in verse 5 and the other in verse 6. Remember that there were neither verse nor sentence divisions in the original Greek manuscripts, these were added later for our convenience. Usually, these divisions are accurate and very helpful, but occasionally there are mistakes. If a translator is working with a text which has an incorrect verse division it is quite probable he will misunderstand the passage and therefore produce an incorrect translation.

The Greek word *epipotheo* has the following meanings: to desire, to long for, to pursue with love. The last meaning fits this context the best and when that meaning is applied to a properly divided text, the passage makes sense.

James is challenging these Christians not to be preoccupied with selves, but to focus on God and his plan. The Holy Spirit pursued and pursues these Jewish Christians because he loves them. These believers should in turn be pursuing after God, but are instead pursuing their lusts and such sins as jealousy, in effect they are running from the love of God.

How does the Holy Spirit pursue us with love and give us greater grace? At gospel hearing, the Holy Spirit provided Common Grace for us and all unbelievers, convincing the spiritually dead of the truth of the Gospel (John 16:8-11). At the moment we believed, he also provided Efficacious Grace making the believer's faith effective unto salvation (Ephesians 1:13, 2:8).

At salvation he provided five irrevocable gifts:

1. Spirit-baptism (Acts 1:5; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:26-28; Ephesians 4:4-5)
2. Regeneration (The Holy Spirit provides a human spirit at salvation for us as part of our spiritual birth: John 3:6; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 1:23)
3. Indwelling (1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19-20; 2 Corinthians 6:16)
4. A Spiritual Gift (1 Corinthians 12:4, 7,11)
5. Sealing (Ephesians 1:13-14, 4:30)

Aside from these irrevocable gifts, the Holy Spirit also provides one revocable gift, namely the filling of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18; Galatians 5:16-18). Under the filling of the Spirit, God the Holy Spirit demonstrates his love for us by providing his power for our learning, metabolizing, retaining, recalling and applying of the Word of God. Also, he prays for us when we are out of fellowship (Romans 8:26, 27).

4:6. On which account it says [in Proverbs 3:34 in the Septuagint], “God makes war [αντιτασσομαι / antitassomai] against the arrogant [believer], but he keeps on giving grace to the humble [believer].”

When an army went into battle, the general would use this word (antitassomai) in commanding his troops to arrange themselves against the enemy forces. If the Christian pleases the Lord, he will be blessed and promoted by the Lord (James 4:10). On the other hand, if he doesn't please the Lord, the Lord will go to battle against that believer. If God arranges his resources to go into battle against you, you can be sure that you will be the loser!

Arrogance and its characteristics (2 Timothy 3:1-7)

3:1. But know this, that in the last days [of a client nation by interpretation, of a dispensation by application] difficult times are imminent.

The sinful characteristics described in the following verses 2-7 can apply to believers or unbelievers at any point in history, but by interpretation this is specifically addressing the declension which takes place among believers in a client nation. When Christians are not motivated to learn the Word and to advance in the spiritual life, truth disappears from national thought and function, which brings about a national decline.

As Paul was penning this message (2 Timothy), the Jewish client nation of Israel was in a serious state of decadence and on its way out. Emerging in Israel's place was the first Gentile client nation, Senatus Populusque Romanus – the Roman Empire. The number of mature

believers was increasing in this emerging client nation, and so the trend was toward virtue, humility and prosperity. This brought about the golden age of Rome, 96-192 AD. The Roman Empire (SPQR: Senatus Populusque Romanus) became a wonderful place to live for its citizens as well as providing blessing to many other nations as well. However, as the believers in the Roman Empire forsook the spiritual life, arrogance began to permeate the lives of those living within it. As a result, many disasters befell the Romans such as the Great Plague between 165 AD to 180 AD, a warning that the golden age was coming to an end, and the civil war from 193 AD to 198 AD, marking the end of the golden age. These two disasters removed a good portion of the arrogance in the land and so brought about a temporary interest in evangelism and Bible teaching. However, as time passed and the empire aged, more and more arrogance crept into Roman society, leading to great political chaos in the years 235-284 AD, the splitting of the empire in 395, and a catastrophic end in 496 AD for what was once possibly the greatest empire in history.

By application, this is also true of dispensations.⁹ Toward the end of the Dispensation of the Gentiles there was so much decadence and demonism among the nations of Mesopotamia, Canaan and Egypt etc. that the Lord had to bring the Jewish race into existence (2061 BC), and later to form the Jewish nation of Israel (1441 BC), beginning the Age of Israel. 1500 years later there was so much rejection of truth and so much religiosity among the Jews (to the extent that they rejected their Savior and Messiah) that the Age of Israel had to be interrupted by the Church Age in 30 AD. In the Church Age there is no evidence to suggest that human history will get better as many believers are misled to believe. Indeed, after the removal of all Church Age believers at the Rapture, there will be so much evil upon the earth that the Lord will have to return early to shorten the 7 year Tribulation in order to deliver the Jews in Jerusalem. Then, the Lord will establish his Millennial Kingdom upon the earth, where there will be 1000 years of perfect government and

9. A dispensation is a period of human history expressed in terms of Biblical revelation, which divides history into different eras reflecting God's plan for mankind. For further study read *The Divine Outline of History: Dispensations and the Church*, by R. B. Thieme Jr.

environment. As this final dispensation of human history approaches its conclusion there will be so much arrogance among the unbelievers (proving yet again that perfect environment cannot make a person happy) that when Satan is released after 1000 years of captivity in the Abyss, he will easily motivate the unbelievers into a revolt against the perfect government of the Lord Jesus Christ (Revelation 20:7-9).

3:2. For persons will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, slanderers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful ones and anti-establishment [totally irresponsible].

The Greek word ἀνόσιος (*a-nosios*), here translated as “anti-establishment,” is often defined and translated as “impious” or “unholy” but that doesn’t tell us enough. Plato used it to mean “transgressing ancient laws” (establishment laws). It also came to mean to reject the obligations of life, to have no sense of responsibility.

3:3-4 Unloving [no capacity for love], implacable, malicious gossips, without self control, violent and brutal [unreasonable in thinking and action], not lovers of intrinsic good [having no love for divine good as found in God’s plan, therefore they have no spiritual life and values], treacherous [disloyal], thoughtless types [insensitive], having become pumped up with arrogance, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God [false priorities],

“Pumped up with arrogance” manifests itself in legalism, socialism, crusader arrogance, activism and civil disobedience.

