

THE TONGUE

STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF JAMES

STUDIES 1 - 7

TEACHER MANUAL

Stephen Nemeth Lectures

The Tongue

Your Greatest Instrument For God

Studies In The Book Of James

Studies 1 - 7

Teacher Manual

TABLE OF CONTENTS		
Study	Title	Pages

1	Chapter One - Studies In The Book Of James	1
2	Chapter Two - Do The Word	11
3	Chapter Three, part 1 of 3 - Yield Your Tongue To God's Word	24
4	Chapter Three, part 2 of 3 - Speak Words That Move Mountains	30
5	Chapter Three, part 3 of 3 - Speak Words That Bring Peace	36
6	Chapter Four - Walk In God's Grace	39
7	Chapter Five - Money And Prayer	47

Stephen Nemeth Lectures

STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF JAMES

James Chapter One - STUDY 1

During the Lord's earthly ministry, James had tried to provoke the Lord. It is a new James who opens his letter and identifies himself as -

James 1:1a - *James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,.....*

To James there was no longer any calling higher than being a servant of God and His Son. That is maturity!

He opens his letter -

James 1:1b - *.....to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.*

Throughout the Old Testament you can read how Israel's twelve tribes were scattered throughout the eastern world. First, ten of the twelve tribes (called Israel) were taken into captivity by the nation of Assyria.

The other two tribes (called Judah) were taken captive by the nation of Babylon.

Later, the Israelites were allowed to return home to rebuild their temple in Jerusalem. However, not all of them chose to return. Many of them would return to Jerusalem only to observe specific feast days.

Many of the practicing Jews from surrounding nations were in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost.

When the one hundred twenty people were baptized in the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other tongues, those Jews hearing them were amazed.

They recognized that these Christians were speaking in the languages of the countries from which these Jews had traveled.

Then, Peter preached a sermon so powerful that three thousand people were converted that day. As these newly converted Christians returned to their homes, the gospel spread throughout the entire region.

James wrote to the churches that had been established in the many nations surrounding his home city, Jerusalem.

Some have said that James wrote to the Jews. But, he uses the words “My brethren” in

James 1:2 - *My brethren,.....*

So, I believe that James had something bigger in mind. I believe that he was writing to all the children of his heavenly Father, all of the spiritual brothers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, he wrote to you.

1. SPEAKING LIKE BROTHERS.

Sometimes we share God’s Word with loved ones and get absolutely no response! We say, “They are not getting it at all.”

While appearances will lie, God’s Word is true -

Isaiah 55:11 - *So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.*

Just as the Word changed James, it pierces the hearts of unbelievers whether they like it or not! James may not have believed in Jesus during His earthly ministry, yet the Word was still piercing his heart.

When his spirit was awakened by the new birth, Jesus’ teachings came to life within James, quickened to his remembrance by the Holy Spirit.

This is beautifully confirmed in how the essence of James’ message parallels the Lord’s teaching.

James 1:2 - *My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;*

Matthew 5:10-12 - *Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

11 Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Both Jesus and James said, “Rejoice in the face of adversity.”

As the Holy Spirit brought the words of Jesus to James’ remembrance, I am sure he also remembered the example his Brother had presented during His earthly life.

The words he once resented became words he taught others -

James 1:4 - *But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.*

Matthew 5:48 - *Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.*

Patience.

First, Jesus said, "Be perfect." Ever practical, James said, "You will become perfect by exercising patience."

In the book of James the word 'perfect' means 'mature.' And patience yields maturity in every Christian.

We are an impatient generation. We have instant coffee, instant tea, and we want instant answers to prayer, i.e., "Lord, give me patience now!"

God's Word, in contrast, teaches us to exercise patience. It is through patience that we reap the benefits of God's Word. James didn't believe in giving up. He believed in praying and waiting patiently for God's answer in every situation.

An old story about James says that his knees were as tough as a camel's because he spent so much time on his knees praying!

He learned his keys to maturity from the best teacher - Jesus.

James 1:5 - *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.*

Matthew 7:7-11 - *Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:*

8 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

9 Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?

10 Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?

11 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

b. Wisdom.

First, Jesus said, "If you have a need, ask God to meet it." Then James made it practical. "If you have a need, get God's wisdom on how to handle your situation."

You will obtain His wisdom by asking for it.

Compare -

James 5:1-3 - *Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you.*

2 Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are motheaten.

3 Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.

Matthew 6:19-21 - *Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:*

20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Sometimes we think, “If I had walked with Jesus during His earthly ministry, I would have understood the scriptures.”

But James really blew it while Jesus was on the earth, and he saw the Lord nearly every day! On the other hand, the apostle Paul had the most penetrating revelation of the Last Supper and he was not even there!

His perception of Christ’s victory at the cross is outstanding yet Paul never physically walked with the Lord.

All revelation of God’s Word must come through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Jesus is called “The Living Word.”

When He spoke God’s Word, the Holy Spirit revealed its truth. And He still reveals it today! Is not that encouraging? You do not have to wish that you had walked with the Lord then. You can walk with Him today and every day as the Holy Spirit leads you into the truth of the scripture.

2. WALKING WITH THE WORD.

The word ‘walk’ denotes ‘activity’! Do not ever assume that just because someone has been a Christian for a long time he or she will be mature. That just is not true!

I know people who have been Christians for thirty-five years who are still spiritual children. Yet I know some new Christians who are very mature in the Lord. They attained maturity by acting upon God’s Word.

Do you want to be a mature Christian? The key found in the book of **James** is “Practice God’s Word in your life.”

James 1:22-25 - *But be ye doers of the word, and not 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.*

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.*

Jesus told a parable about two men who built houses; one house was built on sand, the other on a rock.

Matthew 7:24-27 - *Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:*

25 *And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.*

26 *And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:*

27 *And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.*

The sand represents the hearing of God's Word without action; the rock represents the person who hears and obeys God's Word.

You know the story. The wind and waves came against these houses and only the house on the rock stood firmly intact. Both men heard the Word, but only one built a foundation by acting upon it.

The rock is a combination of hearing and doing.

The Holy Spirit reveals the scripture to us for one reason: for us to act upon it. God's will for us is equal to His Word.

If we want to be mature Christians, our goal must be the same goal that Jesus had here upon earth: to do the Father's will. This is how you will be a spiritual brother of the Lord.

Matthew 12:50 - *For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.*

3. YOUR KEY TO VICTORY.

James 1 is your key to victory in everything you do. The Bible says that Christians will experience various trials and temptation.

It would be wonderful if we could say, "I am a Christian so I will never have another trial."

John 16:33 - *These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*

While we cannot ignore the trials that come, God's Word says we can win over trials. James tells us how.

James 1:2 - *My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;*

Does this scripture mean that, in desperate situations, you can still be happy? Yes!

Once I asked God, "How can You expect me to have joy when everything looks so black? That seems impossible!"

The Lord sweetly said -

Nehemiah 8:10b - *.....the joy of the LORD is your strength.*

Look at your trials with a winning attitude. God wants you to win. He has the strength to bring you through as a winner. Then you can be joyful because victory is ahead.

Your number one strategy in trials should be to count them all joy.

James 1:2 - *My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;*

James also tells you what to do while you are waiting for victory.

James 1:3 - *Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.*

1. Faith and patience.

Plan to be patient while you are counting it all joy. You will not find it hard to be patient when you know that it is God's will for you to win over trials and temptations.

You have to have faith and patience to inherit God's promises. They are Siamese twins; one cannot be separated from the other.

We may say, "We have world-overcoming faith!" But, that faith will be tried. In order to have the faith that endures, you must also have patience. Then the results are guaranteed.

James 1:4 - *But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.*

As I have said, the word 'perfect' really means 'mature.' The mature Christian understands that his faith wins over circumstances. When you can trust God patiently, your faith will make you win.

Being patient is one of the Christian's most difficult tasks but it also produces the greatest rewards!

2. Wisdom.

Along with faith and patience, James gives you another element that is necessary for your victory.

James 1:5 - *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.*

Did you ever look around at your circumstances and say, "Dear God, what am I going to do? This is the biggest mess I have ever seen!" That is the time to ask for God's wisdom. Ask God for it and you will receive it.

But, you have to know how to ask for wisdom.

James 1:6-8 - *But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.*

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.

After you ask God for wisdom to handle your trial, believe that God gives you that wisdom. If you ask for wisdom today, then tomorrow you are not to say, "I wonder whether I am hearing from God or not."

You have to say, "God's Word promises that He gives me wisdom. Therefore, I believe that I have received His wisdom."

c. Trials and temptations.

With all trials come temptations to worry, fear and doubt God. Trials are external. They are on the outside and have to do with our circumstances.

But, when trials come on the outside, then temptations come on the inside, "I do not know about being a Christian. God's Word does not seem to be helping my situation. Where is God in this?"

Some people even blame God for having sent them trials. They say, "If God loves me, He would not do this to me."

James clearly says -

James 1:13 - *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:*

Satan is the only one behind temptations. Hardships, trials, poverty, sickness and death are all from Satan. Do not ever say, "God is doing this to me." He is not! God is not a child abuser. Would you tempt your own children? Of course you would not.

