

The Epistle of James: Living My Faith

- Living my faith in the midst of trials from without and temptations from within
- Living my faith in relation to the word of God – be doers and not hearers only
- Living my faith in relation to our fellow man – without partiality and evil thoughts; with love
- Living my faith by understanding that pleasing faith works obedience
- Living my faith in relation to the use of our tongues
- Living my faith in relation to the world and worldliness
- Living my faith in relation to my brethren
- Living my faith with God in my plans
- Living my faith in relation to this world's goods
- Living my faith with patience in the face of suffering and injustice



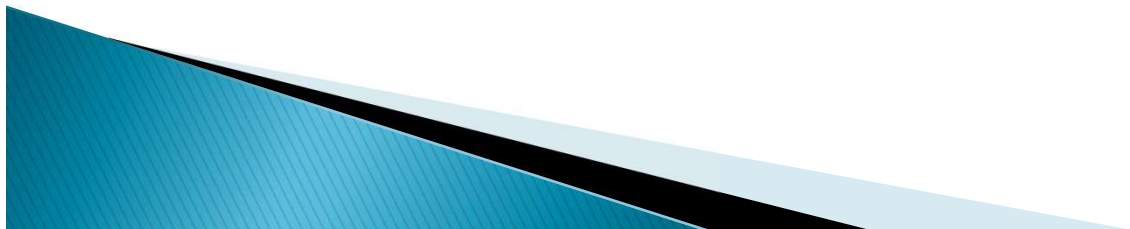
The Epistle of James: Living My Faith

- Living my faith involves truthfulness in my speech
- Living my faith in prayer and praise
- Living my faith by confessing sin and praying for one another
- Living my faith involves knowing the power of prayer
- Living my faith involves care for my brethren



Living my faith involves truthfulness in my speech

- “But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. **But let your “Yes” be “Yes,” and your “No,” “No,”** lest you fall into judgment.”
- To swear – to invoke the name of God or other sacred names or things; to utter an oath
- Like what Jesus said in Matthew 5:33-37
- The practice of the scribes and Pharisees in Jesus’ day: Matthew 23:16-22
- Our statements should be true without wanting to re-enforce them with an oath calling upon heaven or earth to support the truth
- What about a judicial oath?
 - Matthew 26:63, 64



Living my faith in prayer and praise

- “Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms.”
- See James 5:10
- Suffering comes in various forms – sicknesses, losses of various kinds, sorrows, persecution; whether bodily or inner mental anguish
- When we suffer, we may either
 - Blame God for it
 - Go to God for strength to bear it or for relief from it
- What then is to be our attitude toward suffering?
 - Not fretful complaining, but pray to God for wisdom and strength
 - James 1:5
 - 2 Corinthians 12:7-10



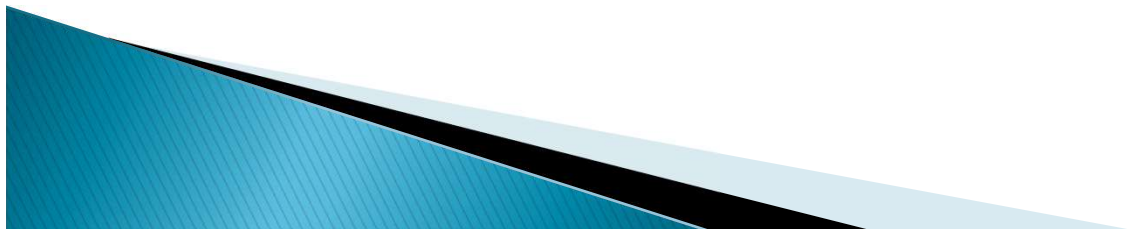
Living my faith in prayer and praise

- “Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. **Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms.**”
- Cheerful – an attitude or disposition that is joyful and pleasant, in good spirits with a mindset that is free of anxiety
- Acts 27:22, 25 – “be of good cheer” or “take heart”
- Just as when afflicted we should pray, so when we are cheerful we ought to express praise to God
- If when I’m suffering I cast my cares upon Him, asking for strength or relief, then when I am of good cheer should I not also go to God with thanksgiving and praise?



Living my faith by confessing sin and praying for one another

- “Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.”
- Suffering in v.13 more broad; now specifically sickness
- This word can mean:
 - To be weak in faith, to doubt, hesitate, be unsettled, timid
 - To be afflicted, distressed, needy
 - To be sick, physically
- Much accomplished:
 - The prayer of faith will save the sick
 - The Lord will raise him up
 - Sins forgiven



Living my faith by confessing sin and praying for one another

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- The power of prayer prayed by faith
 - James 1:5-8
- Miraculous today? No
- In the past, God fed some people miraculously.
- In the past, God healed some people miraculously
- We are taught to pray God for our food. We are taught to do our part (e.g. work). God feeds.
- We are taught to pray God for healing. We do our part (e.g. take care of body, go to doctor). God heals.



