

Chapter 1

¹From James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes in the Dispersion. Greetings.

²Consider it pure joy, my brothers, when you are involved in various trials, ³because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance. ⁴But you must let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking nothing.

⁵Now if any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives to everyone generously without a rebuke, and it will be given to him. ⁶But he must ask in faith, without any doubts, for the one who has doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷Such a person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. ⁸He is a double-minded man, unstable in all he undertakes.

⁹A brother of low status should boast in his exalted status, ¹⁰and a rich person in his lowliness, because he will fade away like a flower in the grass. ¹¹For the sun comes up with its scorching heat and dries up the grass. The flower in it drops off, and its beauty is gone. That is how the rich person will fade away in his pursuits.

¹²How blessed is the man who endures temptation!
When he has passed the test, he will receive the victor's crown

of life that God has promised to those who keep on loving him.

¹³When someone is tempted, he should not say, “I am being tempted by God,” because God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone. ¹⁴Instead, each person is tempted by his own desire, being lured and trapped by it. ¹⁵When that desire becomes pregnant, it gives birth to sin; when that sin grows up, it gives birth to death.

¹⁶Do not be deceived, my dear brothers. ¹⁷Every generous act of giving and every perfect gift is from above and comes down from the Father who made the heavenly lights, in whom there is no inconsistency or shifting shadow. ¹⁸In accordance with his will he made us his children by the word of truth, so that we might become the most important of his creatures.

¹⁹You must understand this, my dear brothers. Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. ²⁰For human anger does not produce God's righteousness. ²¹Therefore, rid yourselves of everything impure and every expression of wickedness, and with a gentle spirit welcome the word planted in you that can save your souls.

²²Keep on being doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. ²³For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at himself in a mirror. ²⁴For he studies himself carefully and then goes off

and immediately forgets what he looks like. ²⁵But the one who looks at the perfect law of freedom and remains committed to it—thus proving that he is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of what it requires—will be blessed in what he does.

²⁶If anyone thinks that he is religious and does not bridle his tongue, but instead deceives his own heart, his religion is worthless. ²⁷A religion that is pure and stainless in the sight of God the Father is this: to take care of orphans and widows in their suffering, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

Chapter 2

¹My brothers, do not practice your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ by showing partiality. ²Suppose a man wearing gold rings and fine clothes comes into your assembly, and a poor man in dirty clothes also comes in. ³If you give special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, “Please take this seat,” but you say to the poor man, “Stand over there” or “Sit on the floor at my feet,” ⁴you have made false distinctions among yourselves and have become judges with evil motives, haven't you?

⁵Listen, my dear brothers! God has chosen the poor in the world to become rich in faith and to be heirs of the kingdom that he promised to those who love him, has he not? ⁶But you have humiliated the man who is poor. Are not rich people the ones who oppress you and drag you into court? ⁷Are not they the ones who blaspheme the excellent name by which you have been called? ⁸Nevertheless, you are doing the right thing if you obey the royal law in keeping with the Scripture, “You must love your neighbor as yourself.” ⁹But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and will be convicted by the law as violators. ¹⁰For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point is guilty of breaking all of it. ¹¹For the one who said, “Never commit adultery,” also said, “Never murder.” Now if you do not commit adultery but you murder, you become a

violator of the law. ¹²You must make it your habit to speak and act like people who are going to be judged by the law of liberty. ¹³For merciless judgment will come to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

¹⁴What good does it do, my brothers, if someone claims to have faith but does not have any works? This kind of faith cannot save him, can it? ¹⁵Suppose a brother or sister does not have any clothes or daily food ¹⁶and one of you tells them, “Go in peace! Stay warm and eat heartily.” If you do not provide for their bodily needs, what good does it do? ¹⁷In the same way, faith by itself, if it does not have any works, is dead.

¹⁸But someone may say, “You have faith, and I have works.” Show me your faith without any works, and I will show you my faith by my works. ¹⁹You believe that there is one God. That's fine! Even the demons believe that and tremble with fear.

²⁰Do you want proof, you foolish person, that faith without works is worthless? ²¹Our ancestor Abraham was justified by works when he offered his son Isaac on the altar, wasn't he? ²²You see that his faith was active with his works, and by his works faith was made complete. ²³And so the Scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.” And so he was called

God's friend. ²⁴You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.

²⁵Likewise, Rahab the prostitute was justified by works when she welcomed the messengers and sent them away on a different road, wasn't she? ²⁶For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is also dead.

Chapter 3

¹Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more severely. ²For all of us make many mistakes. If someone does not make any mistakes when he speaks, he is perfect and able to control his whole body. ³Now if we put bits into horses' mouths to make them obey us, we can guide their whole bodies as well. ⁴And look at ships! They are so big that it takes strong winds to drive them, yet they are steered wherever the pilot pleases by a tiny rudder.

