

James 1

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Tape #8219
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Shall we turn now to the Book of James, Chapter one?

James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, The Greek word is *doulos*, which is a bond slave. There are only two writers in the New Testament that introduce themselves by the title, only of bondslave. Paul the apostle calls himself an apostle and a slave. But only James and Jude introduce themselves, just as bondslaves of Jesus Christ, of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Interestingly enough, this is the James, who a half-brother to Jesus. He was a sibling who grew up with Jesus, along with Jude. In Mark, it is made reference to, are not his brothers, James and Jude and Simon with us? It would appear that His brothers did not believe that He was the Messiah, until His resurrection from the dead. James became one of the leaders in the early church. Very early in the history of the church, James, the brother of John, who was one of the disciples, called to be an apostle, was martyred. And after that, the James that appears in the Acts of the Apostles is this particular James, the half-brother of Jesus, who after His resurrection with Jude, became leaders in the early church. James wrote this practical epistle and of course Jude wrote the epistle of his name. And he introduces himself also as a bondslave of Jesus Christ.

Now if I had that kind of a relationship with Jesus, I'm sure I would have inserted somewhere along the line, Chuck, a half-brother to Jesus Christ! I'd want people to know how important I was! But James just declares he is a bondslave of God and the Lord Jesus Christ, but what higher honor, what higher privilege, can one have than being a bondslave of Jesus Christ?

to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting. The word, greeting, in the Greek, is a word to rejoice. It is a typical Greek salutation. It is not the grace and peace that Paul usually uses. But it is a word that means, joy or rejoicing. And it was typical in the secular Greek writings when you would write a letter in the salutation, you would say joy or rejoice. The word is used in the New Testament in the letter of the church council in Jerusalem, when they wrote the letter to the church in Antioch to comfort them with regards as regards to the Gentiles' relationship to the law. The word was used in the salutation of that letter, but it is interesting to note that James was the one who wrote the letter to the church in Antioch, concerning the decision that was made by the church council in Jerusalem.

You heard many times of the ten lost tribes. But evidently they weren't lost yet! But they are scattered to the twelve tribes that are scattered abroad. The Jews were first dispersed when the Assyrians conquered the Northern Kingdom of Israel. There was the first dispersion of the Jews. The second dispersion took place when Judah, the southern kingdom, was conquered by Babylon. And then in about sixty-three B.C., there was a third dispersion of the Jews. And finally in seventy A.D., the final dispersion of the Jews, when Titus conquered over the rebellious Jews that were still living in Palestine at that time.

And so when they were scattered, they were scattered abroad throughout the world, and so today, you find pockets of Jews all over the world. Many of them are in Russia, many of them in China, many of them in Central and South America, many of them here in the United States. They are scattered throughout the world. And so the idea of the ten lost tribes, is not really a Biblical idea. They are not lost. God knows exactly where they are and who they are.

²*My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; or testings*. Now that is the opposite response that we naturally have to a time of tribulation or testing. We so often feel that God has maybe forsaken us. And maybe God is angry with us. Somehow and I don't know where it came from. We have the concept that serving God ought to be a bed of roses. It ought to be just smooth. It ought to be just so easy and plushy, just serving God. It ought to be something that is just never a problem. But that is not the case. We declare our love for God and God puts the declaration to the test. Do you love Me if this should happen? Would you love Me should that happen? Would you remain true and faithful to Me?

We find the interesting story of Job in the Old Testament. When the sons of God were presenting

themselves to God and Satan also came with them. And God said, to Satan, where have you been? And he said, oh, I have been going to and fro throughout the earth, up and down in it. He said have you considered My servant Job, an upright man? He loves good! He hates evil, a perfect man, upright.

And Satan said to God, concerning Job, does Job serve You for nothing? Look at all that You have given to him. Anybody would be a fool not to serve You, when You have given them as much as You have given unto Job. Let me take away his riches. Let me strip him. And You will find out the true character and nature of Job. He'll curse You to Your face. And so God gave to Satan the permission to strip Job, with the restriction of, spare his life. Don't touch his life.

So Job started receiving the messages. All of his cattle, camels and sheep and all, were killed. His children, all ten of them were killed in a wind that struck the home where they were eating. And one by one the messengers came, telling them of the loss of all of these things. And in all of these things, Job did not curse God, nor charge God foolishly. But he fell on his face and said, naked I came into the world, naked I'm going out. The Lord has given and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord!