Then you can be sure that God would certainly not tempt the children whom He loves. God wants to help you to win, not lose.

The reason temptation comes is because we allow the devil to entice us with carnal thoughts.

James 1:14 - *But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.*

4. Your mind and emotions.

The two parts of your life the devil attacks are your mind and emotions.

What he really wants is your will. If he can convince your mind and emotions to listen to him then, with your will, you choose to sin.

When Satan came to Eve, he appealed to her emotions through lust. Satan made the fruit seem attractive to Eve and she wanted to eat it. Then lust led to deception.

Ultimately, lust affected the decision Eve made and she gave her will over to the devil and sinned.

James 1:15 - *Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.*

In temptation, always remember that the devil is working on your mind and emotions to get you to sin and bring death to yourself.

You say, "How can I keep from sinning?"

James has given you three beautiful keys that tell you how to win over sin.

(1) The first key to winning over sin is to look ahead at the result of sin: death.

Had Eve looked ahead, she would have said, "What has God said about eating this fruit?"

Of course God had warned -

Genesis 2:17 - *But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*

Eve could have looked ahead and seen death. Temptation becomes far less attractive

when you see that its price is death.

(2) The second key to winning over sin is to look around at our blessings and see that every good gift comes from God -

James 1:17 - *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 devil told Eve, “God is holding out on you because you are not as wise as He is. If you eat that fruit, you will be wise like Him.”

Genesis 3:5 - *For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.*

But that was a lie, was it not? Eve had all that she could have wanted. After all, she was created in God’s own image. Eve could have avoided sin by looking around at all the blessings she had and seeing that every good and perfect gift is from above.

First, look ahead, and then look around.

(3) The third key to winning over sin is to look within your heart to the power of God’s Word.

James 1:18 - *Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.*

Every born again Christian has been begotten by God’s Word. The Word within you will overcome the temptation around you.

1 John 4:4 - *Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.*

5. **Victory.**

God wants you to win over temptations and trials. He gave you His Word to prove it. His Word will not only save you from temptation, it will keep you safe from it. But, you have to stand fast on the Word.

James 1:23 - *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:*

If I look into the mirror of God's Word, I see God's supernatural power on my behalf.

James 1:24 - *For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.*

In the mirror of God's Word, I can see whether or not my thoughts, my emotions and my will line up with God's Word.

I can tell my body, "Get in line with God's Word. The Bible says that Jesus bore my sickness on the cross."

If my will is wavering, I tell it, "You are going to believe God's Word no matter how circumstances may appear."

Keep looking at God's Word. In His Word is the image of a winner, the image of a mature Christian. It is by looking at your overcoming image in God's Word that you endure and overcome temptations and trials.

Watch what happens to those who win over temptations.

James 1:12 - *Blessed 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.*

The end of sin is death but the end of your faith and patience is life.

DO THE WORD

James Chapter 2 - STUDY 2

Scripture Portion: James 2:1-4

James 2:1-4 - *My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons.*

2 For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment;

3 And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool:

4 Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?

GOD IS OUR SOURCE.

God is our Source and knows our needs. According to James, the first step of walking by faith is to get our eyes off people and onto God.

James 2:1-4 (NAS) - *My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus with an attitude of respect of persons.*

2 For if there come into your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment;

3 And ye have respect unto him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou there in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit under the footstool:

4 Are ye not then partial in yourselves and are become judges of evil thought?

To prefer one person above another is to enter into judgment.

God does not want us to judge others by their material status. Jesus calls this attitude “respect of persons.” I call it “pyramid climbing.”

But even in James’ correction there is love. He calls us “My brethren.” He never uses God’s Word to hurt people. He shows us what is wrong and then reveals a better way to handle our situations.

Why should someone be a respecter of persons?

No one can pull his coat around himself and say, “I have never done that!” We have all been guilty of pyramid climbing, sometimes even without realizing it. Then later the Lord convicts us about it and we pray, “God, how could that have happened?”

What is respect of persons?

Basically, it is when a person desires personal gain for himself and he is looking to people to put him over, instead of looking to God.

If we will stop looking for personal gain from other people and put our trust in God, then we open the door for Him to bless us with every blessing of His kingdom.

James 2:5 - *Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?*

When we look to God in faith, we find that, as heirs to God's kingdom, everything that God has is ours. Why look for rich men to meet our needs? God is far richer than any man. He has it all.

If the kingdom of God has every treasure we could desire in this life and the next, we must look to God as our Source in every situation. This is the first key of not being a respecter of persons.

When we look to God, people's appearances no longer matter. We will be equally kind to every person. We will be walking in the Spirit of love.

Jesus had an outstanding reputation for not being a respecter of persons. Jesus was James' example, so let us make Him our example.

Matthew 22:16 - *And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men.*

Jesus treated every person alike.

Rich, poor, young, old, the Lord Jesus loved them all. He had the wonderful ability to look past a person's physical appearance and see his potential.

(1) **The Samaritan woman.**

Read **John 4:6-42**.

The Lord was equally loving at the well when He talked with a despised Samaritan woman. The religious people of Jesus' day disdained the Samaritans and did everything possible to avoid them.

But Jesus went out of His way, not only to talk to a Samaritan, but to a Samaritan woman at that! In His disciples' eyes, the woman was a second class citizen. In the Lord's eyes she was beloved of God.

The words Jesus spoke so stirred her spirit that she was converted and became an evangelist! She turned her whole city around because, by faith, Jesus looked at her potential.

(2) Matthew.

Matthew 9:9 - *And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him.*

Consider Matthew, a disciple who was a hated tax collector before he received the Lord's call to discipleship.

By Jewish standards, Matthew was a turncoat because he collected taxes for the Romans.

As far as the Jews were concerned, anyone on the Roman payroll was an enemy. At that time, Rome had no stable tax system, so the tax collectors padded the required tax and used the extra money to feather their own nests.

When Jesus called to Matthew "Follow Me" we probably would have said, "Not him, Lord!" But Matthew was one of the Lord's most faithful, loyal men. His touching gospel portrays Jesus as "The King."

First, we are to see God as our Source. Second, we are to look past people's appearances to see their possibilities in the Lord.

I am not saying, "Ignore what you see, pretend it is not there at all." We must allow the Lord to give us His vision for others. So often we want to judge people by their past or present, but God says "Accept them where they are." Then, develop a faith vision for their future.

(3) Barnabas.

Barnabas had a marvelous ministry in receiving a faith vision for the ministries of others and then helping them to develop their ministries. While the apostle Paul was still called "Saul" Barnabas was instrumental in gaining credence for him with the other disciples.

The disciples heard that Saul had been converted but they were unwilling to believe it. They said, "His conversion is a farce! He is killing Christians." But with Barnabas' intervention, the disciples recognized the truth of Saul's conversion. Soon afterward his name became "Paul."

(4) John Mark

Barnabas and Paul ventured out together on the first missionary journey. On it, Barnabas met a young man whose ministry he was to develop. His name was John Mark.

Shortly after Paul, Barnabas and John Mark departed, the latter developed a terrible case of homesickness and returned to the city. Later he wanted to accompany Paul and Barnabas on the second missionary journey, but Paul sharply refused to offer him a

second chance.

A major disagreement ensued between Paul and Barnabas who said, "If John Mark does not go, I will not go either."

What a people oriented person was Barnabas! He was so insistent in pleading John Mark's case that Paul and Silas departed in one direction and that day Barnabas' development of young John Mark's ministry began.

The teaching John Mark received was so effective that later Paul wrote a letter saying,

2 Timothy 4:11 - *Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry.*

How could Barnabas have known that Saul would become Paul? How did he perceive that John Mark would mature and write the gospel of Mark by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit?

A key to Barnabas' fine discernment is found in -

John 7:24 - *Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.*

As Christians we will see God's vision for others only if we are walking in love toward them. Faith must be motivated by love. If we do not love every person with Christ's love, we fail to walk by faith. But when we commit to loving them as Jesus did, then we see beyond a person's appearance to his potential.

Never judge a person by his or her inadequacies. If you do, you will be discouraged.

James says that if we do not know the Lord's love to people, we are in sin.

James 2:8-10 - *If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well:*

9 But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.

10 For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.

GOD'S LOVE - ROYAL LOVE.

James placed such a wholehearted emphasis on God's Word.

In **chapter one** he spoke of -

1:18 - *the word of truth,*

1:21 - *the engrafted word,*

1:25 - *the perfect law of liberty.*

In **chapter two** he spoke of -

2:8 - *the royal law,*

2:8, 23 - *the scripture,*

2:9, 10 - *the law,*

2:12 - *the law of liberty.*

James did not reason with those whom he taught, nor did he state his opinions. He built a solid foundation of correction. He did not just say, "Do not be a respecter of persons" he said, "Fulfill the royal law. Love everyone."

I once asked the Lord, "Why is love the royal law?"

He answered, "Because it will cause you to live like a king."

We are kings and priests in Christ Jesus. We have been ordained to live by a law of supernatural love. Love is to rule our hearts and, consequently, our actions.