⁵In the same way, the tongue is a small part of the body, yet it can boast of great achievements. A huge forest can be set on fire by a little flame. ⁶The tongue is a fire, a world of evil. Placed among the parts of our bodies, the tongue contaminates the whole body and sets on fire the course of life, and is itself set on fire by hell. ⁷For all kinds of animals, birds, reptiles, and sea creatures can be or have been tamed by the human species, ⁸but no one can tame the tongue. It is an uncontrollable evil filled with deadly poison. ⁹With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse those who are made in God's likeness. ¹⁰From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. It should not be like this, my brothers! ¹¹A spring cannot pour both fresh and brackish water from the same opening, can it?

¹²My brothers, a fig tree cannot produce olives, nor a grapevine figs, can it? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.

¹³Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good life that his works are done in humility born of wisdom. ¹⁴But if you have bitter jealousy and rivalry in your hearts, stop boasting and lying against the truth. ¹⁵That kind of wisdom does not come from above. No, it is worldly, self-centered, and demonic. ¹⁶For wherever jealousy and rivalry exist, there is disorder and every kind of evil.

¹⁷However, the wisdom that comes from above is first of all pure, then peace-loving, gentle, willing to yield, full of compassion and good fruits, and without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy. ¹⁸And a harvest of righteousness is grown from the seed of peace planted by peacemakers.

Chapter 4

¹Where do those fights and quarrels among you come from? They come from your selfish desires that are at war in your bodies, don't they? ²You want something but do not get it, so you commit murder. You covet something but cannot obtain it, so you quarrel and fight. You do not get things because you do not ask for them! ³You ask for something but do not get it because you ask for it for the wrong reason—for your own pleasure.

⁴You adulterers! Don't you know that friendship with the world means hostility with God? So whoever wants to be a friend of this world is an enemy of God. ⁵Or do you think the Scripture means nothing when it says that the Spirit that God caused to live in us jealously yearns for us? ⁶But he gives all the more grace. And so he says,

“God opposes the arrogant
but gives grace to the humble.”

⁷Therefore, submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil, and he will run away from you. ⁸Come close to God, and he will come close to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹Be miserable, mourn, and cry. Let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy into gloom. ¹⁰Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

¹¹Do not criticize each other, brothers. Whoever makes it his habit to criticize his brother or to judge his brother is judging the law and condemning the law. But if you condemn the law, you are not a doer of the law but its judge. ¹²There is only one Lawgiver and Judge—the one who can save and destroy. So who are you to judge your neighbor?

¹³Now listen, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a town, stay there a year, conduct business, and make money.” ¹⁴You do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. ¹⁵Instead you should say, “If the Lord wants us to, we will live—and do this or that.” ¹⁶But you boast about your proud intentions. All such boasting is evil.

¹⁷Therefore, anyone who knows what is right but fails to do it is guilty of sin.

Chapter 5

¹Now listen, you rich people! Cry and moan over the miseries that are overtaking you. ²Your riches are rotten, your clothes have been eaten by moths, ³your gold and silver are corroded, and their corrosion will be used as evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have stored up treasures in these last days. ⁴Look! The wages that you kept back from the workers who harvested your fields are shouting out against you, and the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of the Heavenly Armies. ⁵You have lived in luxury and pleasure on earth. You have fattened your hearts for the day of slaughter. ⁶You have condemned and murdered the one who is righteous, even though he did not resist you.

⁷So be patient, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious crop from his land, being patient with it until it receives the fall and the spring rains. ⁸You, too, must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, because the coming of the Lord is near. ⁹Do not complain about each other, brothers, or you will be condemned. Look! The Judge is standing at the door!

¹⁰As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord. ¹¹We consider those who endured to be blessed. You have heard

about Job's endurance and have seen the purpose of the Lord—that the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

¹²Above all, brothers, do not swear oaths by heaven, by earth, or by any other object. Instead, let your “Yes” mean yes and your “No” mean no, lest you fall under condemnation.

¹³Is anyone of you suffering? He should keep on praying. Is anyone cheerful? He should keep reciting psalms.

¹⁴Is anyone of you sick? He should call for the elders of the church, and they should pray for him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵And the prayer offered in faith will save the person who is sick. The Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed any sins, he will be forgiven.

¹⁶Therefore, make it your habit to confess your sins to one another and to pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. ¹⁷Elijah was a man just like us, and he prayed earnestly for it not to rain, and it did not rain on the ground for three years and six months. ¹⁸Then he prayed again, and heaven sent rain, and the ground produced its crops.

¹⁹My brothers, if one of you wanders away from the truth and somebody brings him back, ²⁰you may be sure that whoever brings a sinner back from his wrong path will save his soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.