

# UNITY AS A TEAM

## HOW TRUE FAITH BEHAVES

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### James 1:2-4

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(Verse 2) The root word for trials or troubles is ‘a trial’ which means, according to Strong’s Concordance, **“to put to the test”** or **“to make proof of”**. In I Peter 1:6-7 the same word is used to show your faith is genuine – **“tested by fire”**. What kind of things do we put to the test, when we say *“let’s test it out?”* So James is saying when you have trial/testings they are just showing you how real your faith is, showing you how real God is and how really He is there for you. What a cool saying in the NLT where it says *‘consider it an opportunity for great joy’*. BECAUSE...

(Verse 3) **“...the testing of your faith produces endurance”**. This word means steadfastness, perseverance, patience which is one of the fruit of the Spirit, Galatians 5:22. In Romans 5:3-5, what does **“strength of character”** what does that mean to you?

(Verse 4) Growth means spiritual growth, which eventually leads to maturity as a believer. God’s desire is for us to be mature. His desire is for Christian men and women who can stand under pressure and who can support and assist others to grow and mature, (That is the church). But we have to allow it, (let it grow) God gives us a free will; many people shelter themselves from trials because they do not want to have pain. That would be like a mother sheltering her child from every type of pain and the child would never even learn how to walk, because they might fall down. We learn through trials, testing and pain. That is how we grow and learn to depend on God. SO...let it grow and be joyful in the trial because we know that it will eventually lead to maturity and we will **‘be perfect, complete needing nothing’**. Philippians 3: 12 says basically we haven’t reached it yet that is perfection but we keep on pressing for the goal of it.

What factors are essential to becoming mature? Which ones of these are the most difficult for me to deal with?



## James 1:5-8

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(Verse 5) This is simple, if you don't understand then ask God. God wants to show you - that is why you are going through the trial in the first place, for you to grow. We are to ask God for wisdom, which is, "The moral discernment to meet life in consistency with the will of God". Daniel 2:20-23 God has it and He wants to give it to us, but we have to look to Him alone, we can't be looking to God, to the newspaper, to the friends we have to every other source, but to Him alone.

(Verse 6-8) We don't want to be unsteady, wavering, unsettled, it means without doubting. Doubts in verse 6 is in the present tense in the Greek, this means doubting is something that is ongoing it is a continuous action on the part of the person. It is like to waves of the ocean, up and down, up and down, many people live like that as Christians, up and down, God's word says don't be like that. Ephesians 4:14 says we won't be wavering when we gain maturity. I don't think any believer wants to be what verse 8 says, **"Their loyalty is divided between God and the world, and they are unstable in everything they do."**

## James 1:9-11

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(Verse 9-11) What is James trying to tell us here? What we see with our physical eyes is not what is really going on in our lives. The trial causes us to look beyond our physical sight and our physical condition. When we are placed in a position (trial) where we have to rely on God, we can't fix it, we can't make it go away, we can't get away from it, we look beyond the place we are here in this world, rich or poor it doesn't matter because God is the one who holds it all. We are forced to see how easily the things on this earth pass away, just like a flower that withers in the sun, so is our physical life.

## James 1:12-15

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(Verse 12) We have a promise, actually two promises. First we will receive the crown of life and second God will bless us. The crown is given in



Heaven, but the blessing can be here on earth. The crown of life is mentioned in several passages, Revelation 2:10 and Revelation 3:11. We want to have something to lay at the feet of Jesus (Revelation 4:10) on that day.

This is a reward for enduring the testing time and why do we endure it? Because we love Him, that is the reason for all of the above. The reason for the trial, the reason for the growth, the reason for the joy during the time of testing, the reason for the faith, the reason for maturity is because of the love we have for our Lord.

(Verse 13) God does not put temptation in your path.