Now, these things, the tornado that hit the house of his son, the eldest son, where all of the children were having a banquet, that would be classified in the insurance company today as an act of God. And it is interesting how that we so often equate calamities to God. And we blame God for the calamities. But Job did not curse God, nor did he charge God foolishly.

And so the sons of God, again, were presenting themselves to God, Satan also came with them. And God said to Satan, where have you been? And he said, oh I've have been going up and down throughout the earth, to and fro in it. Have you considered My servant Job? The word considered, is an interesting word. In military language, it's the word that would be used of a general, who is studying carefully a city to develop the strategy of taking that city. And Satan assures God that he has been studying Job, developing a strategy. He had a strategy whereby he felt he would take him.

He said, You won round one, but let me touch him physically. You've not let me touch him physically. Let me touch him physically. He'll curse You to Your face. So Job became covered with boils. He developed such a horrible state, smelly, horrible, sores all over him. Ulcerating sores, running sores. And so bad was his condition, that his wife finally said to him, why don't you just curse God and die?

His friends came to ostensibly comfort him, but instead they harangued him, because they were trying to figure out why a man would go through such horrible loss and suffering as did Job. And they had theorized that Job surely was hiding some horrible sin. And they kept probing trying to find what horrible sin, he was seeking to cover, because this was surely a punishment from God. No man would go through these things except he were a horrible sinner.

And we know the outcome of the story, how that God or Job proved himself faithful to God through these testings, his faith did not waver! There were times when he would express despair. Cursed be the day that I was born. Why didn't they just let me die in the womb? Why was I born? But yet in the midst of that, tremendous declarations of faith. I know that my Redeemer lives and shall stand in the last days upon the earth. And though worms may destroy and eat this body, yet in my flesh, I shall see God! And how God finally came on the scene, rebuked Job's friends for their total misunderstanding of the condition of Job. He told them, you'd better have Job pray for you. And then God blessed Job in the end. Job had more wealth and riches than he had ever had before, but he had passed the test.

My brethren count it all joy when you fall into diverse temptations. God puts our faith to the test. God puts our devotion to the test. But the purpose of God is not to destroy you! But through testing, we become strong. Through the testings we learn our own weakness and we learn to rely upon His strength. And God will put us to the test to the breaking point of our own abilities and resources, deliberately. So that we will not trust in ourselves or in the weaknesses of our own flesh. But that we will learn to trust in the Lord. We won't look to ourselves for our reserves or resources, but we learn to look to God for His resources.

You see, as long as I am looking to myself for the resource, my resources are always limited, very limited. But when I look to God for my resource, I have unlimited resources! When I look to myself for strength, my strength is very limited, but when I look to God for strength, my strength is unlimited.

And so Paul learned that through the testings, the weaknesses of his own flesh. And he came to the place

where he said, I glory in my weakness that the power of God, might be manifested in me. For when I am weak, then I am strong. So God puts us to the test. Count it all joy when you fall into these divers temptations, because God is developing, first of all, patience in you. And that is one of the characteristics that is so necessary for the foundations of our whole relationship with God. It's learning to wait on God.

Think of how patient God is with us. Over and over, God declares that He is long-suffering. And He surely is! He has suffered a lot longer than I would have suffered with the world today, and with a lot of people! I would have wiped them out a long time ago. But God is so long-suffering and so patient. But we are so impatient when it comes to God. If God doesn't answer our prayer immediately, we start looking for alternatives. We feel, well, I've got to take it into my own hands. I gave God all day! And oh, what a mess we can make of things when we decide that we had better not wait for God, but do it ourselves.

So, ³*Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.* Paul said much the same thing in his letter to the Romans. Tribulation worketh patience. Patience works experience. I begin to experience God's faithfulness. And experience, then hope, so that when I'm going through the trials, I have that hope that sustains me and keeps me going.

⁴*But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.* Let patience have her perfect work, that is, to bring you into maturity.

Dr. McGee was speaking in a church one time. He turned to the pastor and said, there are more babies in this congregation up here than there are in the nursery downstairs. But the babies in the nursery over there are beautiful. But after you have been walking with the Lord for twenty-five years and you still need the bottle, it's sort of sad. And so developing maturity, God develops maturity in our lives through these things.