3:5. holding to a superficial form [outward appearance] of the spiritual life [εὐσεβεία / *eusebeia*], but they themselves have disregarded its power [the power of the filling of the Holy Spirit working together with metabolized doctrine in the soul]; avoid such ones as these.

It was Dr. Borkom of Heidelberg who came up with the correct meaning of the Greek word *eusebeia*. He said that it meant “Christian

faith and life.” In the New Testament this Greek word is used for the spiritual life of the Church Age believer.

Many Christians in reversionism can appear very spiritual, because they are executing some form of a pseudo-spiritual life based on religion, emotion, Christian service etc. These people can also be very charismatic and friendly, providing a comfortable social environment which attracts other reversionistic believers as well as many young Christians who don’t know any better. But what does the Bible tell you to do regarding these people? Avoid them!

3:6-7. For among them are those [immoral Christian men] who creep into homes [some men are experts at deceiving women and slyly entering their homes, for example under the pretext of spiritual counseling] and seduce silly women [no doctrine in their souls] who are overwhelmed by their sins and are carried away by various lusts [the emphasis here would be on approbation and sexual lust]. Always learning [these women], but they are never able to come to a metabolized knowledge of the truth.

“Always learning” may refer to the following four categories of Christians: first, many Christians attend an incorrectly taught Bible classes and so become puffed up with false knowledge. Secondly, Christians loaded down with arrogance may learn the Word from a good pastor-teacher only to distort its meaning in order to concur with their pseudo-righteous image of self. Thirdly, some insist on listening to a variety of Bible teachers that they might be able to pick and choose rather than accepting the authority of one prepared pastor. Lastly, some Christians like to listen to mentally stimulating or sensational messages that “tickle the ear” (2 Timothy 4:3), rather than being inculcated with consistent Bible teaching from a well prepared and excellent minister of God’s Word.

In contrast to the arrogant believer, a humble believer is teachable, objective (uninfluenced by emotion, popular opinion, or personal prejudice, but influenced by facts and truth), understands, respects and obeys all legitimate authorities, and is grace oriented, that is he understands and appreciates God’s grace toward him and applies grace toward others. In short, the humble believer executes God’s plan

for his life, advancing to Spiritual Self Esteem, then on to Spiritual Autonomy and finally to Spiritual Maturity.¹⁰

James continues:

4:7. Therefore, submit to God, and stand your ground against the devil, and he will flee from you.

The believer submits to God when he “grows in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18). The believer must come to the point of understanding his spiritual life and applying all the Ten Problem Solving Devices. Then he is able to defend himself (stand his ground) against the devil. We defend; God takes the offensive and will cause the devil to flee.

4:8-9 Come near to God [through spiritual advance], and he will come near to you [provide blessing]. Cleanse your hands, you sinners [rebound; name your sins], and purify your hearts [remove the blackout and garbage], you double-souled believer [a split personality developed through reversionism]. Be miserable [warning discipline], lament [intensive] and weep [during dying discipline]; let your laughter [based on superficial and false concepts, not based upon capacity for life which reflects divine viewpoint] be turned to grief, and your [pseudo] happiness to depression.

4:10. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will promote you.

In his humanity Jesus Christ demonstrated how to develop humility:

He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death even the death of the cross. (Philippians 2:8)

10. The phases of Christian growth are explained in detail throughout the book *Christian Suffering* by R. B. Thieme, Jr.

Although being a Son He, he learned obedience [to authority] from the things which he had suffered. (Hebrews 5:8)

Humility is developed through ones submission to all legitimate authorities. When you are consistently obedient to all legitimate authorities the Lord will promote you.

4:11. Brethren, stop slandering each other; he who slanders a brother and judges his brother, slanders, maligns the law [νομος/ *nomos* refers to the mystery doctrine of the Church Age] and judges the law, but if you judge the law *and you do* [first class conditional sentence], you are not a doer of the law, but a judge [critic].

The verb *slander* is in the durative present tense which means that it began sometime in the past and continues up to the point of the writing of James. Many believers set themselves up as judges and so think that they have the right and authority to evaluate, judge and slander other believers.

The basic meaning of the Greek word *nomos* means instruction. In this passage *nomos* (translated “the law”) refers to the mystery doctrines as found in the New Testament epistles, namely, the doctrines of the spiritual life of the Church Age believer (James 1:25; 2:12). Spirit Baptism, a spiritual status unique to the Church Age, would be a good example of a mystery doctrine. The Holy Spirit places each person at the point of his salvation into union with Christ identifying (baptizing) him with Christ. Therefore, if a believer maligns or in any way persecutes another Christian he is in effect maligning or persecuting the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 9:4).

4:12. There keeps on being one unique person [the correct translation of the Greek word *heis*], the lawmaker and judge who is able to save [the believer at salvation] and to destroy [a dramatic aorist: to cast the unbeliever into the Lake of Fire]; but you, [in contrast to the lawgiver and judge] who are you who judges his neighbor [the believer who judges and maligns others whom he knows]?

Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own Lord, he stands or falls. (Romans 14:4a)

4:13. Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into this or that city, and shall work in that place for a year and we shall both transact business and make a profit."

The reversionistic believer under the influence of monetary lust concentrates on selfish planning which totally excludes the Lord. Following are five areas under which he deviates from God's plan for his life.

1. Time: The reversionist uses time given by God for his selfish desires.
2. Geography: The reversionist looks for a place to make money in business rather than a location where he can learn the word of God.
3. Objective: The reversionist plans his life around gaining material rewards in time, rather than around eternal reward.
4. Operation: The reversionist is so occupied with making money that he ignores God's perfect grace provision.
5. Motivation: His motivation is based on profit rather than pleasing the Lord.

4:14. Yet you do not even know what kind of life you will have tomorrow. You are just a vapor trail in the sky [a mist, wisp of smoke], visible for a short time and then you vanish [physical death].

When the believer learns and executes God's plan for his life, his life has purpose and objectives. His primary purpose in life is to reciprocate God's love. God has loved him from eternity-past, now the believer must learn to love God in time (1 John 4:19). His strategic objectives are to reach Occupation with Christ which makes him a phenomenal witness before man, and to pass Evidence Testing which gives him a testimony before the angels and glorifies God to the maximum. On the other hand the believer who does not execute God's purpose for his life lives a life without purpose and objectives - he is nothing but a wisp of smoke!