James 2:12 - *So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.*

Something very special happens when we esteem the royal law of love. It becomes a law of liberty to us.

The more you read, speak and act upon God's Word, the more it becomes an integral part of your soulish nature.

We do not always feel like acting upon God's Word. We do not always feel like reading our Bibles. But we obey God and do those things because we love Him.

At first, God's Word is as a law to us. But the more we claim that law as a part of our lives, the freer we become.

The day will arrive when we will respond spontaneously according to God's Word! God's Word becomes a law of liberty. It sets us free to act in His love.

4. FAITH WITH WORKS - A PRODUCT OF LOVE.

People think that **James 2** is primarily about faith that produces works. But, before James could address the subject of faith, he had to lay a foundation of love. Love is a fruit of the Spirit. It is resident within every Christian by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Love is not a “feeling.” It is a decision.

We decide to act in the love of God toward people. I think that most Christians get into trouble by trying to live out their own love (feelings) instead of living out God’s love (a decision to put others first).

Love is activated by our wills.

James corrected those people who were respecters of persons by saying, “Walk by love, the royal law.” Then, he progressed to what love should produce - faith and works.

Read **James 2:14-19**.

Three kinds of faith are revealed: intellectual faith, emotional faith and dynamic faith. True faith that works by love will produce works in the life of every Christian.

James says -

James 2:17 - *Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.*

James showed a man whose faith was solely in his mind. That man never moved past intellectual acknowledgment of God’s Word. If he truly believed God’s Word, he would feed the person who was destitute of food. But the man without faith was hindered by his mind.

Perhaps he thought, “Why does not this person get a job?” This type of intellectual reasoning blocks true dynamic faith.

James said, “Even the devils do more than give intellectual assent to God’s Word. They tremble.” That is emotional!

The demons believe so they have intellectual faith. They tremble so faith is also in their emotions. But emotional faith is not saving faith, is it? This faith substitutes words for works and, without works, that faith is dead.

I looked up the word ‘dead’ and found that it means ‘barren.’ A more colorful description would be ‘it draws no interest.’ If you put your money into a savings account, you would expect your money to produce some added gain for you.

If it gained interest, your money would be considered productive and profitable. In the same way, faith should produce works in order to be productive and profitable to you.

Intellectual or emotional faith is not profitable to anyone.

The devils cannot be saved, but they believe in eternal punishment.

Luke 8:31 - *And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep.*

Devils also believe that Jesus is the Son of God.

Mark 3:11 - *And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God.*

I was raised in a church that did not believe in eternal punishment. The general belief was, "The only hell you have is here." Demons are smarter than that!

You ask, "How can I have faith that supersedes my intellect and emotions?" You have faith that produces works by deciding to be a doer of God's Word and not a hearer only.

Just as you decided to believe God when you received salvation, you can believe and act upon His Word every day of your life. You want to please God? Live by faith in His Word.

Your mind may not always want to act in faith, but your will determines true faith. "God's Word is true, so I will act upon it."

1. Abraham.

Abraham 'the father of faith' is a brilliant example of people from God's Word.

James 2:21-23 - *Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?*

22 Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?

23 And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.

God gave Abraham and his wife, Sarah, a child of promise named Isaac. Before that, they had been barren of children. Isaac was born from their faith in the miracle power of God's Word. "He said we would have a child, so we will have a child."

One day God told Abraham, "I want you to offer your son, Isaac, as a sacrifice to Me on the mountain range of Moriah."

How could Abraham endure the intellectual and emotional pain of parting with his only son, his child of promise?

Hebrews 11:17-19 - *By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son.*

18 Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called:

19 Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

Abraham made a decision to believe God's Word. He said, "God promised me a child. Even if He has to raise Isaac from the ashes, He will give me a child." When Abraham made the decision in his heart to believe God, his emotions and intellect were transformed.

Emotionally, Abraham had the strength to lift the knife that would kill his own child. That is a heavy thought when you understand the bond of love between parent and child.

Intellectually, Abraham's thoughts were affected. "I see my child raised from the dead."

Physically, Abraham carried out God's Word. As he lifted the knife to sacrifice Isaac, an angel spoke to him, "Lift up your eyes." Looking up, Abraham saw a ram tangled in a nearby thicket.

That ram would be Isaac's substitution in the sacrifice. Through this substitution, Abraham received a revelation of the perfect sacrifice of God. There on the mountain range of Moriah, Abraham saw that the only Son of God would become the substitution for sinful man.

He would be crucified on Calvary, in that same range of mountains. Abraham said, "On this mount it shall be seen."

Abraham was the first man to see resurrection! He believed in resurrection before it had happened. But he could not have seen it if his faith had not produced works. He saw the Lord's sacrifice of love for mankind. God's faith produced works, too!

Then Abraham said, "I have met Jehovah Jireh."

The word 'jireh' comes from a Hebrew verb meaning 'to see.' By calling God "Jehovah Jireh" Abraham was saying, "The Lord sees ahead to my needs and then makes provision to meet them. He prepared a ram for the sacrifice even before I came to Moriah."

Further, Abraham was saying, "God sees and prepares for everything I will ever be."

That is really getting your faith in gear!

God has already made provision for every situation you will ever encounter. That alone should inspire your faith.

In this life we will always be faced by situations ahead, so we can look to Him and know that He has made provision for us in those times.

My natural instinct is to make plans. I plan activities weeks, months, even years in advance. Sometimes God allows me to plan this way. Other times He does not. But, when plans fall through, I know that He is Jehovah Jireh and He will still put me over. The following story explains what I mean.

My flight was seriously delayed. Hours began to creep by. I began to wonder if I would be on time to teach. Then the plane's captain told the passengers, "Go to lunch. When we return, we will have a report on the scheduling."

That was not very encouraging! We still had no guarantee that the plane would leave soon. In situations like this, long range planning is not an alternative.

There were two options: I could lose my peace over the situation or I could look to God as Jehovah Jireh. I said, "God, You opened the door for me to go to that city, so You will have to help me walk through it." I hunted for another ticket counter, praying quietly in the Spirit as I walked along.

"But," the agent insisted, "this flight is booked. There are so many standbys that it is doubtful you could take this flight."

What happened.?

I was the last standby that was accepted. God had already seen the difficulty that I would encounter and He had made provision for it. Jehovah Jireh always sees ahead to take care of needs such as these.

Knowing God as Jehovah Jireh should change the way you respond to crises. Fussing and fuming will not change circumstance, but Jehovah Jireh will!

b. Rahab.

God saw ahead and made the provision for a woman named Rahab. He saw her faith and, when Joshua sent two spies into the Promised Land, they 'happened' to end up at Rahab's door!

James 2:25 - *Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?*

I like the contrast James has given us. First, he tells us about Abraham, a Hebrew and "the father of faith." Then he tells about Rahab, who was not only a Gentile, but also a harlot.

Looking at these examples, you might think they were incompatible. But the compatibility between Abraham and Rahab was not their outward appearances, it was their faith.

Rahab was so special. She heard the same rumor that was heard by all the people in

Canaan (the Promised Land); the God of Israel opened the Red Sea; He killed their enemies Sihon and Og.

Rahab, along with the rest of the Canaanites, knew that the Israelites would conquer their city. Every person had heard the same report. What was the difference with Rahab? Rahab believed and her faith brought activity.

When the Hebrew spies sneaked into Canaan, Rahab was so excited that they had come to her home. She wanted the men to tell her about their wonderful God! She told them, "I have heard about your God!" She had heard!

How does faith come?

Romans 10:17 - *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

Rahab heard the Word of God, believed it and then confessed her faith out of her mouth.

Romans 10:9 - *That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

Faith always begins with hearing, believing and then confessing.

Rahab told the spies, "Your God is the God of the heavens and the earth." Intellectually and emotionally, Rahab believed, then her faith brought action.

You may be sure that when you determine to act in faith, you will be tested. Rahab's test put not only her faith, but also her life on the line.

Joshua 2:2-3 - *And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, Behold, there came men in hither to night of the children of Israel to search out the country.*

3 And the king of Jericho sent unto Rahab, saying, Bring forth the men that are come to thee, which are entered into thine house: for they be come to search out all the country.

Rahab's countrymen came to her door and said, "Bring us the Hebrew spies. We know they are in your house." But, she so strongly believed in the goodness of their God, she had hidden the Hebrew spies from sight. Her faith was so great that she risked her life for the defense of God's people.

She said, "The spies were here but they have already gone."

It is one thing to say, "I believe." It is another thing to act on what you believe. True faith always brings activity.

Rahab esteemed the God of Israel above her own countrymen.

She was such a smart woman, too. After the men had left, she asked the spies, "How can I be sure I will be saved?" The spies told her, "Hang a cord out your window. When we

take the city, you will be spared.”

Rahab had such wonderful faith she even believed for the salvation of her whole family.

Joshua 2:13 - *And that ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death.*

What is the first thing most new converts do? They hand you a prayer list with the names of all their unsaved loved ones.

Rahab did the same thing. She wanted her whole family to know the Lord. This was not just intellectual or emotional faith. It was dynamic faith! We will see the results of her marvelous faith.