As I look back on my life and I see the many testings that I went through, I must confess that I wasn't always joyful in those testings. But I sure am now! As I look back and see what God was working out in my life, through those many testings, I rejoice greatly for the fruit that came from the testings, the maturity that I gained as the result of going through those trials!

So let patience have her perfect work, or maturing work, that you might be fully matured and entire, or complete, wanting nothing! That is, your not lacking at all in maturity.

Now one of the lacks that we always have is that of wisdom. You might be entire, wanting nothing, but ⁵*If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally,* So oftentimes people say, what can I pray for you? And I always say, pray that I might have wisdom. Wisdom in making the many decisions that need to be made, daily. When you lack in wisdom, isn't it glorious that we can ask God for wisdom? Our wisdom is so fallible.

How many of you have never made a mistake in your life? You always made the wise choice. You bought property on Lido Island when it was three hundred dollars a lot. We can all look back, can't we? Well, if I'd only....! If we lack in wisdom though, the wonderful thing is that, God will give us wisdom. It's amazing how there are many people who have a lot of knowledge but not much wisdom.

A pastor was out on the golf course with a friend who was a Ph.D. As they were getting ready to tee off, it started to rain. And the fellow with the Ph.D. said, oh what shall we do? And the pastor said, I think we'd better get out of the rain. You see, it's wisdom that says, get out of the rain! Knowledge will tell you that it's raining. Wisdom will tell you to get shelter.

Let him ask of God, who gives to all men liberally, or freely *and upbraideth not*; God doesn't scold you. God doesn't say, oh, you're so stupid! Don't you know better than that? You know, He doesn't upbraid you, when you come to God for wisdom, He's so gracious, He gives to you. And I think of some of the dumb things that I should of known, but God doesn't upbraid me when I come to Him for guidance and for wisdom.

and it shall be given him. That's a glorious promise! God will give us wisdom in the decisions that we ask.

That wonderful proverb, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Lean not to your own understands, but in all of your ways, acknowledge Him. And He will direct your paths." But you see there are several qualifications to the, He will direct your paths—we want that! But in order to have that, what must I do? First of all, I must not trust in my own understanding, but I must trust in the Lord with all my heart. I can't

lean to my own understanding. And then, I have to acknowledge Him. I have to ask. And He will direct your paths.

⁶*But let him ask in faith*, But when I ask, it's important that I ask in faith, *nothing wavering*. Now that's not an easy task, either, is it? Asking in faith with nothing wavering!

For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. Have you ever been out on the stormy sea? The waves driven with the wind and tossed. And so is the man who is asking God for wisdom, but his faith is wavering.

⁷*For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord*. ⁸*A double minded man is unstable in all his ways*. It's important that we just make a commitment, you know. I'm going to stand on the Word of God! Or I will fall with the Word of God. I'm not going to leave it! I'm not going to waver from my position. I'm going to trust God!

And so often, we give God the deadline. I'll trust Him until 2 o'clock this afternoon. And then we begin to waver. We are not really stable. We're double minded. If God doesn't, then this is what I'll have to do. And we've already planned our own plan of action, if God doesn't come through.

⁹*Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted*: ¹⁰*But the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away*. Look at what God has done for us of low degree! Look how God has exalted us! He has called us his children, His sons. Beloved, now are we the sons of God! What a great exalting of our lives, those of low degree!

Those that are rich, that they are brought low, because their riches aren't going to last as Greg Laurie says, you've never yet seen a U-Haul trailer hitched, you know, to the hearse. It's just, you know—naked I came in, naked I go out! Job said it of himself, but it's true of all of us! You don't take anything with you. As the flower of the grass, the riches shall pass away.

¹¹*For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways*.

Now, ¹²*Blessed is the man*, We are told to rejoice when we experience temptations and here in verse twelve, we are told—blessed is the man!

And the word, blessed, the root is, oh, how happy is the man *that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him*. That glorious crown of life awaits the child of God at the end of the road!

Paul writing to Timothy at the end of the road for his life, said the time of my departure is at hand. But I have fought a good fight. I have finished the course. I have kept the faith! Henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, various crowns, given to us in heaven.

To the church of Smyrna, that was going to go through such terrible persecution from the Roman Government, Jesus said, be thou faithful unto death, and I will give to thee a crown of life!

And so blessed is the man that endures the temptations and the testings, for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to them that love him.

