

CCF Study Notes
Tuesday 7 AM Study
10 October 2006
James 1

Before beginning to read from James let us spend time in prayer, considering the victory which God gives through faith in Jesus Christ. Let us ask God to help us to do the following:

1. **See** that God has put us where we are in the world,
2. **Seek Wisdom** in the midst of trials through prayer in faith,
3. **Glory** in our humble estate,
4. **Endure** temptation by yielding our selfish desires to His perfect will,
5. **Acknowledge** the goodness of God and of all His gifts,
6. **Listen** intently to God's will, and
7. **Walk** as doers of the word, showing mercy, justice and love in all that we do.

Many have seen a contradiction between what is written in this book and what is written in the letters of Paul. The claim is that James is writing about a salvation that is by works instead of by faith. Nothing could be further from the truth. This letter of James is all about faith. It is a practical work that describes how faith will change the way we live. If our lives do not reveal our faith, maybe we need to examine our faith a bit more closely. James leads us into this.

(1:1) This James is probably the brother of Jesus. Yet he identifies himself of God. And he acknowledges that Jesus is his Lord and that Jesus is the One chosen of God. It is as we place our faith in Jesus Christ that we come to know our place on this earth. The twelve tribes were Gods people – people of privilege and destiny. Yet God chose to scatter them throughout the whole world that they might be a blessing to all nations. That is how it is with us as well. Though we are adopted as sons of God in Christ it is our joyful place to live as servants of God in this world. Though we are God's children as well, we also are scattered throughout the world that we might be a blessing. It is as we come to faith in Christ that we understand our place here on earth – and praise God for it.

(1:2-8) Trials can be joyful if God gives wisdom to live through them and see God's hand in them. Trials force us to seek God's wisdom, coming by faith in prayer before God. Too many discover they have no faith when the trials come. They are double-minded, knowing the power of God, yet overwhelmed by the trouble around them. But if we come to those trials in faith, calling out to God for His help He gives the wisdom to walk through the trials. He gives us the victory over the trials. Will we walk by faith? Or will we be unstable in all our ways?

(1:9-11) We are so full of ourselves. Jesus was so lowly that many could not accept Him as their Messiah. Some see it as a great trial when God brings us low. Consider that it makes us more like Christ. It makes us more suited to take our place in the kingdom of God when we have no position, power or authority ourselves. We need to become like little children, lowly in heart. Perhaps it helps us to realize that all the riches, power and glory this world has to offer

will fade away in time. When God exalts a man it is for all eternity. But it takes great faith to walk in humility.

(1:12-15) Temptations are distinct from trials. God does not tempt us. We must endure temptations, relying on the strength God gives us through His indwelling Holy Spirit. The reward for overcoming faith is that crown of life. Are we willing to trade passing earthly privilege for an eternity of glory? When we give in to temptation we show that our love for God is weak or lukewarm. Many Christians today are carried away by their fleshly desires. When God is not the master passion of our lives, we fall easily into temptation and backsliding. Many do not like to talk about sin today. Sin is an offensive topic! Yet desire conceives and gives birth to sin, and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. We must talk about desire and sin! It is a matter of life and death!

(1:16-18) Deception is the hallmark of our time. The essence of deception is thinking either that God's gifts are not good, or that this world has any good gifts to offer us. God's greatest gift to us is His word. His word bears fruit in our lives, that we might be a gift offered to God, that we might be like those firstfruits. Anybody who questions the goodness of God or suggests that this world has anything good to offer us is lying. Do not be deceived! We must believe that God's gift in Christ Jesus is more than enough to meet all our needs.

(1:19-21) Often we are slow to hear God's word, and quick to speak out against God. We become angry with sin and angry with God. Our anger does not bring righteousness into our lives. Righteousness comes by faith in Jesus Christ, not by action or by anger. The word is able to save our souls. We do not have to find our own way in this world. We are not saved by our own strength. God is our salvation.

(1:22-27) The law is a mirror in which we see our own sinfulness and need for a Savior. The law should motivate us to action, not to despair. The law of liberty procains freedom from the power of sin and of death in Jesus Christ. If we believe the good news, then we are free to act. We will speak rightly of God and of all men, not passing judgment. For we believe that all men stand condemned before God – unless their sins be paid for by that Perfect Sacrifice. We reach out to those who are hopeless and helpless and rejected by the world knowing that we have found ultimate hope in Jesus Christ.

P.S. Recordings of these studies in John, the Prophets, and Job and copies of these notes are now available on a new website at <http://www.jstoker.name> . A podcast is also available there or at <http://feeds.feedburner.com/CCF-T-Podcast> .