4:15. Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord has willed, we shall both live and do this or that [executing God's will for our life]."

Please read the booklet *Divine Guidance* by R. B. Thieme Jr., pages 6-7, 16-18 for a more detailed study of this subject.

4:16. But now you keep on boasting with arrogant words; all such boasting is worthless.

A legalist, for example, may boast about all the great things he has done and is doing for the Lord, when in reality he is producing dead works and encourages others to do likewise through his boasting. An ignorant government may boast about how it will bring peace in the Middle East, yet with little understanding of the spiritual conflict involved (Genesis 12:1-3) or the Muslim religion (Genesis 16:12), they will become involved in anti-Semitism and only aggravate the situation. The arrogant believer lives outside of God's plan and does not consider God's plan in his decision making process. His life and boasting are worthless.

4:17. Therefore to the one having known the honorable thing to do and not doing it, to him it keeps on being sin.

The greater the knowledge, the more lucid are the issues of the spiritual life and the failures related to the spiritual life. Some Christians learn enough of God's Word to understand their objectives, but for one reason or another they fail to execute accordingly. The sin of not executing God's plan also means that the believer will spend most of his time, if not all of it, out of fellowship with God. If the believer persists in avoiding his responsibilities to God (execution of the spiritual life) and remains out of fellowship, he will inevitably die the sin unto death (1 John 5:16).

Chapter Five

5:1. Come on now, you rich persons [Jewish believers in reversionism], break out into crying and start screaming over your miseries that shall come [futuristic present] upon you.

James decided to use reversionism characterized by monetary lust to make the point that no Christian can be happy outside of God's plan. James could have illustrated reversionism by using the example of an ascetic renouncing all the comforts of life in his pursuit of happiness, but this would not have caught the attention of too many Christians. So, James used the seeking and attainment of wealth, rather than the seeking of poverty, to illustrate the frantic search for happiness.

Men spend their whole life trying to make a fortune in their quest for happiness. Women marry wealthy men in their desire for material niceties and the comforts of life, as if this in itself is happiness. However, great wealth without capacity only brings frustration and misery. This frustration is one type of self-induced misery, to which God will add warning discipline. If the Christian does not heed this warning, the Lord will increase the discipline so that the believer might experience intensive discipline. In the believer's frustration and discipline, he will begin to weep and eventually, when the pressure becomes unbearable (the frustration of self-induced misery combined with intensive discipline), he will enter into screaming (a tantrum related to mental illness). He sought happiness through wealth, but found only self-induced misery and divine discipline.

Remember that there is nothing wrong with wealth; in fact wealth is extremely important in national society. People with wealth, both believers and unbelievers, produce jobs for others. These jobs provide the capital required to support families and a comfortable lifestyle. If a country and a people in a national entity are going to prosper, there must be businesses ranging from family-owned businesses to large corporations. Great national prosperity begins when a nation develops large

corporations, for these corporations not only create the need for many medium-sized businesses and corporations, but are also able to compete in the world markets. God has designed the economy to operate under the principle that wealth creates greater wealth so that many can benefit. Wealth is not evil, only people with rotten souls: "the *love of money* is the root [source] of all kinds of evil," not money in itself (1 Timothy 6:10).

Many times politicians in government lusting for the approbation and the votes of the people will tax businesses and corporations heavily in order to bribe the greater majority of voters with government programs and handouts. Other politicians jealous of the ability and wealth of great entrepreneurs desire to destroy their businesses through unfair taxation and legislation. In any case the money they receive in taxation gets called 'government money' as if it were the personal income of the politicians. When the government gets involved in these functions, much of this money is squandered on non-productive social programs or literally stolen by politicians. God never designed government for these purposes. Any function of social welfare should be limited to the truly helpless in society i.e. orphans, helpless widows, the physically helpless etc. If people are given freedom and businesses are allowed to prosper without the burdens of excessive taxation and harmful legislation, there would be more than sufficient money for people to take care of themselves.

The Christian who fails to learn and execute the spiritual life will never be happy. Nothing can make that Christian happy who fails in his responsibility before Lord. However the believer who has attained a capacity for life through spiritual growth will be able to enjoy the following blessings, if and when God provides them:

1. Achievement and recognition (e.g. in the field of science)
2. Friends and social life
3. Health and vigor
4. Romance and love
5. Pleasure and stimulation (physical and mental)
6. Promotion with authority and power
7. Success and approbation (e.g. as an actor, musician etc.)
8. Wealth and comfort

While achievement in these areas cannot be considered the source of happiness for a Christian, if he is a spiritually advanced believer with capacity for life he will have the ability to enjoy these things as God provides.

5:2, 3. Your riches have rotted, and your clothes have become moth-eaten. Your gold and silver are tarnished, and their poison [a reference to the venomous soul producing poisonous evil] shall be evidence against you, and shall eat your pieces of flesh [the plural of *sarks*: objects of prosperity]. Like fire [destroying things, others and self] you have accumulated [culminative aorist: the result of many years out of fellowship] treasure [these possessions produce a reaction in the rotten soul] for the last days [crisis or catastrophic days: the sin unto death].

These riches have not really rotted; the clothes are not moth-eaten, and the gold and silver articles are not tarnished. In reality it is the souls of these believers that have become rotten, moth-eaten and tarnished. The three verbs used in this verse are consummative perfects in the passive voice. This means that at some point in the past these Christians rejected the spiritual life and so entered into the 8 stages of reversionism. As they progressed through these stages rot and destruction set in. When a believer has a rotten soul, his wealth becomes malodorous, namely, he will use his wealth in a wrong or evil way. Even though a reversionistic Christian businessman may be wearing very expensive garments to impress, his clothes will appear moth-eaten to discerning people who see his decadence. A Christian woman may be wearing the most beautiful clothes, jewelry and accessories, but if she has a tarnished soul seeking attention and approbation, a discerning person will not want to be around her. Possessions cannot conceal a malodorous soul!

Rotten riches, moth-eaten clothes, and tarnished gold and silver means that these possessions did not bring the happiness that these Christians were striving for. The wealth or possessions of a person are no greater than his soul-capacity. When money, people or things become more important than God's plan, the believer becomes stupid. When money, people or things become the basis for happiness, the soul begins to rot.