The Israelites never even had to fight a battle to conquer Jericho. God had a different plan. He said, “For six days in a row, march around the city one each day. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times. When you are through marching, the priests will blow their trumpets, all the people will shout and the walls of Jericho will fall down. The city will be yours.”

On the seventh day, the Israelites marched around Jericho seven times. Then the priests blew their trumpets, the people all shouted and, as God had promised, Jericho’s walls came crumbling to the ground.

Only one wall was left standing - Rahab’s wall remained erect, a tribute to her saving faith.

Can you have faith that your life will stand while around you everyone else’s walls are crumbling? We live in a sinful day. Families are breaking up. Children are going astray. But we can follow Rahab’s example by believing God’s Word and acting upon it.

4. TOTAL SURRENDER.

James has said, “True faith has works.” Having emotional and intellectual faith is not enough. Our will must be involved, causing us to match faith with works.

But, does God want us to be emotionally and intellectually involved in faith also? Yes! He wants faith to be a part of our whole being. The more of ourselves we surrender to God, the greater will be our faith.

The book of **Jonah** shows us how God wants faith to be demonstrated in every area of our lives. Our minds, our bodies, our emotions and our words are all to be full of faith. If not, God will deal with us to get us in line with His Word. He had to deal with Jonah.

The book of **Jonah** begins with God telling him, “Go command the people of Nineveh

to repent.” Jonah’s answer was an unqualified, “No!”

Nineveh was the capital of the Assyrian nation. The Assyrians were some of the most vicious, brutal people, and he certainly did not want them to repent. He wanted God to destroy them.

As Jonah saw it, the logical way for God to deal with Nineveh was to pour His wrath out upon them in destruction.

Emotionally, he hated the people of Nineveh. I am sure Jonah also feared the people and thought, “If I preach to them, they will kill me.”

With all this inner turmoil, Jonah refused to obey God. Instead, he fled in the opposite direction of Nineveh in a boat with some other men. As they sailed away, a cruel storm arose and death for all seemed certain.

When the men found out that Jonah was fleeing from the call of God, they recognized the storm to be God’s judgment. Jonah was cast into the sea, ending up in the belly of a great fish. There he finally submitted his will to the Lord.

Jonah 2:7-9 - *When my soul fainted within me I remembered the LORD: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple.*

8 They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy.

9 But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD.

When Jonah submitted his will to God, God caused the fish to vomit Jonah out onto the shore. From there he went immediately to Nineveh and commanded the people, “Repent.”

This simple message sparked a tremendous revival. The people of Nineveh fasted. They were so sincere that even their animals were put on fast!

God turned the whole picture around, which really shocked Jonah. He certainly did not expect the people of Nineveh to receive his message. In fact, he was hoping they would not receive it.

When God corrected the spiritual condition of the people of Nineveh, Jonah fell apart and started to cry, even saying, “I wish I could die.”

You see, Jonah had enough faith to obey God, but not enough faith to handle the results of his obedience.

Because of Jonah's self-pity, God withered a vine that had been giving Jonah shade. Then God said, "You had pity on a gourd that withered before your eyes, but you do not care for those thousands of people in Nineveh? What is your problem?"

Jonah's problem was his attitude. He obeyed God but his attitude was rotten. "There! You told me to, so I did it!"

God had to reprimand him. "Faith should involve your entire being. I want your spirit, your mind, your emotions and your actions all surrendered to Me."

Did Jonah ever get it right? I believe he did because he authored the book of **Jonah**. He would not have "told on himself" if his attitude has remained poor. He lined up his attitude with God's Word.

How did Jonah end up caring for, even loving, his enemies?

He brought his emotions into faith by an act of his will. He said, "If God loves them, I love them, too."

Faith is just that simple. It is the surrender of your will to God's love. God deals with unsundered areas of our lives because He wants us to be one hundred percent in faith.

When your whole being is in faith, you will be a doer of God's Word.

That is dynamic faith!.

YIELD YOUR TONGUE TO GOD'S WORD

**James Chapter Three - STUDY 3
Part 1 of 3**

5. YIELD YOUR TONGUE TO GOD'S WORD.

Most people want to be chiefs not Indians. They want spiritual maturity to happen to them overnight.

James, in his potent chapter on the tongue, seems to say, "You will never be a good chief until you have been a good Indian."

For all Christians, controlling the tongue is essential to being either a good leader or follower.

The commitment a church leader makes to God must be airtight or the pressure of leadership will break him. Church leaders are subject to such criticism because they deal with so many people.

James opened his third chapter by revealing that, while Christian leadership looks attractive, it is difficult

James 3:1 - *My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.*

James was saying, "Do you really want to be a leader? Then you are accountable to God for many other souls in addition to yourself."

For even the most mature Christians, leadership has its drawbacks. I would love to be able to say, "I have never offended anyone."

James 3:2a - *For in many things we offend all.....*

James knew the key to eliminating offenses and accelerating Christian maturity. The key is in the control of our tongues.

James 3:2b - *.....If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.*

The word 'perfect' in the above passage means 'mature'. Therefore, James is telling us that a man's mark of maturity is found in his speech. If you desire spiritual growth,

examine the words that you speak.

Through controlling your words, you control your thoughts, emotions and physical body.
The choice is yours.

Your tongue can destroy. It can delight.

6. YOUR TONGUE CAN DESTROY.

Our loose lips could sink our ships if we do not guard our words. Generations of children have boasted, "Sticks and stones can break my bones, but words can never harm me." But, words can harm and even destroy us and the people around us.

Whether spoken for good or for evil, words keep working long after they have been spoken. Yet, as hard as we try, it seems impossible to bridle our own speech.

Have you ever tried? After saying something really negative, you vow, "I will never say that again." But two weeks later, you are saying things that are even worse!

James said that no man can control his tongue.

James 3:7-8 - *For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind:*

8 But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

Negative words are like poison. Speaking negative words turns your tongue into an agent of destruction. Those words can defile your whole body and cause as much damage as a bite inflicted by a poisonous animal.

Who is behind poisonous words? Hell itself!

Our wrong words may begin as a small fire but even the smallest of fires is capable of setting a whole forest ablaze.

Proverbs 26:20-21 - *Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth.*

21 As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire; so is a contentious man to kindle strife.

God hates the spreading of strife among men who are supposed to be brothers! If you are stirring up hatred among people, you are just hurting yourself. Do yourself a favor. Stop setting fires and start putting them out with God's Word.

You say, "I do not speak negative words." Do you listen to others speaking them? If you listen, you are as guilty as the person speaking.

If someone wants to tell you a story about another individual, confront the talebearer. Ask him, "Have you discussed this with the other person?" Usually the person's answer will be, "No, I have not." Then you can settle the matter using God's Word.

Christians are to confront specifically the offending person in a spirit of love to correct him.

Matthew 18:15 - *Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.*

If Christians will solve disagreements with scripture, there will be far less strife among brothers. Just as Christ made peace between man and God, our goal should be to maintain peace among ourselves.

1 Corinthians 13:6 - (Love) *Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;*

Love your spiritual brothers enough to not spread bad news about them. Let the gossip stop with you.

God does not even want us associating with speakers of evil.

Proverbs 11:13 - *A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.*

Why not? Because sin is contagious.

We become like those with whom we spend time. I have found that the people who talk the most are usually the ones who cause the most trouble.

Proverbs 17:27 - *He that hath knowledge spareth his words: and a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit.*

I looked up the word 'excellent' and it means 'cool'.

A man with understanding will keep his cool. On the other hand, a hot heart leads to burning words.

If you do not want to be a hothead, watch what you say.

A perfect man will control his words thereby controlling his entire life.

3. YOUR TONGUE CAN DIRECT.

The bit and the rudder both signify direction. You will either direct yourself into life, or into death.

Proverbs 18:21 - *Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.*

There is only one way to guarantee that you will speak words of life. To speak words filled with life, you must first put those words into your heart.

Matthew 12:34b-35 - *.....for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. 35 A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.*

Your heart is like a vault where you store the treasure of God's Word. If you want to withdraw life-filled words, you must first deposit the treasure. When you do, you will be prepared to speak words that will direct you in God's perfect will.

In any circumstance, I immediately begin to speak God's Word over the situation.

Proverbs 3:5-6 - *Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.*

6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

Just as God's Word keeps a door open for His perfect will in my life, His Word will keep doors open for you.

Practice God's Word. Do not just read it. Your tongue will direct you in God's will if, through practice, you build an immovable foundation for victory.

7. YOUR TONGUE CAN DELIGHT.

The fountain and the fig tree are both sources of delight and refreshing. James was not the only one who likened your tongue to a tree. So did king Solomon.

Proverbs 13:14 - *The law of the wise is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.*

Proverbs 18:4 - *The words of a man's mouth are as deep waters, and the wellspring of wisdom as a flowing brook.*

God's Word refreshes you in any situation. As you speak the Word, you bring a refreshing to others.

In the Old Testament, the priest washed his hands and feet in a brazen laver before he entered the holy place. The laver was made from mirrors so the priest could see himself as he washed.