¹³*Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man*: God doesn't tempt us with evil. Satan tempts us with evil, but God allows him to do it. And it does serve a purpose. But, when I'm tempted, I can't really say, well, God tempted me, God laid out this temptation before me.

No, ¹⁴*But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed*. No, a man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lusts and enticed. It is my desires that brings me into temptation, the desires of my flesh. I see opportunities for fulfillment of those—I shouldn't say fulfillment—of opportunities of indulging because you'll never fulfill the lusts of the flesh. There's only one thing you can do for your lust and that is to starve it to death. If you feed it, it will only demand more, until it will consume you!

When a man is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed—now Jesus was tempted. To be tempted is not sin. Satan tempted Jesus with the glories of this world. All of these will I give to you, the glory of them, if

You will bow down and worship me. He was tempted to use the supernatural powers for His own personal benefit—to turn the stone into bread. You can do that! Satisfy the hunger that You have after this fasting.

Then he tempted Him to do something spectacular to draw crowds, to get notoriety and publicity. Jump off the pinnacle of the temple! And when You land unscathed and unharmed at the bottom, think how You will be awed. They'll worship You!

Jesus was tempted. But He didn't yield to the temptation. It's not a sin to be tempted. It's when I yield to the temptation that it becomes sin.

15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. The wages of sin is death!

16 Do not err, my beloved brethren. 17 Every good gift, Now God doesn't tempt you with evil. Neither tempt He any man. We're tempted by our own desires and lust, which when we yield and give into them, brings sin, which when it is finished, brings death. But don't err on this.

Every good gift *and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.* The unchanging God bestows His blessings upon us! And every good gift, every perfect gift, comes to us from God. If it's good, it's from God. If it's evil, it's from Satan.

18 Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, John speaks of those who were born not by the will of man, nor by the will of the flesh, but by God! The glorious thing is that we have been begotten of God, born again by the Spirit of God. Peter said, thanks be unto God who begotten us again to a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. So, of His own will begat He with the word of truth. You have been begotten again or born again by receiving the Word of Truth. By believing that Jesus is the Son of God, who came and bore your sin, who died on the cross in your place, and who rose again in order that you might be justified from your sins. We've been begotten of God, born of God, by His own will. Not our will but His will.

He begat us with the Word of Truth *that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.* If any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature. The old things are past away. Everything becomes new! Born again into this new relationship, I'm not any longer looking back to my English/French heritage. You can't really blame your nature now on the fact that you're Irish or you have the Latin hot temperament. No, that all died! If any man is in Christ, he is a new creation. I've been born again by the Spirit of God! The new nature that I have in Christ Jesus. That we should be a kind of a firstfruits of His new creation.

19 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, (You know, he starts off saying, brothers, and let a brother of low degree, and now my beloved brothers) *let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:* As Romaine said, God gave you two ears and one mouth. That should tell you something. Swift to hear! Slow to speak, slow to wrath!

20 For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. God isn't manifested in your wrath, in your anger, in your temper.

21 Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. Lay aside the filthiness of the world, the language, the jokes, just the filth of the world. And receive, instead of that, God's engrafted Word in your heart!

Paul writing to the Galatians, said, don't be deceived. Whatever a man sows, that he is also going to reap. And if you sow to your flesh, of your flesh you are going to reap corruption. Now I believe that Paul is referring to what you sow into your mind. Whatever you sow into your mind is that which is going to come out of your life. And if you plant in your mind, filthiness and all, that's what's going to come out. But if you plant the Word of God, he that soweth to the Spirit, of the Spirit, he shall reap.

And so here, be encouraged to receive the Word of God, and giving yourself to the Word. And here we are tonight. And this is exactly what God wants, that you be attentive to His Word, the engrafted Word which is able to save our souls. But, it's not just being here, hearing the Word, but it's going out then and doing the Word!

²²*But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.* How many people have been deceived just because they go to church and hear the Word of God? Deceived into thinking, well I'm all right. I'm okay. You're okay. We've been to church. We've heard the Word of God. Now, we can go out and live as we want for the rest of the week. Then we can come back next Sunday and hear the Word of God again. And they are deceived into thinking that because they hear and assent to the Word of God, when the Scripture is read, they can say Amen! So be it!

But you see, if you don't practice it, then you're just deceiving yourself. You're living in a false sense of security. Feeling that everything is all right because I've heard the Word. But it's more than hearing the Word, it's putting it into practice in your life. And here's where practical James comes in, be ye doers of the Word and hearers only, deceiving your own selves!