As the believer moves through the Eight Stages of Reversionism, he acquires poison in the soul via blackout. By contrast, as the believer moves through the Ten Problem Solving Devices, he acquires Bible doctrine in the soul via the filling of the Spirit. Poison in the soul is Satanic thinking called evil (Matthew 15:19). Bible doctrine in the soul is God's thinking called absolute good (the Greek word *agathos*) (3 John 11, Romans 7:12, Matthew 12:35) or the honorable good (*kalos*) (Hebrews 5:14; 6:5, 1 Timothy 1:8). Lust is the motivation of the evil believer, whereas love for God (a desire to please the Lord) is the motivation of the great believer. Divine thinking and love for God leads to good decisions and genuine production, whereas satanic thinking motivated by lust leads to sin and human good (good produced outside of God's plan). This category of good is classified as 'dead works', being evil production. The evil thinking, motivation, decisions and function of the reversionist will be used by the Supreme Court of Heaven as evidence against him.

The venom in the soul of the believer (black out, scar tissue in the stream of consciousness and garbage in the subconscious) eats his 'fleshes' (pieces of flesh), destroying any capacity to enjoy his possessions. The pieces of flesh are those possessions which he thought would make him happy, but don't. In effect he is destroyed by the very things he thought would make him happy. The rotten, moth-eaten, and tarnished objects of his desire fuel a fire (a destructive force) in his soul which eventually leads to self-induced frustration, misery, and the ultimate discipline administered by the Lord, the sin unto death (1 John 5:16).

5:4. Behold, the wages of the workers who have mowed your fields, the ones [literally: the wages, though referring to the workers] defrauded by you; these workers keep screaming [in desperation], and the screams of the harvesters have entered into the ears of the Lord of the Army.

The Christian who neglects the spiritual life will eventually reach the 8th stage of reversionism, reverse process reversionism. In this stage the norms and standards, priorities, values and objectives are all reversed.

Those who he should love, he doesn't; those about whom he should be concerned, he takes advantage of. Instead, he concentrates on inconsequential persons, those who complement and respond to his arrogance. In this passage we have the reversionistic Christian businessman who is defrauding his workers of their pay instead of caring and providing for them. Being in the 8th stage of reversionism, he has no integrity, no honor, no sense of responsibility and no love for his employees. He has a malodorous, rotten and venomous soul.

Many Jewish Christians became very wealthy under Roman law which not only provided them with the freedom to acquire great wealth, but also protected their money and property. Now, in reversionism, they abused the very law which protected them. They used their wealth and power to defraud their workers of their rightful wages. The property owners apparently made verbal contracts with the harvesters to pay them at the end of the harvest season, but found some excuse not to do so. Since these businessmen had considerable power and influence in their community, the workers had no choice but to accept their loss. For this reason they and their families suffered terribly and some may have even perished.

It's not that these wealthy believers needed the money, not at all. However, since they were in a frantic search for happiness, they could never be satisfied with the amount of wealth they had acquired. Under self-deception they kept thinking in their misery that if they were to acquire even more money, they would obtain happiness. They never did find happiness, but only misery and great divine discipline.

These wealthy believers remained out of fellowship with God because they had rejected God's recovery procedure and his plan for their life. They were motivated by monetary lust from the source of the sin nature. Under the power of this lust, they sought happiness through the attainment of more and more wealth. However, since lust can never be satisfied, they were never content with the wealth they had acquired.

The title *Kurios Sabaoth* means the "Lord of the Armies," a title of the second person of the Trinity, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Greek σαβαωθ (*sabaoth*) is transliterated from the Hebrew word (צבאות *sebaoth*). You find this word translated many times in the Old Testament as "hosts," and sometimes translated in the New Testament as

"Almighty," but its meaning is "armies." You see, since many theologians and translators of the Bible are such pacifist-wimps, they find it difficult to associate the Lord Jesus Christ with any type of violent action, even when it is justified. So, one almost never finds this word translated correctly. "The screams of the harvesters have entered into the ears of the Lord of the Armies" means that some disaster will befall these businessmen and possibly even violence. If the businessmen of a nation become corrupt and evil, it causes a reaction. This reaction can lead to violence, and if the reaction is widespread, to revolution.

If a person makes a lot of money in business, he should allow some of his prosperity to flow over to those who helped him make that money. In this way both employer and employee are blessed. The more money a believer makes under good laws of government (the laws of divine establishment) and under the grace of God, the greater becomes his responsibility to others and to his nation. He has the responsibility to continue to create and perpetuate business systems under free enterprise so that there will be prosperity not only for his generation, but for future generations as well.

5:5. You have lived in excessive luxury [τρυφάω / *truphao*] and self-indulgence [σπαταλάω / *spatalao*] on the earth; you have been a sensual voluptuary. You have fattened your hearts [right lobes] for a day of slaughter [personal or national disaster].

The Greek word *truphao* means to live in luxury, extravagance and in licentiousness. The verb *spatalao* means to live lewdly. These Christians are using their wealth and power to gratify their lusts. In reversionism the believer does not have the self-discipline and the humility to enjoy his wealth properly.

This passage is not criticizing luxury, rather it is describing evil, wealthy Christians with no integrity, no honor, no humility, no self-discipline and no appreciation for the source of their blessing, unlike the noble wealthy Christian who appreciates the source of his blessing and uses his wealth in an honorable and responsible way.

When social and business life is related to evil, it contributes to disaster both personal and national. For example, society breaks down rather quickly when there is a breakdown in the institution of marriage. Bad family life or the lack of it produces an unstable generation of citizens, naturally causing an unstable nation. Also, if a nation is full of corrupt and evil businessmen, there will be a reaction. Sometimes this reaction takes the form of liberal legislation stripping the people of their freedoms, such as the limiting or removal of free enterprise, or in more extreme cases a revolution ensues.

Just as cows are fattened up for the slaughter house, so a lifestyle of neglecting ones spiritual life fattens up believers for the day of slaughter, namely, intensive divine discipline followed by the sin unto death. By going through the 8 stages of reversionism, these believers help to bring about personal and national disaster which they are not prepared for.

5:6. You have condemned, murdered the righteous; he doesn't oppose you.

The judicial system in a nation is extremely important. Its purpose is to protect the innocent and to punish the guilty. When people with power and influence are able to bribe police, judges and other people connected with jurisprudence, the nation is headed for disaster. In this case, certain wealthy Christians were using their power and money to convict innocent people, who were not even hostile to them, and have them sentenced to death. In some way, these innocent people stood in the way of the financial advance of these reversionistic businessmen.