After having walked through the hot desert sand and handled the bloody sacrifices for sin, the priest found cleansing and refreshing in the cool water.

Likewise, the mirror of God's Word reminds us of who we are in Christ and brings us cleansing and refreshing.

Ephesians 5:26-27 - *That he might sanctify and cleanse it (the church) with the washing of water by the word,
27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.*

Speaking God's Word gives you continuous cleansing power that works on the inside and reveals itself on the outside. Only when your heart is full of the Word can it produce God's cleansing and refreshing. Then, as you speak that Word, you become spiritually equipped to be a priest to others.

The Word in your mouth proves to others that you are the righteousness of God in Christ. As a righteous one, God's Word in your mouth brings life to others.

Proverbs 10:11a - *The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life:.....*

James compares your tongue to a tree which brings life through fruit bearing. A tree that is barren of fruit fails to benefit anyone. But, by speaking God's Word, your vocabulary becomes fruitful.

Jesus said -

John 6:63 - *It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.*

We would never think of killing another person. But unfruitful speech, such as gossip or lying, brings death.

Proverbs 12:22 - *Lying lips are abomination to the LORD: but they that deal truly are his delight.*

Purpose to bring life by dealing truly with others. Bring them the truth of God's Word. Then you delight yourself, you delight others, and - best of all - you delight God. He is pleased when weary souls hear His words of refreshing.

Isaiah 50:4 - *The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned.*

I cannot emphasize strongly enough the importance of praying in tongues. Paul said -

1 Corinthians 14:18 - *I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all:*

Where did Paul receive the inspiration to write one-third of the New Testament?

I believe much of that inspiration came through speaking in tongues. Paul's tongue belonged to God.

If you want the fire of God's power in your life, begin praying in the Spirit as often as possible. As you yield your tongue to God, His fire will burn off the chaff of your life.

The mark of maturity is found in one whose tongue is dedicated to God.

SPEAK WORDS THAT MOVE MOUNTAINS

Chapter Three - STUDY 4 Part 2 of 3

1. SPEAK WORDS THAT MOVE MOUNTAINS.

What do a horse's bit, a ship's rudder, a fire, a poisonous animal, a fountain and a fig tree have in common?

James compared each of these to the tongue in his powerful study on the importance of the words we speak. He wanted us to know that we can direct our lives unto good or evil with our tongues.

If we say -

Psalm 27:1 - *The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?*

our words create strength in our bodies.

But, if we say, "I am getting old and forgetful," our words create weakness. Your tongue will either defile or sanctify you.

James said -

James 3:3 - *Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body.*

If you have ever been around horses, you know that they get some wild ideas. A horse's mind may say, "I do not want to go that way." His body may say, "I will not follow you." But, a bit in the mouth of a horse becomes his mind and emotions and directs his actions.

By comparing a horse's bit to a tongue, James was saying, "Your words control your mind, your emotions and your physical body." Your tongue can also overwhelm external circumstances.

A ship comes across contrary forces of wind and waves during storms, yet a small device on the ship called a 'rudder' can guide the ship into a safe harbor.

When life's storms come, our words decide whether we shipwreck or survive.

I call the tongue “The world’s smallest but largest trouble maker.” James was more blunt.

James 3:6 - *And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.*

If I speak vicious words against a person, those words are backed by the power of hell.

When a cruel statement reaches the person about whom it was spoken, it has become a blazing fire. One wrongly spoken phrase can cause terrible damage.

We do so many things to improve our quality of life. Some of us lift weights; others observe careful diets. Yet, because our tongues are the greatest factor of control in our lives, our greatest concern should be to bridle our tongues.

King David knew the importance of controlling his speech. He prayed -

Psalms 141:3 - *Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.*

The apostle Paul said -

Ephesians 4:29 - *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.*

2. YOUR BEST ASSET.

On the positive side, you can speak heaven on earth.

Proverbs 15:4 - *A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit.*

Your tongue can be your worst liability or your finest asset. If it is to be an asset, you must speak those words which please the Lord.

Hebrews 3:1 - *Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;*

The word ‘profession’ is the Greek word ‘homoglia’. It means ‘speaking the same thing’.

Do you want to speak the same words as Jesus? Then, speak God’s Word.

When you speak the Word, Jesus tells the Father what you have spoken. Jesus is the High Priest, or Mediator of your confession.

God is pleased when you speak His Word, because then He can bring it to pass in your life.

Isaiah 57:19 - *I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the LORD; and I will heal him.*

Joshua had to trust God for water, food, clothing, military protection and spiritual guidance for over one million people. He had begun what would be the greatest challenge of his life. That is when God told him “Meditate on My Word day and night.”

“With my schedule?”

God knew that Joshua would need the Word in order to handle such responsibility. He would not take the promised land by the power of human strength. He would take it by the supernatural power of the Word!

Joshua 1:8 - *This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.*

The Word of God determines your success!

In the last chapter you saw that Joshua never fought a battle to obtain the promised land. If you are fighting and struggling with impossible circumstance, try speaking God’s Word instead!

Matthew 17:20b - *.....If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.*

You do not kick the mountain and you do not push the mountain. You do not put dynamite under the mountain. Jesus said, “You speak to the mountain.” The tongue is what overcomes contrary forces.

When Joshua and his men took control of the promised land, what did they do? Did they kick the walls? No! They shouted and those walls fell down.

How will you knock over the walls of impossibility in your life? With your tongue! Your tongue casts down mountains and takes you into every promise of God.

After securing victory in the promised land, Joshua won yet another battle with the power of his words.

Led by Joshua, the Israelites fought against the Amorites. However, as the battle grew heated, nightfall approached. Without light, the Israelites would surely be defeated.

Joshua 10:12 - *Then spake Joshua to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun,*

stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon.

Proverbs 12:6 - *The words of the wicked are to lie in wait for blood: but the mouth of the upright shall deliver them.*

Joshua delivered his people from defeat and death by speaking words of faith. Israel was spared in battle because their leader, Joshua, knew how to abide in the presence and power of God's Word. Even the sun stood still!

Your dedication to the truth has the power to save lives around you, too.

At the end of Joshua's life, he was still speaking words of power. When the Israelites settled in the promised land, Joshua was eight-six years old. He could have said, "I am old and weak. Just give me a tent." Instead, he said, "Give me the mountain with a city on it."

He did not ask for tents, he asked for mountains!

As for Joshua's family, they were all godly people.

Joshua 25:15b - *.....as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.*

Joshua believed God for good things and he spoke his convictions aloud.

Like Joshua, you set the course of your destiny with the words you speak. No other person can speak your words of faith. Jesus said, "You speak to the mountain."

Matthew 21:21b - *.....ye shall say unto this mountain,.....*

Job 22:28 - *Thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee: and the light shall shine upon thy ways.*

You decree that the mountain will be removed. You decree success. Then it shall be established. 'Shall' means 'future' so sometimes you have to hold fast to your profession of faith.

God's truth contains the supernatural power to conform your life to His perfect will. As you speak His Word, you also bring others into line with God's will.

You may have thought "I cannot change another person's life." But God can! I will never believe that our professions of faith do not alter the wills of others.

I fought for years against the baptism of the Holy Spirit. But, one day I received that baptism because my own mother's prayers and words of faith changed my will and put the call of God upon my life. Her words brought heaven to earth for me. And, yours can do the same for others.

What about words spoken to harm us?

Isaiah 54:17 - *No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD.*

I speak that verse every day.

Bad news travels fast, but so does good news! Dedicate your mouth to the good news of God's Word. Your words work as no other thing to -

Hebrews 13:21a - *Make you perfect in every good work to do his will,.....*

3. SIX CONFESSIONS TO START YOUR DAY.

When everything around you starts to look crazy, that is the time for you to stop whatever you are doing and speak God's Word to bring your circumstances back into perspective.

I recommend that you start your day with the following six confessions. Set the course of your day with God's Word.

I would not start my day without the following faith confessions. I hope they are as special to you as they are to me.

a. *Jesus is the Lord over my day.*

He is Lord over your day and your disposition! You may wake up in a bad mood. You may find that everyone around you is negative. That is when you need to remember that Jesus is still Lord.

He is still on the throne and He wants to bring life into your day.

b. *I am a new creation in Christ.*

You are born again with a new spirit, a new nature and a new thought life. You were created to be the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. He is completing you in His image day by day.

Do not let Satan drag you into the ways of your old nature. Keep your nature in Christ in ascendancy by speaking who you are in Him.

I cast my cares on the Lord.

Leave yesterday's worry with yesterday. You are not supposed to be carrying them anyway! Start your day by giving every worry and care to the Lord. He said -

Matthew 11:30 - *For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*

Once you give the Lord your cares, leave them there.

d. *I shall not want.*

The Lord is your Good Shepherd. You shall not want for any good thing, whether it be spiritual, physical or material. God is your Jehovah Jireh. He has already seen ahead to meet your needs.

2. He bore my sickness, my griefs and my sorrows.

Jesus took all of these on Himself at the cross. You cannot change your own sickness and sorrow. Only the Lord can change them.