(Verse 14-15) You know “the devil made me do it” is really not true according to the Word. We are tempted by our own evil desires. It is like a thought that comes to our mind. We can replace it with a Godly thought or we can dwell on it. When we dwell on it, think about it, plan it, talk about it with others then it will in all likelihood become an action. Then it is a sin. God didn't make us sin, the enemy didn't make us sin, we did. Philippians 4:8 and 2 Corinthians 10:5 tells us how to keep our thought life under God's rule.

## **James 1:16-18**

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(Verse 17) God has a purpose, to give us birth and to give us good gifts. The wonderful part of this verse is that God does not change, and His gifts to us are continually coming down from Him. Sometimes we may not even see things as a gift or we think we want another gift instead. I would challenge you to pray about what it is you want and see if God does not either change your desire or give it to you. Matthew 7:7-8, John 16:23, Ephesians 3:20 and James 4:2 all talk about asking God. He loves us and wants to give us good things BUT He alone knows what those are and when we will be ready for them.

(Verse 18) The Word says we are His prized possession out of all creation. We are created in the image of God. He chose to give us birth; He chose us - John 1:13 and John 15:16



## James 1:19-27

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(Verse 19) Be quick to listen- like a mother hears a child even when she is asleep she is in tune to the sound of the baby and tuned into the child's cry, that is how we should be tuned into God. We hear God through the Word, other Christians, circumstances. Be slow to speak we have 2 ears and 1 mouth. Be slow to become angry at the Word because it points out our sin. Like someone who breaks the mirror because they don't like the reflection.

(Verse 20) We have a choice. We can keep the filth in our lives or we can get rid of it. Like when God comes to clean out the library or the TV room or the game room, we can chose to say no to what He shows us or we can move it out of our lives.

(Verse 21-25) Don't just know what is right but do it - James 4:17. Why do we own a mirror? We use a mirror to examine ourselves and to make changes in our appearance. If we look in the mirror see dirt on our face and walk away without changing it did the mirror do us any good? If we read the Word, study the Word and yet not do the Word is it just like that? 2Corinthians 3:18 says when we have been shown what God needs to change and allow the changes in our lives then we reflect the glory of God.

(Verse 26-27) The definition of religion from the Greek is "the outward practice, the service of a god". It is used 5 times in the New Testament, James 1:26-27, Acts 26:5 and Colossians 2:18 where it is translated worshipping. "Pure religion has nothing to do with ceremonies, temples, or special days. Pure religion means practicing God's Word and sharing it with others, through speech, service and separation from the world".

Warren Wiersbe

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- How can we share God's Word through speech?
  - How can we share God's Word through service?
  - How can we share God's Word through separation from the world?
  - Pray about what God has shown you and what He wants to do in you as we study the book of James.



# UNITY AS A TEAM

## HOW TRUE FAITH BEHAVES

### James 2:1-13

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A mature Christian practices the truth of the Word of God. In order to practice the truth we must know the truth. That means study, read, listen to and ask for wisdom from God. We already know He will give it according to James 1:5.

Don't show partiality or favoritism. We can't love God and say we don't love people according to 1 John 4:20. Christ died for people, all kinds of people, good, bad, sinners, poor people those who could give nothing back to Him. Jesus was not influenced by who or what the person was or what he could get from them. God looks at the heart.

Jesus was "one of those persons", the Word says Isaiah 53:2-3. Jesus was not attractive in appearance, he was rejected by men, he was not a popular man in terms of what we would say is popular. Matthew 8:20 Jesus himself says, "**Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head**".

(Verse 5) "**God chose those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith**". Read also I Corinthians 1:26-30. Why does the Bible say God chose the poor, weak etc? So why do we have a tendency to accept those that are attractive, wealthy and popular?

If we could see with Jesus' eyes we would see all the good and bad of the person. If we could see with Jesus' love then no matter what good or bad we saw, we would love them anyway. That is what we need to ask the Lord to give us; His eyes to see people.

Other scriptures to tell us what Jesus expects of us:  
Leviticus 19:18, Luke 10:25-37, 1 John 4:19-21

- What is it that makes us drawn to certain people and why?
- Why is it so hard for us to love some people?
- What does it mean to see people through Jesus' eyes? How can we do this?