This innocent person didn't oppose this wealthy person, the wealthy apostate opposed himself. Any believer who does not advance in God's plan will dive into the 8 stages of reversionism and becomes his own worst enemy.

The first six verses of this chapter dealt with monetary reversionism. Verses 7-8 will provide the solution to monetary reversionism:

5:7, 8. Therefore [if you desire to recover from reversionism], have patience [execute the spiritual life] until the coming of the Lord [Rapture]. Behold, the farmer waits with expectation for the valuable production of the land, and constantly being patient over it [the land] until he has received the early rains [October - December] and the latter rains [March, April]. Be you also patient and have stability [from knowledge of God's word] in your right lobe, because the coming of the Lord [the Rapture] draws near [every day it gets closer].

The Greek word *makrothumeo* means to patiently endure injustices or difficulties, to exercise restraint in the face of provocation, and to have ones emotions under the control of rational thought. In this passage it takes on a technical meaning - the execution of the spiritual life. The Christian must patiently learn and apply God's word to his situation on a day by day basis. He must apply the problem-solving devices to his pressure situations rather than react emotionally. He must concentrate on his objective, namely, occupation with the Lord Jesus Christ, so that when the Rapture takes place he will be prepared for the evaluation which will take place immediately after that time (2 Corinthians 5:10).

The Good Farmer

The good farmer has knowledge of his profession, executes the planting of his crops in a rational manner and eagerly awaits with confidence their valuable production. He must be patient, keeping his emotions under control waiting for the early rains to advance his crop and the latter rains to nourish the grain stalks while the kernels are being formed and filled out. Then, he will be able to enjoy and benefit from the valuable production of the land.

The Good Christian

The good Christian accumulates spiritual capital (doctrine in his soul) that he might execute the spiritual life in a rational manner from a stabilized mentality. He knows that if he is not distracted by emotion related to sins and lusts, he will eventually enjoy the valuable production

of his spiritual life. The early rains would be analogous to his spiritual advance from childhood to spiritual esteem. The latter rains are analogous to his advance from personal love for the God the Holy Spirit and God the Father to occupation with the Lord Jesus Christ. If he accomplishes that, he will be ready and eager to meet his Savior at the Rapture of the Church at which time he will receive payment (eternal rewards) for his valuable production (production of divine good, a result of executing the spiritual life).

5:9. Stop complaining against [criticizing, maligning] other believers that you not be disciplined, Behold [used to introduce a concept], the Judge keeps standing before the door.

Some Christians constantly commit sins of the tongue. These Christians, who should be classified as “verbal reversionists” are found in verses 9 and 12. In verse 9 he uses his tongue to constantly criticize, malign and slander other believers. In verse 12 he uses oaths to deceive people.

Stop judging so that you will not be judged [not receive triple discipline from God]. For by what judgment [slander, gossip, maligning] you judge [others], you will be judged [punished for slander, gossip, maligning], and by what measure you measure it out [the sin you mention regarding another, for example drunkenness, adultery], it will be measured back to you [you will be punished for the other person’s sin which you mentioned]. (Matthew 7:1, 2)

Every verbal sin is motivated by some mental sin. For example anger, hatred, jealousy, and self righteousness all motivate verbal sins. A person full of hatred may want to slander; a jealous person may want to malign his rival; a self righteous person may want to judge, criticize and even malign another believer. Verbal sins are never committed with good motivation.

All verbal sins receive triple discipline from God in addition to the self-induced misery that naturally accompanies any sin. Let’s illustrate using Christian A and B. Christian A hates Christian B so he

slanders B. He slanders B by spreading the rumor that B is unfaithful to his wife. Thus A will suffer in the following ways:

1. He is punished for hatred.
2. He is punished for slander.
3. He is punished for adultery the sin he mentioned about B “by what measure you measure it out, it will be measured back to you.”
4. He will be punished by the law of self-induced misery.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the judge (John 5:22) who knocks at the door (warning and intensive discipline) of the believer who is out of fellowship. The Lord intends for the believer to understand that he is being disciplined (to hear the knocking). In this way, he gives the believer the option to get back into fellowship by naming his sins and to learn the lesson of this passage.

The analogy of ‘the Lord standing at the door’ is also taught in the Book of Revelation. In this passage we learn that the Christians of the Laodicean Church had become preoccupied with their wealth and so neglected the intake of Bible doctrine and slipped into reversionism. So, the Lord began to knock at the door, that is, he brought warning and intensive discipline to them:

To the messenger [pastor-teacher] of the church of Laodicea, write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the ruler of the creation of God [description of Lord Jesus Christ], he communicates these things. I know your modus operandi [spiritual lifestyle] that you are neither cold [an unbeliever] nor hot [an advancing believer]. I wish that you were cold [an unbeliever: easy solution: believe in Christ] or hot [an advanced believer: keep advancing]. So, because you are lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, I am about to vomit you out of my mouth [the sin unto death] because you say, ‘I am rich, I have become extremely wealthy, in fact I have need of nothing.’ As a matter of fact you do not realize that you are under stress and miserable [no capacity for happiness,

blessing and love] and poor [no values related to the spiritual life and eternity] and blind [no perception of reality as related to God's word] and naked [no application of the problem-solving devices]. I counsel you to buy from me gold which has been refined by fire [problem-solving devices applied under the pressures of adversity and prosperity] that you may become rich [spiritually wealthy in both time and in eternity] and white clothes [the uniform of glory given to mature believers] that you may clothe yourself and that the shame of your nakedness [at the Rapture] may not be revealed, and collyrium [eye medication analogous to confession of sins] to rub into your eyes [consistent exposure to the Word] that you may keep on seeing [keep on being motivated by love for God]. Those whom I love, I reprimand and discipline with punishment. Therefore, keep on being diligent [motivated, devoted] and change your mind [about acknowledging your sins and learning doctrine]. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door [rebounds, names his sins to God the Father], I will come in to him and dine with him and he with me [fellowship between God and the Christian]. The winner [the one who overcomes], I will grant to him [the honor and privilege] to sit with me on my throne just as I also was victorious and sat down with my father at his throne. The one having an ear let him hear what the Spirit communicates to the churches. (Revelation 3:14-22)

5:10-11. Brethren, as an example of suffering afflictions with their emotions under control [with patience], take the prophets who have communicated in the name of the Lord. Behold, we recognize as happy [congratulate] these ones who have endured [remaining happy under the pressure of adversity through the application of God's word]. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the end [the result which came] from the Lord [Job was blessed and his friends survived],

because the Lord keeps on being very compassionate [always treats people in grace] and merciful [grace in action].