But, you will see things change when you speak God's Word!

f. *I have the mind of Christ.*

When you determine to speak God's Word in faith, the Holy Spirit will quicken scriptures to your remembrance.

Each day confess that you have the mind of the Lord. Then expect Him to work with your thoughts.

Like Daniel and the three Hebrew children, you can be ten times wiser than those around you.

Daniel 1:20 - *And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm.*

SPEAK WORDS THAT BRING PEACE

James Chapter Three - STUDY 5

Part 3 of 3

4. SPEAK WORDS THAT BRING PEACE.

We all want to have a spirit of faith working in our lives. Faith is simply believing in God's Word and acting on what it says.

The Bible says that, if you believe God, you will speak what you believe.

2 Corinthians 4:13 - *We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak;*

A centurion came to Jesus and said -

Matthew 8:8 - *The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.*

Did the servant receive healing? Yes!

Jesus said about the centurion -

Matthew 8:10 - *When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.*

If you want Jesus to say that your faith is great then, like the centurion, you will release faith with your tongue.

A woman who was diseased with an issue of blood received her healing by speaking these faith filled words -

Mark 5:28 - *For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole.*

The Greek tense for "she said" means "she kept saying."

The woman continually said, "If I can touch the Lord's clothes, I will be healed" and created the fruit of her lips.

There is another type of confession that is just as important as confessing God's Word. It is the confession of sin.

Proverbs 28:13 - *He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.*

Repentance is the forsaking of sin. But before repentance must come confession.

1 John 1:9 - *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

If you are a child of God, demons know you! They have to flee when you speak God's Word in the Name of Jesus.

I once heard a man say, "You cannot out think a demon, but you can out talk one." You out talk demons with God's Word.

Psalm 17:4 - *Concerning the works of men, by the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer.*

5. SOW RIGHTEOUSNESS.

A mature Christian uses his tongue to sow the fruit of righteousness in his life. God's Word is for you to sow at every possible opportunity.

James 3:17a - *But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable,.....*

God's Word is pure. It does not set the standard for purity, it is purity.

Because God's Word is pure, it is also peaceful.

James 3:17b - *.....gentle, and easy to be entreated,.....*

God's wisdom is easy to entreat. God does not try to hide His wisdom from us.

James said -

James 1:5 - *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.*

James 3:17c - *.....full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.*

God's Word is full of mercy and brings victory for all!

When James spoke against respecters of persons he said -

James 2:13b -*mercy rejoiceth against judgment.*

It is not hypocritical. God's Word does not choose or prefer one person above another.
It is full of mercy for everyone.

James 3:18 - *And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.*

Do your words bring peace and victory to others?

Do they bring peace and victory to yourself? They will if you speak God's Word.

If you want to sow the fruit of righteousness in abundance speak God's Word.

WALK IN GOD'S GRACE

James Chapter Four - STUDY 6

6. WALK IN GOD'S GRACE.

Read any newspaper from front to back and you will find in-depth descriptions for all kinds of fights and wars. Whether on an international scope or a personal level, wars are nothing new.

Did anyone teach us how to quarrel? No, says James.

James 4:5 - *Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?*

To the spirit of man, conflict is a natural part of everyday life. It really gets hot sometimes.

One of the most shocking things a baby Christian learns is that even other Christians are not perfect. How do you deal with those relationships?

Even though we may be surrounded by fights and struggles, Christians can overcome the spirit of war by the power of the Spirit of God. James reveals how we can be mature Christians by putting down conflicts, rising into faith and experiencing God's grace.

What is the root of warring?

It is selfishness, the basis of all sin. Remember, Satan first sinned by trying to exalt himself above God. Sin is the same today. People say, "I want my own way, regardless of the cost."

James 4:1 - *From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?*

Wars are in our members, therefore they take place in the realm of our senses. We see something or hear something. We get offended and soon we are at war against someone.

James 4:2 - *Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.*

It is disturbing to know that Christians are fighting among themselves. It is even more disturbing to know that the reason these conflicts take place is because of envy.

People are striving in competition against each other, jealous of each other's gains.

Why?

Because their eyes are not on God. Those whose eyes are on material possessions instead of God will find that their prayers go unanswered. Even if they ask God for something, their motives are selfish: "I want a new car because so-and-so has one."

James 4:3 - *Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.*

God wants to meet all our needs, but He cannot do so when things are more important to us than He. Jesus said -

Matthew 6:24 - *No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*

To befriend the world and its material benefits is to turn from God.

James 4:4 - *Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.*

James is not talking about physical adultery. He is saying "Sin is spiritual adultery." We cannot love the world and love God at the same time.

The world's love puts self first. God's love puts others first.

The world's love will pass away. God's love is eternal.

1 John 2:15-17 - *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

If you look to what the world can offer, you are befriending the world. That friendship brings selfishness, while God calls His people to unselfishness.

Jesus said, "The world's love opposes God." You might think, "I am fighting for myself." But James says of such a fight, "You are fighting with God."

Do not fight with God by befriending the world and its gains because God always wins.

7. BE THE IMAGE OF CHRIST.

You might say, "I cannot change." But, God can change you! He has a simple solution to focus your eyes on Him -

Romans 12:2 - *And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

As you renew your mind to God's Word, your personality and desires conform to the image of Christ in you.

I understand that a seed, when split in half, bears the image of what it will be at maturity.

The seed of God's Word in you has the full potential to mature you into Christ's image. You develop that maturity by renewing your mind to God's Word. But, unless you read the Word, you cannot reach your full potential in Christ. I have seen what happens to those who neglect God's Word, and it grieves me.

A man and his whole family were saved, baptized and Spirit-filled at our church. They never missed a service, but I knew that the father struggled with reading his Bible. Then one day he became offended by another church member, so he and his family left the church permanently.

After leaving the church, the man became involved in drinking, taking drugs and was unfaithful to his wife. The marriage and family broke apart. Although the man's family still serves the Lord, his tragedy could have been avoided if he had disciplined himself to renew his mind with God's Word.

People get saved and think "Hurray! Everything is marvelous." But, if they do not stay involved with reading God's Word, everything will not be marvelous. Fights and wars will come. They will be victims or victors, depending on their use of the Word.

In the long run, consistent Bible reading pays off. You can be saved, Spirit-filled and in church every day, but only God's Word will keep you walking in spiritual discernment and not out of sense knowledge.

Why does the devil bring so much strife into the church?

He wants to bring disharmony because it quenches the flow of God's power. The enemy

wants to divide Christians and cause them to argue among themselves about issues such as healing or speaking in tongues. But, if you are in division, your eyes are not on God.

I have thought many times about Dr. Cho's church in Seoul, Korea. His church is the largest in the world. It is influencing its nation because so many people are in agreement.

Politicians want to speak there because they know that the members could easily get them elected.

That church has power and authority because its members are of one mind.

Psalm 133:1 - *Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!*

Abraham had a perfect opportunity to quarrel with his nephew, Lot. Their herds had grown so large that there was a shortage of grazing land. The two men would have to divide their herds into different areas.

Abraham told Lot, "There are two areas - a well-watered plain and a mountainous region. Choose the land you prefer."

Abraham could have dictated to Lot the land he should choose. But Abraham did not have to compete with Lot to obtain the choicest land. He knew that, no matter where he lived, God would cause him to prosper.

Lot chose the well-watered plain for himself, leaving the arid, mountainous region to his uncle. It was a poor choice because Lot walked by sense knowledge. He did not prosper but Abraham did.

You see, faith, not sense knowledge, will bring you on top.

What if Abraham had taken offense at Lot? He could have complained, "I have raised Lot as my own son, and look how he has treated me. I have to live alone on a dry, desolate mountain."

Some other person could have picked up Abraham's offense and passed it on. "Did you hear about what Lot did to Abraham?" Then the person would excuse his gossip by saying, "It is a matter for prayer."

By the time Lot would have come on the scene, nobody would have been talking to him. They would have been thinking, "That thug! How could he be so thoughtless?"

When people begin to fight, others pick up each other's offenses. We as Christians must stop sharing our offenses with others and, instead, go to the Lord in prayer. Only then will we stop disunity and open ourselves to the flow of God's power.

Living in the sense realm brings trouble because it causes us to walk by sight instead of

by faith.

I like the way James does not just say, “Be mature!” then hit you over the head with “Clean up your act!” He shows us how to rise above wars into faith.

James 4:6 - *But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.*

You say, “I cannot help but fight with others.” But God wants to give you grace. People have called grace “God’s unmerited favor.” It is more than that.

Grace is God’s supernatural power wrought on your behalf. When Satan, the whole world, and your own flesh are coming against you, God has even more grace to make you a winner in your situation.

James said that grace is for the humble. Being humble does not mean that you lie down on the ground and wait for people to walk on you. It means that you yield yourself in total dependence on God.

Do not say, “What about the others person’s sin?”

Who is right or wrong does not matter! Leave the other person’s sin with God and let Him deal with it. Just take care of yourself. It is your own relationship with God that is important.

How can you humble yourself?

James 4:7-8 - *Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*

8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.

Step one is always to submit yourself to God. No matter how vindicated you feel in your anger toward another person, submit yourself to God. No matter how impossible a situation may appear to be, submit yourself to God.