²³*For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:* ²⁴*For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.* Looking in a mirror, seeing the reality and the truth, and of course, the Word of God is like a mirror. You look into the Word of God and all of a sudden you see yourself as you really are. But then you walk away and you forget what you saw! You're walking down the street and you look in the glass window of the store and you see a reflection of yourself and you suck it in, you know. But before you get a block away, you relax again, you know. You forget so quickly what you saw, what manner of person you really are.

Dr. McGee told the story of these hillbillies down in Kentucky, the hills of Kentucky, that were just far, far away from anything that was civilized. They were very backward kind of folk. There were some men who came into the area hunting. And after they left they went down to examine the camp. They found that the fellows had left some of the things there at the camp, including a mirror. And this one hillbilly looked in the mirror, oh, I didn't know they ever took a picture of my dad! And he took the mirror home with him. And so he slipped it into the house and put it under his pillow. And his wife saw him sneaking it under his pillow. So when he went out, she wondered what in the world, he was trying to hide in his pillow. So she went in, took the mirror and looked in. She said, so that's the old bag he's been going out with.

²⁵*But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.* Blessed in the things that you do for the Lord. You look into the perfect law of liberty—I love that! The perfect law of liberty, I have freedom, glorious freedom in Christ Jesus! Freedom not to do the things that destroy a person. Freedom to serve the Lord with my whole heart, the glorious law of liberty! And what I do, I do out of love, not out of a sense of obligation or duty. Blessed in his deeds.

²⁶*If any man among you seem to be religious,* Now religious and religion is really not a word of the New Testament. You see, Christianity isn't really a religion, though it is classified by the world as one of the world religion. It's not a religion. In fact, Christianity is almost an anti-type to religion. If you will study the religions of the world, the religions of the world tell you of the endeavor of man to reach and please God. Man's endeavor to reach God, to touch God. And here you have finite man standing on the earth base, trying to build a bridge to heaven, reaching out trying to touch God. Finite man trying to touch an infinite God, and such is an impossibility! You can never start with an earth base and reach heaven. You can never start with a finite being, reaching an infinite being! Christianity has an infinite God reaching down to touch a finite man. It's the exact opposite of religion. It isn't your attempt to reach God. Christianity is God's attempt to reach you. God is the One who initiated, for God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son! In religion you have a system of works and activities whereby man can please God. In Christianity we are told that by the works of righteousness, we cannot be justified, but we please God by simply believing His love and His provisions for us.

One day they came to Jesus and they said, what must we do to do the works of God? And Jesus said, this is the work of God, that you believe on Him, who He has sent. That's what Christianity is all about. It's not your works by which you can please God, it's God's work in your behalf. And you're simply believing and trusting in it.

So if a man among you seems to be religious, *and bridled not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this*

man's religion is vain. That's heavy kind of thoughts to ponder. The importance of bridling our tongue. And he is going to speak of this more as we move into the Book of James and tell us what a problem we have with such a small member of our body. But the trouble that it can get you into. Behold what a huge fire such a little matter can kindle, oh boy! You remember the last argument you had with your wife? What did it start over? Nothing! Insignificant!

²⁷*Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this,* This is where again, be doers of the Word, not hearer only.

To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world. That's what it's all about! Doing the works of God, showing the love of God to those that are in need. And keeping yourself unspotted from the things of the world. In those things God is well pleased.

Father, we thank You again for practical applications to truth. And Lord, help us now to make those applications, that we might become doers of the Word and not just hearer of the Word. But looking into the mirror and seeing the truths. Help us not to forget what we saw, but may we seek then Lord, to correct the flaws that we might please You and live a life that is pleasing and acceptable unto You. Lord, we realize that we have a long way to go, but we thank You that You are there to lead us, to help us, to strengthen us. And so Lord, we look to You now for that help and strength. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Shall we stand? The pastors are down here at the front to minister to you tonight. If you have any needs, special needs for prayer. They are here to pray with you and for you. And so feel free as soon as we're dismissed, to come forward and let them exercise their gifts as they minister to you in your spiritual needs tonight.

May the Lord be with you and bless you and may He give you a wonderful week! May you be strengthened by His Spirit in your inner man! And may we together experience and come to know more completely and fully, what is the riches of His grace and His mercy towards us in Christ Jesus!