These two verses deal with mature believers receiving undeserved suffering. This passage is sandwiched in between verses 9 and 12 to let the believer know that not all suffering is deserved discipline from the Lord, but that some suffering is undeserved and accompanied with great happiness in the soul.

The great prophets of the Old Testament and Job are referred to as men who had undergone tremendous undeserved suffering. These two verses tell us that the great prophets of the past suffered undeservedly. Moses experienced great suffering brought on by the apostasy of the Exodus generation who for the most part rejected him and his message, and even attempted to kill him (Numbers 14:2-10). Elijah was pursued by King Ahab and Queen Jezebel; David was constantly being pursued by Saul and his soldiers. Paul experienced great suffering via the Judaizers and the Thorn-demon. Since these great men of the past all had metabolized doctrines in their souls, they were able to maintain their happiness under great undeserved suffering.

Job was the greatest believer on the earth in his day and was placed under the greatest possible undeserved suffering, Satan himself being permitted to administer Job's test. Job nearly failed because he reacted to the false accusations of his friends, but got back in fellowship and went on to pass the test, with the result that God made him even more prosperous than before (Job 42:10-17).¹¹

The Lord keeps on being compassionate and merciful. The friends of Job deserved to die, but God used the prayer of a mature believer to deliver them (Job 42:7-10). In James 5:15, 16 we see how God used the prayer of Elijah to deliver the nation of Israel from its peril, for the "prayer of a righteous man [a mature believer like Job or Elijah] when put into operation has great power."

5:12. And [the Greek conjunction picks up from verse 9] before all things, my brethren, stop making promises with a solemn oath neither

11. For an explanation of Evidence Testing, see *Christian Suffering*, Chapter 10

by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath; but let your yes be yes, and your no, no; that you not fall under judgment [divine discipline and eventually the sin unto death].

When a Christian proceeds through the gates of reversionism emphasizing verbal sins, he is defined as a verbal reversionist. In verse 9, the verbal reversionist was guilty of maligning other believers, in this verse, he is guilty of distorting the truth and using a solemn oath to conceal it.

To conceal a lie well one must take an oath by someone or something associated with integrity. So, if a Christian were going to lie, he would take a solemn oath by God or by some institution known for its truthfulness, saying for example, “As God is my witness...”, or “I swear in God’s name that...” A believer with integrity simply tells the truth and fulfills his promises, without making a show of swearing on anything or any person.

Verse 9 describes the verbal reversionist; verse 12 provides the pattern of recovery from this degeneracy. This type of believer lacks integrity and honor. Therefore, in order to recover he must develop what he lacks.

5:13. Is any one among you [advanced believers] enduring affliction? Let him keep offering prayer. Is any one among you happy? Let him keep singing in the ecstasy of the moment with full capacity of your mental faculties.

When the believer reaches spiritual self-esteem, he will begin to receive underserved suffering called providential preventive suffering, e.g. Paul’s thorn in the flesh. Then, when the believer reaches spiritual autonomy, he will receive momentum testing, and when he obtains spiritual maturity he will be given the honor of being called to the witness-stand to give testimony on behalf of God and his plan before the angels, as Job did. Whenever the Christian is enduring undeserved suffering he must pray, especially that part of prayer which expresses thanksgiving. When a believer enters into love for God the Father, God the Holy Spirit and the Lord Jesus Christ, he will have great happiness of soul. With such happiness in his soul, he is commanded to express it in songs and hymns.

5:14. Is any one among you [Jewish believers] weak [helpless to solve the problem of dying the sin unto death]? After they [physicians] have applied olive oil [each one to his own patient], let him [the dying believer] call the pastor [plural: each person summons his own pastor] of his church, and let them pray over him [each pastor then prays for the believer belonging to his congregation] in the name of the Lord.

When this passage is read in the English, it appears that the elder-pastors (presbuteros) are pouring oil on the sick and dying believer, but in the Greek this translation is impossible and the interpretation absurd. According to a Greek grammatical rule, the action of an aorist participle must precede the action of the main verb. “After applying oil-medication” is the aorist participle; this action must precede the main verb “let him call the elder-pastor”. Therefore, oil is being applied *before* the pastor is summoned and brought to the dying person. The pastor could not possibly be the one involved in pouring the oil. The interpretation is also absurd because olive oil (ἐλαιον / *elaion* from the Greek word ἐλαία / *elaia* meaning olive) cannot heal a dying person, only God has the power to prevent death.¹²

In this passage James uses the word *presbuteros*, one of the many terms used for the pastor-teacher, to emphasize the authority of the pastor.¹³ The believer in reversionism has rejected the authority of his pastor. Now, if he is going to avoid the sin unto death, he must first put himself under the authority of his pastor, which is rather humiliating for the reversionist. The reversionist must begin his recovery with orienting to authority. Then, in unconditional love, the humble pastor uses his authority to approach God the Father in prayer on behalf of this evil believer who now wants a second chance.

God has provided in the divine decree a qualified pastor for each Christian. If the Christian neglects the teaching ministry of this pastor,

12. Olive oil and other oils were used as basic therapy by physicians and others in the ancient world (Mark 6:13). The Good Samaritan used oil mingled with wine to dress the wounds of the man who fell among robbers (Luke 10:34).

13. See the Appendix, page 106

he will eventually face the sin unto death. To undergo this terrible suffering means that the Christian has gone through all 8 stages of reversionism. With blackout and scar tissue filling his soul, he will receive some type of illness or disease which has no human solution. However, the dying believer does not know this and so goes to a doctor. After using some oil therapy the doctor finally announces that his situation is hopeless, and so the dying, reversionistic believer is finally compelled to seek a spiritual solution. With no other options available to him, he must now summons his pastor to his bedside.

5:15 The prayer from the doctrinal one [the mature pastor] shall deliver the hopelessly sick one [the Father will answer the prayer], and the Lord shall restore him to health; and if he has produced sins [he has produced many sins during his reversionism: the third class condition is used since this is a hypothetical situation], he shall be forgiven by Him [the Lord].