Years ago a young man in our church was experiencing major problems with drug abuse. He was in and out of church all the time. He would leave his wife and children for months, then come back and say, “I am resisting the devil.”

You will never resist the devil until you first submit to God.

If your prayer life and Bible reading are inconsistent, you are not submitted to God. How can you resist the enemy if you are fighting with God Himself?

James said, “First submit yourself to God. Then you will have put yourself in a position

to resist the devil and he must flee from you.”

Then James gives another tip.

James 4:8a - *Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.....*

The major goal in every Christian’s life should be to know the Lord better every day. We try to manipulate our own circumstances, we create distance between ourselves and God. Instead of this, let us draw near to Him. Stop warring and let Him battle for you.

We always want to clean up somebody else’s life, but James charges us -

James 4:8b - *.....Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.*

We are double minded when we try to walk by faith and, at the same time, live in sense knowledge.

We purify ourselves from a double mind by submitting our wills to God, resisting the devil and drawing as close as possible to God.

James said about a double minded man -

James 1:7 - *For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.*

When we purify our hearts with the single motive of walking close to the Lord, we are in a position to receive from Him because we no longer have selfish motives.

James 4:9 - *Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.*

Someone who is trying to please God and the world at the same time is the most miserable person you will ever see.

God is saying, “Do not ignore the sin. Get down to business and repent.”

Why?

Because then you are in a position to receive grace (supernatural strength) from God. He always wants us to win and can help us to do so when we submit ourselves to Him.

James 4:10 - *Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.*

If you are depending on your own strength in a trial, then God will not use His strength to help you.

Many years ago someone told me to handle problems by ourselves because, as far as others are concerned, we should not have any problems. Then we experienced a major trial involving our family.

What did we do?

We told the church. They loved us, prayed for us and provided a tremendous support system in our crisis.

It is a mistake when the church thinks that its leadership does not have problems. Whether you are in full time ministry or are a lay person, do not be too proud to obtain the support of other members of the Body. Never be too proud in a trial to say, "I cannot handle this problem myself."

When you are at your weakest, the Lord will deliver you with His own strength.

You might say, "But people will criticize." So, what is new about that?

Criticism is nothing new. We will always have it! The important thing is that we please the Lord by agreeing with others on His Word. Be honest. If you need help, do not run from God - run to Him. Let Him fight your wars because He has already won them for you in Christ.

As you rely increasingly on God's grace, conflicts will prove to be less of a snare to you. Then, in order to move in God's perfect will for your life, believe and act on God's Word.

James 4:13-16 - *Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain:*

14 Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

15 For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.

16 But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil.

What does it mean to rejoice in your boastings? It means that your eyes are fixed on accomplishments and plans rather than on God. You are worried about your own goals, not God's goals for you.

Our lives are so short that, if we expect to accomplish the Lord's will, we must allow Him total control.

Do not plan ahead without God's will. Our lives are now God's responsibility. Our part is simply to allow God to stay in control. When we let Him handle our problems, He will do the supernatural.

8. YIELDED TO REST.

When you know that the Lord has prepared your way, no person or circumstance will rattle you. You can stop every war, whether it is within or without, by completely yielding to God's will. In yieldedness, you will find rest.

Hebrews 4:11 - *Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.*

A woman I know was saved shortly after her husband's death and their children were all in their twenties. The devil told her, "If you had been saved earlier, your children would not be so wild." They were all taking drugs and their mother was tormented with fear because they were all unsaved.

One night as she was praying, God spoke to her and said, "Leave your children with Me. It is My will to save them so stop harassing yourself." From that night on, the mother never worried about them. She never cooked up schemes to get them saved. She just said, "They are God's problem. He will send the laborers."

One morning, at four o'clock the mother was startled from sleep by a telephone call. It was her son who said, "I have heard the voice of God. What should I do?" The boy's mother led him to the Lord.

He was Spirit-filled, attended Bible college and became an assistant pastor. Today the man directs a large youth ministry. Every member of his family is saved because his mother decided to allow God to perform His will by leaving her struggles with Him.

You will never win a war through the ability of your own flesh. It is through entering into God's grace and trusting Him for the victory that you will win every time.

Now, repent of any warring in which you may have been involved.

Have you fought for a job? Struggled with a war of condemnation? Your Father is a God of peace. He *is* Peace.

Commit yourself by faith to rest in His perfect will and He will grant you grace that vanquishes wars and makes you walk in the high places of peace.

MONEY AND PRAYER

James Chapter Five - STUDY 7

9. SPEND WISELY, PRAY HEAVENLY.

The Lord is very aware of two elements of your life: your giving and your prayers.

It is interesting that, as described in the book of **Acts**, it was the prayer life and sowing of alms that brought Cornelius to the Lord's attention.

Throughout the Bible, financial giving and commitment to prayer have distinguished the mature men of God. So it is no surprise that James ended his epistle on the subjects of money and prayer.

10. MONEY.

When Jesus sat near the treasury in the temple, He did more than just sit there. He watched what people gave. Had we been there, probably we would have averted our eyes from the treasury and politely looked in another direction.

But the Lord watched and noticed people's giving then, and He still notices it today.

Sometimes when ministers talk about money, people become very sensitive. They say, "It is a personal matter."

While our giving should be a personal matter between ourselves and God, it is very important that we give. In fact, the Lord is not only aware of His children's finances, He is also aware of the finances of the wicked!

James 5:1-4 - *Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you.*

2 Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are motheaten.

3 Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.

4 Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth.

Who is talking against the rich men?

The cries of God's people have brought a serious matter to His attention. The wages that were held back from the laborers are also crying out! Not only have laborers been cheated of the wages due to them, but the deceitful employers have misspent the money by nourishing only their personal desires!

James 5:5-6 - *Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter.*

6 Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you.

The key phrase for the final chapter of James is -

James 5:3 - *Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.*

Why would an unbeliever store up treasure for the last days? He would not do so!

God is saying that the rich, ungodly people whose fortunes have been amassed for their own lusts will lose their treasure in the last days.

James said, "Weep and howl." Why would a rich man weep over his money? He would only weep over losing it.

Proverbs 13:22 - *A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children: and the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just.*

James 5 reveals the same thing. In the last days, God will take wealth from the wicked men and give it to His people. This truth is found throughout the Old Testament.

Ecclesiastes 2:26 - *For God giveth to a man that is good in his sight wisdom, and knowledge, and joy: but to the sinner he giveth travail, to gather and to heap up, that he may give to him that is good before God. This also is vanity and vexation of spirit.*

Sometimes we observe those around us and see that some very evil men possess huge fortunes.

But God does not want us to worry about them.

Proverbs 24:19-20 - *Fret not thyself because of evil men, neither be thou envious at the wicked;*

20 *For there shall be no reward to the evil man; the candle of the wicked shall be put out.*

God's plan for His people was never that we store up riches. His plan has always been for us to give freely of our resources to the work of His kingdom. By so doing, we open the doors for God to bless us again and again.

Do not worry about how other people gain their prosperity. Just look to God as your Source, not to men. All the riches that this world can offer belong to the Lord and are for His people.

Haggai 2:7-8 - *And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts.*

8 *The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the LORD of hosts.*

If the silver and gold all belong to God, why is it in the possession of evil men? Because they will use their ability to benefit the kingdom of God without even knowing it. Their money will be used to accomplish quick work of the spreading of the gospel.

Haggai continued -

Haggai 2:9 - *The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts.*

The former and latter houses in this scripture are symbolic of the Old and New Testament churches. The New Testament church will be greater than the Old Testament church.

Why?

Because God will bring the gold and silver into the latter house. Many people fail to realize that it takes money to bring the gospel to others.

Whether you like it or not, covering the earth with God's Word is very expensive. In the 1940s, tremendous revival swept the church. But this revival only prepared the way for what is yet to come.

Had silver and gold been poured into the church's work then, the churches would still have lacked the technological resources necessary to minister the gospel throughout the world.

At that time, use of the radio medium was still limited. There was no television. Today we have radio, television, video, satellite and the Internet to reach around the world. All of these are excellent tools with which to communicate God's Word to other countries.

Through these means the Word is reaching formerly inaccessible countries with outstanding results. Some missionaries receive their personal teachings and edification from these means. And, all of these valuable tools to share the gospel cost a great deal of money.

We do not have to worry about where the money will come from for God has said, “The silver and gold are Mine.”

In the end times, wicked men will suffer the loss of their riches to God’s people. This wealth will not be dispensed to people who say, “the wealth of the wicked is laid up for me!” The wealth will be for those who will return it to the unsaved in the form of the gospel!

This is not a new idea. In the earliest Old Testament times, God often applied the finances of heathen men to His own causes.

When the Israelites departed from Egypt under the leadership of Moses, God moved on the hearts of the Egyptians to provide the Israelites with much wealth. Only God could have caused such a thing!

To understand the quality of the wealth received by the Israelites, it helps to consider examples of Egyptian artifacts recovered from tombs. The riches from these tombs are some of the finest in the world. Those people were wealthy.