- What other scriptures come to your mind when we talk of loving others? Please share them with the group.

## James 2:14-19

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There is a quote that says, “Faith is not believing in spite of evidence but obeying in spite of consequence”. We can see this demonstrated many times in the Word of God. But when we look at faith in James, he talks about three types of faith, dead faith, demonic faith and real saving faith.

Let’s look at what the Word says about faith. This is not all by far of the verses that the Bible has about faith. Let’s look up the following verses: Ephesians 2:8-10, 2 Corinthians 5:7, Hebrews 11:6, Romans 14:23

(Verse 14) So, this asks a question, is the faith without works a faith that saves? Faith in the Greek is a verb. What is a verb? You might remember from your English classes some of you it was long ago, that a verb is an action word. This is a quote from the Ryrie Study Bible, “James is not saying that that we are saved by works but that a faith that does not produce good works is a dead faith”.

- Do you agree or disagree with this statement?
- Is everyone who claims faith in Christ saved? Matthew 7:21-26

Please tell me what these quotes from Christian theologians mean to you, do you agree or disagree and why?

- “Any declaration of faith that does not result in a changed life and good works is a false declaration” Warren Wiersbe.
- “It is faith alone that justifies but faith that justifies can never be alone” John Calvin.

(Verse 15-19) What is James saying? The demons believe? Read Mark 3:11-12 and Mark 5:1-13. Does that mean that because they believe and know who Jesus is they are saved? **NO**



## James 2:20-26

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True faith produces works. It is not the works that save a person, but the works is evidence of the process going on inside of us. Ephesians 2:10 says **“For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”** Look again at the quote by Calvin, faith is not ever alone, as we look at the Old Testament examples that James gave think of others that the Bible gives us.

- Abraham (Genesis 22) showed that he had total faith in God and in God’s perfect will and plan. **“We will return to you”** (Genesis 22:5) shows he did not doubt God at all.
- Rehab (Joshua 2:1-21) showed her faith in the True God. Joshua 2:9-11 specifically sight her faith, **“I know”** she believes God is the True God and she knows He has the power to save them. Not only does she know but she acts on it, she hides the spies.

(Verse 26) Says the body without the spirit is dead so faith without works is dead, it is like a 2 part ticket - the 2 pieces are separated by perforation but you can’t get in the door without both parts. Faith without works can’t work and work without faith can’t work, we need both to have true saving faith. Verse 24 is the answer for verse 14, **“justified by what he does, not by faith alone”**. Justification means “to declare sinner righteousness in the spirit of God, to show to be righteousness”.

So because we want to be sure we are truly saved by faith we should look at a few questions for our own introspection and to be sure. 2 Corinthian 13:5a says examine yourself.

1. Was there a time when you admitted to being a sinner and turning to God?
2. Was there a time when you prayed for God to forgive your sins and turn to Him for your salvation?
3. Do you understand the Gospel of Christ, He died to save you and that is the only way to God?
4. Have you seen a change in your life because of your decision?
5. Do you have a desire to share Christ with others?
6. Do you enjoy fellowship with God’s people? Do you love to worship?
7. Do you look forward to Christ imminent return?





Psalm 139:23-24 “Search me O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me and lead me in the way everlasting.”



# UNITY AS A TEAM

## HOW TRUE FAITH BEHAVES

James is such a practical book, it is said to be like the “Proverbs” of the New Testament. James has practical advice for the Christian, how to act and react to others, it makes you wonder about the church that James pastored.

### James 3:1-2

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“Teacher” in the Greek just means instructor or preacher, to preach. Every Christian has gifts (Romans 12:6-7) and we should attain to teach according to the Word. We are all teachers whether we have the title pastor/teacher or not. The Word says a lot about teaching (Hebrews 5:12, 2 Timothy 2:24, 1 Peter 4:11, 1 Timothy 1:3-7). The only way to be a teacher to the people of God is to know the Word of God and to share as the Lord opens the door. We are all teachers.