At that point the pastor must get some facts in order to understand accurately the dying believer's situation. The believer tells the pastor that he had once attended his church, but later left it, maybe it was 20, 30, or 40 years before. This believer had been grieving and quenching the Holy Spirit for a long time; his soul has become darkened and filled with scar tissue. The pastor, a mature believer, recognizes that this believer is probably dying the sin unto death. This conclusion is confirmed when the person informs the pastor that he has been ill for a long time (intensive discipline), and that his sickness has now evolved to the point where he is now dying.

The pastor then asks the believer if he would like another chance to learn and execute the spiritual life. If the dying man answers in the affirmative, the pastor then informs the dying man of the recovery procedure that God has established. Due to the man's emotional revolt, blackout and scar tissue of the soul he is unable to properly name his sins, and even if he could do it, the priestly function of naming ones sins directly to God the Father is no longer applicable. In order to recover the dying man must now name his sins to his pastor. Please note that this is a unique situation and the only time a believer must name his sins to anyone:

5:16. Therefore, acknowledge your sins [the believers dying the sin unto death must acknowledge their remembered sins] to others of the same kind [an older and more basic meaning of the Greek word 'allelon': a believer member to believer pastor: each believer addresses his own pastor] and you [the pastors involved] will offer prayer on behalf of the others [each pastor will pray for the respective member of his congregation: the pastor functions as a 'rebound agent' for the reversionistic believer] so that you may be healed [each dying believer will be healed by the Lord through the prayer of his pastor]. The prayer of a righteous believer [one who is very advanced in the spiritual life] has much power when it is put into operation.

The apostate Christian rejects and often maligns the righteous servant of the Lord, his pastor, the very one for whom he should have shown respect and admiration. Just as the friends of Job were spared the sin unto death through the prayer of a righteous believer, so to Miriam, who rejected and maligned Moses, was delivered from the sin unto death through the prayer of the one who was her spiritual teacher (Numbers 12:1-14). So, in this situation, the dying Christian is delivered through the prayer of his pastor.

5:17,18. Elijah, a human being, being similar to us in feelings, circumstances and pressure, by means of prayer began to pray not to send rain, and it did not rain upon the land [of the Northern Kingdom] for three and a half years. And he prayed again [1 Kings 18:42-44], and the heaven gave rain [1 Kings 18:45], and the land germinated, sprouted and produced its production.

Reversionism (apostasy) is an individual problem that has an impact on the nation. This explains why verses 14-16 are followed by verses 17-18 where Elijah dealt with his nation under punishment from the Lord because too many of the Jewish believers had rejected the spiritual life.

When Ahab and Jezebel ruled in the Northern Kingdom, there was only one faithful prophet in the Northern Kingdom and a small

remnant of faithful believers, “7000 in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal” (1 Kings 19:18). To warn the king and these believers that their nation was approaching the 5th cycle of discipline (Leviticus 26:27-33), Elijah prayed that it would not rain (1 Kings 17:1). God honored that prayer of a righteous (mature) believer, and so it did not rain for three and half years. Finally, on Mount Carmel, the believers having listened to the challenge given by Elijah, changed their minds about their apostasy (named their sins) and agreed to return to the worship of the God of Israel (1 Kings 18:33-39).

In the current dispensation of the Church Age, there are many local churches each containing a pastor along with his respective congregation. When a client nation is in decline primarily caused by the failure of Christians, the nation enters into the cycles of discipline just as Israel had to suffer during the dispensation of Israel (Leviticus 26:14-33). If too many Christians reject the spiritual life, eventually the nation will enter into the final stage of discipline, namely its destruction which is called the 5th cycle of discipline (Leviticus 26:27-33).

Just as the only hope for a believer dying the sin unto death is the prayer of a mature pastor, so the only hope for a client nation about to be destroyed by the Lord is the prayers of great believers, the pivot upon which the fate of the nation balances. In Elijah’s case, it was the prayer of just one mature, righteous believer.

When a client nation is about to be destroyed by the Lord because of its great apostasy, deliverance comes only through mature believers for only they can fulfill all the following of the four requirements specified in 2 Chronicles 7:14: “and my people who are called by my name [believers in a client nation], if they will humble themselves [rebound and place themselves under authority], if they will pray [the prayer of a mature believer is powerful: James 5:16], if they will seek my face [occupation with the Lord Jesus Christ], and if they will turn from their evil ways, then [assuming all 4 conditions are met] I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sins [of the believers in that client nation] and will heal [restore] their land [the nation].”

5:19, 20. My brethren, if any one among you has been deluded [blackout and scar tissue of the soul], and has wandered from the

source of doctrine [through the eight stages of reversionism], and someone [a great believer] turns him back [helps him in his recovery from his spiritual apostasy]. Let him understand that the one having turned back a sinner [restored the reversionistic believer] from the delusion of his way will deliver his [apostate] soul from death [sin unto death], and will cover [prevent] a large number of sins.

Occasionally, a great believer is able to influence this type of apostate believer and may have the opportunity to help in his spiritual recovery. Of course, recovery always begins with rebound and the consistent intake of God’s Word. This is the message that the mature believer communicates to the reversionist suffering under intense discipline. If the reversionistic believer heeds his advice, then the many sins which the reversionist would otherwise have committed if he were to continue in reversionism are curtailed.

Great believers should pray that Christians in apostasy might realize their spiritual failure. While he cannot pray for God to directly change that persons attitude toward doctrine (a violation of freewill), he could pray that God allow the person to undergo suffering which might motivate him to seek a divine solution. He may also pray that if those believers do want the truth, that truth would be made available to them. These same advanced believers should always be ready to help an apostate believer if he comes to them seeking spiritual help, primarily by explaining the recovery procedure to him (i.e. how to rebound) and the importance of studying Bible doctrine on a regular basis.

In verses 14-16, the pastor of mature status is able to help a former member of his congregation recover from the sin unto death. In verses 17-18 we have seen that the mature believers are instrumental in the delivery of their nation from the 5th cycle of discipline as Elijah was, and in verses 19-20 we have seen how a mature believer can be instrumental in helping a believer pull out of his decline through the 8 stages of reversionism, thus avoiding the inglorious finale of the sin unto death.

Appendix

Scriptural designations for the Pastor-teacher

The terms *pastor* (or *shepherd*), *elder* (or *presbyter*), *overseer* (or *bishop*) and *teacher* as found in English translations of the New Testament imply that these are separate and distinct positions of authority found within a local church, but are they really? A study of these terms will reveal that they can all refer to the minister of a local church. Let's begin our study of these words by looking at a hendiadys coined by the apostle Paul: 'the pastor-teacher'.