Living my faith by confessing sin and praying for one another

- “Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”
- Confess = to acknowledge wrong
- To one another
 - Not auricular confession practiced by Catholics (“The obligation by divine law of confessing one's grave sins, committed after baptism, to a qualified priest. It is called auricular confession because normally the manifestation of sins is done by word of mouth and heard by the priest before he gives absolution”)
- Could be public or private (1 Corinthians 5:1; Matthew 5:23-24; Luke 17:4; Matthew 18:15-17)
- The confession ought to be as public as the sin committed
 - How else can we know to pray for a brother/sister who has sinned?
- 1 John 5:16
- Healing is needed when one sins because sin makes one spiritually sick

Living my faith by confessing sin and praying for one another

- “Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”
- Effective, fervent prayer – “supplication” in ASV (a wanting, a need, an asking, entreaty)
 - Literally, “the prayer of a righteous one has great strength, having been made effective”
 - English word fervent: “having or displaying a passionate intensity”
- Of a righteous man – one who practices righteousness (1 John 2:29; 3:7)
- See that:
 - Prayer is effective
 - It is right to pray, for our prayers will be heard
 - We must keep the commandments of the Lord if we expect Him to hear our prayers



Living my faith involves believing in the power of prayer

- “Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.”
- Prayer is powerful because of the one to whom we pray
- Elijah was like us
- 1 Kings 17:1; 18:41-45
- His example shows
 - The power of prayer
 - God answers prayer
- We do not always know how God answers our prayers, but we can know that He does



Living my faith involves caring for my brethren

- “Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.”
- Why do Christians sin and fall?
 - Because they err from the truth
- A Christian may wander into error, away from the truth
 - Examples – into some moral sin; into the belief and promotion of false teaching, etc.
 - The two have this in common: erring from the truth
 - Can we separate doctrine from practice?
 - Doctrine without practice is dead – James 2:14-16
 - Practice without doctrine has no foundation
 - “A man’s life, its outward aspects, is a true reflection of his character; and his character is a mirror of what he believes. Of course it makes a difference what one believes!” (Commentary on James, Gospel Advocate Publishing)



Living my faith involves caring for my brethren

- “Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.”
- Examples of men wandering from the truth:
 - Galatians 5:2-4
 - 2 Timothy 2:16-18
- When a Christian wanders from the truth, brethren who are aware have a responsibility to try to turn him back (“convert him”, KJV)
- How do you do that?
 - Galatians 6:1
 - 2 Timothy 3:16-17
 - The instrument is the truth, the word of God, the sword of the Spirit
 - Teaching, encouragement
- Truth has the power to convert the alien sinner as well as the wanderer



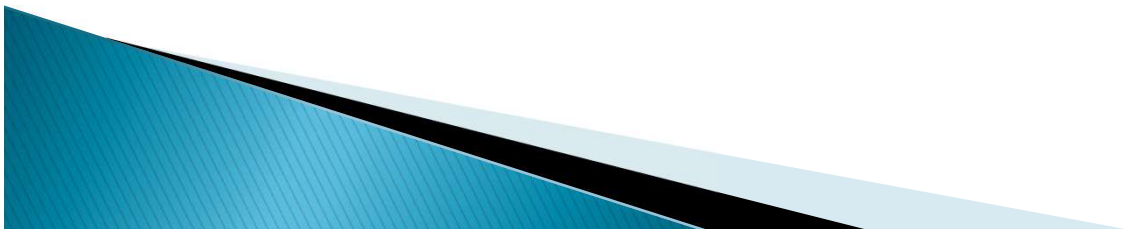
Living my faith involves caring for my brethren

- “Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.”
- Saving a soul from spiritual death in the sense of eternal separation from God
- “Cover a multitude of sins”
 - Romans 4:6-8
 - Does not mean the sins are just not seen by God
 - Not the Calvinistic idea of imputed righteousness
- Romans 14:7
- Proverbs 11:30



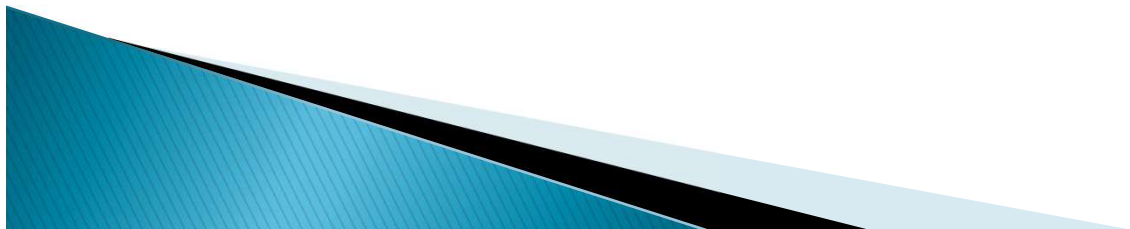
Take-aways

- Swearing should not be part of our speech. We must not invoke God's name in vain. Likewise, we ought not to use substitutions for them, known as euphemisms
 - Gee – “used as a mild expletive or exclamation, as of surprise, enthusiasm, or sympathy [Alteration of JESUS]” (AHD, 3rd edition, 1992)
 - Gosh – “used to express mild surprise or delight [Alteration of GOD]” (AHD, 3rd edition, 1992)
 - Golly – used to express mild surprise or wonder [Alteration of GOD]” (AHD, 3rd edition, 1992)
- God hears the prayers of the righteous. Let us pray more. We deprive ourselves of great benefit when we do not pray as we ought.
- We must not be offended when a brother or sister cares enough for our soul to talk to us about a sin we are committing to try to convert us back to the truth



Keynotes of Scripture in James

- “So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.” (1:19-20)
- “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.” (1:22)
- “But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.” (1:25)
- :Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.” (1:27)



Keynotes of Scripture in James

- “My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality.” (2:1)
- “Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.” (2:17)
- “You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.” (2:24)



Keynotes of Scripture in James

- “Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles.” (3:5)
- “Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so.” (3:10)
- “Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom.” (3:13)
- “But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.” (3:17-18)



Keynotes of Scripture in James

- “Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.” (4:4)
- “But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: ‘God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.’” (4:6)
- “Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” (4:7)
- “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.” (4:8)
- “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.” (4:11)



Keynotes of Scripture in James

- “Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge.” (4:11)
- “whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead you ought to say, ‘If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.’” (4:14-15)
- “Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.” (4:17)



Keynotes of Scripture in James

- “You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.” (5:8)
- “Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms.” (5:13)
- “Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, [k]fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.” (5:16)
- “Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.” (5:19-20)