(Verse 2) Says we all stumble, we all sin (1 John 1:8) we are not perfect but we study in order to be prepared to teach others in words or in actions. The word perfect does not mean without sin, it means to be mature, grown up in the faith.

1. Does what the Bible say make you afraid to be a teacher?
2. How are you a teacher?
3. Does it always have to be in word?
4. Should we strive to teach?

### James 3:3-12

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The tongue! It goes without saying that the words we say affect others. The tongue also has the power to affect the person speaking.

(Verse 6) “[The tongue]...**corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.**”

James says 3 things about what the tongue can do.

1. The tongue has the power to lead or guide. James uses the example of the bridle which controls a 1000 lb horse or the ships rudder which controls a many thousand lb ship. Do you agree or disagree; the tongue controls the body and the old nature?



2. The tongue has the power to lead and guide others. We lead with our words. Can you give me an example from the Word of God? Can you give me an example in your own life where your tongue led or guided someone else?
3. The tongue has to power to destroy and James uses the example of the fire and of wild animals. In 1871 a fire started in the O'Leary barn in Chicago at 8:30 pm when the fire was finished it had burned 100,000 people out of their homes and 17,500 building were destroyed, 300 people died. We hear all the time how forest fires start. The power of the tongue has that kind of fast moving destruction.

(Proverbs 18:21) **“The tongue has the power of life and death and those who love it will eat its fruit”**. What does that mean to you?

The tongue also say according to James has the power to praise. That is what we want to see, hear and know the power to praise God. A teacher once said your heart is a like a cup full of something, when it gets shaken, what comes out? That is what is down inside you. You've heard people say when they let out a burst of cursing or anger; I don't know where that came from....really? Scripture says a lot about this: Matthew 7:16-18, Luke 6:45, Galatians 5:22, John 6:63, Isaiah 50:4

When you are rattled what comes out? What you have put into your heart, what you keep your heart filled up with. I pray it is God's Word, praises, and voice speaking through me and you when we open our mouths. “If you and I are going to have tongues that delight, then we must meet with the Lord each day and learn from Him, we must pray and meditate and permit the Spirit of God to fill our hearts with God's love and truth.” Amen - Warren Weirsbe

- In what ways can words destroy?
- How have you been hurt or helped by someone's words?



## James 3:13-18

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Wisdom is different from knowledge. True wisdom comes from God. Heavenly wisdom is shown in scripture in many places; 2 Timothy 3:15, James 1:5. Colossians 2:2-3, Proverbs 9:10

There are also many examples of earthly wisdom or nature wisdom; it is quite different from God's wisdom. In Acts 27 we see both Godly wisdom and earthly wisdom. Which is best?

Genesis 11:1-9, 1Samuel 17:38-39, 1Corinthians 2:14

(Verse 17-18) This is what we want to concentrate on, **“But the wisdom that comes from heaven is ...**

Pure-sacred, holy, undefiled

Peace loving quiet, undisturbed, gentle, yielding,

Considerate-reasonable, compliant

Submissive-compliant

Full of mercy-controlled by mercy or giving without being paid back

Full of good fruit-upright work, honorable deeds

Impartial-not wavering

Sincere-no pretense, without hypocrisy, genuine

(Verse 18) What does it mean to you? **“Peacemakers who sow in peace, raise a harvest of righteousness?”**

### James 3:17 (Amplified Bible)

<sup>17</sup>But the wisdom from above is first of all pure (undefiled); then it is peace-loving, courteous (considerate, gentle). [It is willing to] yield to reason, full of compassion and good fruits; it is wholehearted and straightforward, impartial and unfeigned (free from doubts, wavering, and insincerity).

This explains the verse very well. I know in my life there are some of these that I could aspire to more. As we have a time of prayer just look into your heart, let God look into your heart and see what He says that you need to allow Him to mold to be more what this verse says wisdom is.