The word *pastor* is a Latin word meaning shepherd, a feeder and protector of the flock. This is a direct translation of the Greek word ποιμήν (*poimen*: shepherd) used many times in the New Testament (e.g. Matt. 9:36, Luke 2:8). The pastor feeds his sheep (the congregation) spiritual food which protects their souls and lives from cosmic influence. The role and function of the pastor as a 'feeder and protector' of the flock is linked to the function of teaching by Paul's creation of the following hendiadys:

And truly He gave some to be apostles, and some to be prophets,
and some to be evangelists, and some to be pastor-teachers.
(Ephesians 4:11)

The Granville-Sharpe rule of Greek grammar states that where two nouns are connected by the conjunction και (kai / basic meaning: 'and') having a definite article before the first noun but not the second, then both nouns are referring to one and the same thing, object or person. In Ephesians 4:11 all of the ministries listed are preceded by an article except 'teacher': the apostles (*tous apostolous*), the prophets (*tous prophetes*), the evangelists (*tous euangelistas*), the pastor-teachers (*tous*

poimen kai didaskoloi). There is no Greek article *tous* before the word *didaskoloi* (teachers) which makes this last phrase a hendiadys. In summary, the words 'pastor' and 'teacher' are referring to the one and the same person, hence: 'the pastor-teacher.'

The Greek word πρεσβυτερος (*presbuteros* - from where we get the word 'presbyterian') is translated in many English Bibles as 'elder', but what is its real connotation? According to the Greek Lexicon by Liddell & Scott, *presbuteros* is used much like the word *presbus*. Aeschylus, the fifth century B.C. playwright uses the plural of *presbus* to imply dignity and so uses it for chiefs and princes. The Greek verb *presbeuo* can mean to rule over, and in the passive can mean to place in first rank. Thucydides, the famous Greek historian used this verb to go as an ambassador. It is within this context that Paul uses *presbutes* in Philemon verse 9, though some translations would give the reader the impression that Paul is simply stating he is an old man, a totally pointless statement considering the context of the message. It is used in Scripture to emphasize the authority which God has given to the pastor of a Church (1 Timothy 5:17, 19; Titus 1:5; James 5:14; 1 Pet 5:1; 2 John 1 and in 3 John 1). Every local church has only one commander, one final authority over the congregation and the deacons. There's no such thing as 'plurality of elders', nor deacons exercising authority in contradiction to the policy or statements of the pastor.

The Greek word ἐπίσκοπος (*episkopos*) means an overseer, and guardian. As the overseer of the local church, the pastor-teacher establishes the policy and makes sure that it is followed. He is also the guardian of the administration system by which the local church operates. Regarding the administrative structure, a large church will usually have a Chairman of the Board, Vice Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and other deacons (missions, children's Bible classes, nursery, maintenance, etc.). The pastor as the *episkopos* exercises his authority over these administrators through the Chairman of the Board. He will deal directly with the Chairman of the Board, and sometimes with the treasurer or secretary and indirectly with the other deacons who are under the

authority of the Chairman of the Board. Each deacon has authority over his area of responsibility only. The deacons do not run the church; otherwise they would be called *episkopos*. So, Paul uses the term *episkopos* (overseer) in the same phrase as the Greek word *διακονος* (*diakonos* / deacons) to show us what the overseer (the pastor-teacher) oversees i.e. the chairman of the board, along with the board of deacons:

Paul and Timothy, slaves of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are located at Philippi, together with the overseer-guardians [*episcopos* : pastors] and the deacons [*diakonos*: administrative officers]. (Philippians 1:1)

In the following passage we see how Peter speaks to a group of men using the following nomenclature to refer to each and every one of them: ‘elders’ (emphasizing their authority); ‘pastors’ (emphasizing their roll as providers of spiritual food); and overseers (emphasizing their roll as policy makers and guardians). These three words all refer to the same profession, but distinguish different aspects of that profession:

Therefore, I exhort the elder-pastors [*presbyteroi*] among you, as your fellow *presbyteros* [Peter calling himself a *presbyteros*] and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, shepherd [the verb *poimaino*: a cognate of *poimen*] the flock [ones congregation] of God among you exercising oversight [the verb *episcopeo*: a cognate of *episcopos*] not under compulsion, but willingly according to the will of God (1 Peter 5:1-2a)

Paul uses these same three words in his reference to the pastor-teachers based in Ephesus:

From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called to him the pastor-elders [*presbyteroi*] of the Church. . . Be on guard for yourselves and for the flock, among whom the Holy Spirit has made you guardian [*episcopos*] to shepherd [*poimaino*] the church of God which He purchased with his own blood. (Acts 20:17, 28)

In his letter to Titus, Paul again uses the same terminology to refer to the function of the pastor-teacher:

For this cause I left you [Titus] behind in Crete, in order that you should set in order [correct with authority] the things that are deficient and ordain [appoint] elders [*presbuteroi*: emphasizing the pastor’s authority] according to the standard of every city [each city requires a different number of pastors] as I had given detailed orders to you [on the way to Crete Paul had given detailed orders, the strategy as to how to develop the spiritual community in Crete], if anyone keeps on being irreproachable, husband of one wife [not polygamous], having children who are believers [if he doesn’t evangelize his children how can he lead the church], not accused of loose behavior [dissipation], or rebellious [does not defy authority, but supports it]. For it is necessary for an overseer [*episcopos*: the pastor’s role as policy maker and guardian] as God’s administrative manager [he has authority over the deacons], not self-willed [to the point of being unfair; must maintain objectivity], not prone to jump to conclusions which lead to anger, not prone to drunkenness, not a brawler [leadership without violence], not eager for dishonorable profit; but kind to strangers [applying grace to people], a lover of good, stability of mind, equitable, discharging ones duty to God [loving the Lord etc] self-disciplined [controlled], constantly clinging to the dependable word according to the standard of doctrinal teaching [*didache* is the teaching of the pastor-teacher] that he might be capable by sound doctrinal teaching [*didaskalia* is the teaching to a group by the *poimen-didaskalos*, the pastor-teacher] both to exhort and to refute [reprove] those in opposition [those who oppose sound doctrine]. (Titus 1:5-9)

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