Just imagine what the Israelites took with them, what God gave them, when they left Egypt! The Egyptians had forced God’s people to work as slaves. For years they had been unpaid. But, God heard their cries and saw that they collected their deserved wages.

God paid His people with the funds of wicked men. They had gold, rubies, diamonds, even linen with which to build their temple.

Years later, the Israelites were in another captivity. This time it was in Babylon. The Jewish temple had been destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar’s armies. Its goods had been stolen. But God stirred the heart of a heathen king name Cyrus to let the Israelites go free.

He was so moved by the power of God’s Word that, when he released the Israelites, he restored to them the wealth stolen from their temple and presented them with tons of riches from his own country’s treasury. The Israelites returned to their homeland, Jerusalem, with abundance bestowed on them by a heathen king.

The examples of the Egyptian and Babylonian captivities have one thing in common. Each time the Israelites received money from the wicked, it was to be used to build the Lord’s house.

Today, heathen wealth is still appointed for the building of a temple, a temple constructed from living stones!

When God secures money from the wicked, it is to be used for building the Body of Christ.

Some people say, “I am a Christian, but I am not prosperous.”

The rules for obtaining prosperity are in God’s Word. God told Joshua -

Joshua 1:8 - *This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.*

To prosper, our first priority should be God’s priority, His Word.

Job 22:22-23 - *Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth, and lay up his words in thine heart.*

23 If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up, thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles.

If you have blown it somewhere, if you are in strife with someone, or if you have not been trusting God, return to Him. Put iniquity far from your tabernacle.

The Hebrew for “Almighty” is “El Shaddai” which means that God builds, adds, and increases His abundance in your life. This is the God Who takes your circumstances far beyond your dreams.

Job 22:23b - *.....put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles.*

You are the temple of God. Dedicate yourself to Him as an instrument of righteousness. If you lack prosperity, ask the Holy Spirit to show you why. The enemy could be stealing from you, but, sometimes we miss God’s blessing just by being impractical.

A mother of two teen age daughters once told me, “I can no longer afford to send my daughters to a Christian school.”

I asked her about her employment and discovered that she worked only three days each week. She had never even thought about working a five-day week. I suggested that her girls might further appreciate their schooling if they worked part-time to help pay for their education.

You see, there was an area of impracticality in this woman’s life that prevented her from enjoying prosperity.

Other likely sources of lack include strife and failure to tithe. James said -

James 3:16 - *For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.* God has commanded us to pay our tithes. Every guideline in God’s Word has been

included for one reason: so that He can bless us. But we must observe God's rules if we desire to receive His benefits.

Job 22:24-26 - *Then shalt thou lay up gold as dust, and the gold of Ophir as the stones of the brooks.*

25 Yea, the Almighty shall be thy defence, and thou shalt have plenty of silver.

26 For then shalt thou have thy delight in the Almighty, and shalt lift up thy face unto God.

The gold of Ophir and the silver represent material wealth. But spiritual wealth is also contained in this scripture, as Job has said -

Job 22:26 - *For then shalt thou have thy delight in the Almighty, and shalt lift up thy face unto God.*

God wants your entire being to prosper.

3 John 2 - *Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.*

You can enjoy the Lord's prosperity when your trust is in Him.

James knew that it was God's will to bless you. He knew that God would use the finances of the heathen. But, like growing into Christian maturity, receiving the prosperity of the Lord can take time. James recognized that you might have to hold fast to patience in order to receive from God.

James 5:7 - *Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.*

To be patient does not mean sitting around saying, "One day the Lord will come to take us away." Patience is the fruit of the Spirit. Like love, it is resident within every believer.

All the fruits of the Spirit must be exercised by our wills. Working together, they make us doers of God's Word. Therefore, patience involves activity.

Through patience, Job gained victory in his trial. Through patience, we will gain victory in our trials in our trials.

James 5:9-11 - *Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door.*

10 Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.

11 Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

Do not complain and grumble about tests and trials in your life. James said, “Happy are those who endure.”

We need to endure our trials in a spirit of faith. Remember, God corrected Jonah for having a wrong attitude, even though he was obedient. Our attitudes will be right if we believe God’s Word and say, “Job had a happy ending, and so will I.”

Job lived for sixty-nine years before his trial, which lasted only one year, until he was seventy years old. Most people want to dwell on Job’s suffering, but his suffering is not your example.

You are to look at the end of Job. After the trial, God returned everything to Job in double portion. He even lived for seventy more years to enjoy the blessings that God gave to him.

Be patient and trust God that the end of your trial, whether financial or whatever, is tremendous blessing.

11. PRAYER.

As I said before, patience involves activity. If there is a waiting period before you receive prosperity, it is essential that you keep your eyes on God.

Reading His Word is a part of being patient. The other part of patience is prayer. Prayer should be every Christian’s key for patience in hardships!

James 5:13a - *Is any among you afflicted? let him pray.....*

The word afflicted does not mean “sick.” It means “distressed” or “enduring hardship.”

If you are in a trial, you can do more than just grit your teeth and vow to persevere. Prayer will make your patience work for you. If you go around dwelling on your affliction, you are not in faith.

You are to pray according to God’s provision, not according to the problems you are experiencing. You can tell God the problem, do not dwell on circumstances. Dwell on solution from His Word. Say, “God, Your Word promises that I will always triumph in Christ.”

I am not telling you to deny the existence of problems. Some mental science religions say, “Problems are not there at all.”

The Lord never denied problems, He said -

John 16:33b -*In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*

If you are in Christ, then you have overcome the world, too. If you are enduring affliction, your prayers bring the promises from God's Word to work in your situation.

To prove that your prayers are very important to God, James gave a shining example from God's Word. He showed you the prophet, Elijah. We think, "Elijah was a great man."

But Elijah blew it, just like we do, but his prayer life should be an example to us -

James 5:17-18 - *Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.*

18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

When Elijah prayed, the heavens, which had been closed from rain for three years, brought forth rain to water the earth.

Today we are awaiting a rain, the latter rain spoken of by James.

James 5:7b -*Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.*

We have a great hope for this life and for our futures. After the latter rain, we will have an eternity with the Lord Jesus Christ. That is a victory for which we should praise God every day!

Sometimes it is important that we pray with others in order to see victory.

James 5:14-15 - *Is any sick among you? 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:*

15 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

In this context, what could be one reason for a person's sickness? Could sin cause sickness? That is what James has said. But is *all* sickness caused by sin? No!

When you see a sick person, do not think to yourself, "He has sin in his life." You do not know that! Those types of judgments will keep you in sense knowledge instead of spiritual discernment.

The prayer of faith is what will raise the sick person, whether he has sinned or not.

Why anoint someone with oil?

The prayer, not the oil, will raise him. But, for some people anointing with oil provides their faith with a point of contact.

God gave us many ways to receive healing by faith, but all Christians have a direct line to God through prayer in the Name of Jesus.

Let us take the scripture literally. Why should we pray with a church elder?

I recommend that you not go to a novice Christian because he is inexperienced in faith. You should seek a person in leadership who has experience exercising faith for healing and who knows the power of God's Word.

One woman who attended a liberal church told me, "I was suffering from asthma. I read the scripture in **James 5:14**. I asked my father to call the elders from my church to pray for my healing."

Her father, a Pentecostal believer, said, "If they pray for you, I will die!"

The point is, a person who prays for you should have faith to be able to pray an effectual, fervent prayer.

James 5:16 - *Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*

When you pray with your church elders, the Holy Spirit may reveal some sin. If so, confess that sin and repent. The scripture does not say, "Confess your faults to everyone." It says, "Confess them one to another." Perhaps you want to confess your faults to God only.

However, if you have battled a persistent weakness or temptation, perhaps you should link your faith with that of another believer. Do not go to the whole church. Pick out one person whose life displays the fruit of the Spirit and whom you know to be discreet.

Many people reading, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man," immediately think "I am not righteous."

But, we are righteous in Christ because He is righteous. We have been made to be the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. In the Name of Jesus you have righteousness. Therefore, your prayers avail much!

Your prayers release God's power to bring wealth from the hands of the wicked and pour it into the gospel. Your prayers can save the lives of many.

An important accompaniment to your prayers should be praise. Every day spend some time thinking about things for which you can praise God.

I have found that the more time I spend in praise, the more I have victories.

James 5:13b -*Is any merry? let him sing psalms.*

Rejoice in the Lord's answers to your small prayers as well as your big prayers.

You can sit in a service and wonder why only twelve people were saved. You can think to yourself, "The organist played the wrong music for this altar call.

But, if you are encouraging a critical spirit, then you are in unbelief. You close the door to God's miracles with a critical attitude.

Of course, more people could come forward for any altar call! Of course, things could be better.

There is never any question that circumstances can improve in church services. But you will see far more miracles if you purpose to live in an attitude of praise.

"Is any merry? Let him sing psalms."

James was a pastor with a heart to win souls, His love extended past his church in Jerusalem to cover churches scattered abroad - and is still reaching those churches today.

His message is, "Be mature by growing in faith."

But, most of all, James' message is one of love for the Lord, for the Body of Christ, and for the souls who will be saved as we become doers of God's Word.