# UNITY AS A TEAM

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James 4 is all about independence of God or what we would call an inability to put our trust in Him and commit our will to His. When you cannot see anything but yourself, i.e., my lust, my goals, my way then we are not letting God be God. Instead we have taken God's job and made it our job

### James 4:1-3

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(Verse1) **“What causes fights and quarrels among you”?** SELFISHNESS, you want your own way, not necessarily God's way. The Word says if you would only seek God's will, not your own and ask accordingly we would not be at war with each other nor might I add, with yourself. We would all be seeking the Father's will, so we would all be on the same page and there would be few if any conflicts.

Consider the following quotes:

- “Selfish living and selfish praying always lead to war. If there is war on the inside, there will be war on the outside.” - Warren Weirsbe.
- “You fight and do not succeed, because you do not pray you do not commit your way to Him, and make known your request to Him, but follow your own corrupt views and inclinations: therefore you meet with continual disappointments;” - Matthew Henry

Now consider the following questions:

- How do we ask? (John 16:24)
- What does God want to do? (Ephesians 3:20)
- Why do we not ask (make a request) to Him this way?
- What in your own life do you need to request of Him in His way and will?



## James 4:4-6

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(Verse 4) If you are friendly (philos, brotherly love) with the world (kosmos which means “the present order of things”), you are hostile (at enmity or enemies) of God. I can’t believe any of us want to be an enemy of God as a Christian yet when we seek to do things in a worldly way; we are not seeking God’s way.

What do these scriptures say to you? How can we avoid being friends with the world?

Titus 2:12, Ephesians 2:1-3, 1 John 2:15-17

(Verse 4) What is God saying here? The divine Spirit is the subject of this sentence; the Holy Spirit is jealous for you, wholly, uncompromisingly, totally loyal to Himself. He is not willing to share you with anyone or anything. Exodus 20:5 says God is jealous God. Read 1 Peter 2:9. How does that make you feel?

(Verse 4) **“But He gives us more and more grace (power of the Holy Spirit, to meet this evil tendency and all others fully). That is why He says, God sets Himself against the proud and haughty, but gives grace [continually] to the lowly (those who are humble enough to receive it).”**

This is a quote from the Amplified Bible

When the verse says he opposes the proud it actually is a word picture of God in battle gear; spear, shield, helmet standing against us. Wow who in the world would want to see that? Matthew Henry says, “...there can be no greater disgrace than for God to proclaim a man a rebel, an enemy, a traitor to his own crown and dignity, and to proceed against him as such? The proud resist God; in his understanding he resist the truths of God; in his will he resist the truths of God; in his will he resist the laws of God; in his passions he resist the providence of God; therefore no wonder that God sets himself against the proud.”



## James 4:7-10

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There are commands that we are given in these verses. Please observe and give your definition of the following:

Submit \_\_\_\_\_

Resist \_\_\_\_\_

Come near to \_\_\_\_\_

Wash your hands \_\_\_\_\_

Purify your heart \_\_\_\_\_

Grieve \_\_\_\_\_

Mourn \_\_\_\_\_

Wail \_\_\_\_\_

Humble yourselves \_\_\_\_\_

And God says He will lift you up, 1 Peter 5:6, Philippians 2:5-8, Matthew 23:12

## James 4:11-16

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Here we get our focus off God and our focus on others and on ourselves. The will is the essence of this part of the chapter again, are we going to do our will or God's will? We can't see with spiritual eyes because we are so busy seeing with physical eyes; what we will do, what others are doing, criticizing, judging, speaking against our brothers and sisters, making our plans. Seek God's will and way and walk in it (Proverbs 19:21, Psalm 33:11) Does this mean that we don't make any plans? Does this mean it is wrong to plan?



## James 4:17

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If you know what you are to do and you don't do it, this is sin. Sins of commission are still sin. What are sins of commission? What are some sins of commission that you know you are guilty of?





# UNITY AS A TEAM

James 5

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