

## November 13–19. James: “Be Ye Doers of the Word, and Not Hearers Only”

### Overview

James is believed to be the half-brother of Jesus (not the brother of John, son of Zebede).

James 1:1

James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.

Because of this Elder McConkie argues that James wrote this epistle to the Saints in the latter-days

### Faith

James tells us why afflictions and trials are important to developing and strengthening our faith

James 1:2-4

[2] My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;

[3] Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

[4] But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

JST James 1:2 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into *many afflictions*;

What does James tells us is important to keep in mind when facing afflictions?

(trying of your faith worketh patience  
let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire,  
wanting nothing)

Like the formula for hope given by Paul gave in Romans:

Romans 5:3-4

[3] And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;

[4] And patience, experience; and experience, hope:

Orson F. Whitney

"No pain that we suffer, no trial that we experience is wasted. It ministers to our education, to the development of such qualities as patience, faith, fortitude, and humility. All that we suffer and all that we endure, especially when we endure it patiently, builds up our characters, purifies our hearts, expands our souls, and makes us more tender and charitable, more worthy to be called the children of God." (in: Faith Precedes the Miracle, pg. 98)

James give us examples of how afflictions help us grow

James 5:10-11

[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.

Who does James present as examples of those who exercising patience during afflictions?

(the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord)  
(the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy)

Robert D. Hales

“Examples of faithfully enduring to the end are taught by prophets of all ages as they demonstrate courage while enduring trials and tribulations to carry forth the will of God. Our greatest example comes from the life of our Savior and Redeemer, Jesus Christ. When suffering upon the cross at Calvary, Jesus felt the loneliness of agency when He pled to His Father in Heaven, ‘Why hast thou forsaken me?’ (Matt 27:46). The Savior of the world was left alone by His Father to experience, of His own free will and choice, an act of agency which allowed Him to complete His mission of the Atonement.” (CR, April 1998)

James tells us a couple of things we need to be aware of when we exercise our faith and ask the Lord for His guidance

James 1:5-6

[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.

[6] 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.

Gordon B. Hinckley

"The history of this Church is a history of the expression of such faith. It began with a farm boy in the year 1820 when he read that great promise set forth in the Epistle of James....

"It was faith, the simple faith of a fourteen-year-old boy, that took him into the woods that spring morning. It was faith that took him to his knees in pleading for understanding. The marvelous fruit of that faith was a vision glorious and beautiful, of which this great work is but the extended shadow." (CR, Oct. 1951)

James also tells us that faith and works are inseparable

James 2:14-18,26

[14] What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?

[15] If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,

[16] And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?

[17] Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

[18] Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.

[26] For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

What is the relationship between faith and works?

(Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone)

LeGrand Richards

"James makes it clear that to believe in God is not sufficient, for the devils do as much, and that 'faith without works is dead.' A farmer might just as well believe that he can harvest a crop without planting. Such faith is dead; it will not produce a harvest without works." (A Marvelous Work and a Wonder, pg. 268)

Also we must be careful not to ask for things that are against Gods will

James 4:3

[3] Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

Neal A. Maxwell

"Instructive, indeed, is that circumstance in which the believing mother of James and John unmeekly pressed the Savior in behalf of her sons, hoping they might later sit on his right hand and on his left. Jesus did not indignantly reprove the worshipful and good mother. Rather, He spoke truthfully to her, saying she did not realize what she asked....

"The mother's petition resembled so many of our prayers. We do not realize the implications of what we ask. We ask amiss and then wonder why such petitions are not granted precisely as submitted." (Meek and Lowly, pg. 10)

Charity

James defines pure religion

James 1:27

[27]Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

How does James define pure religion?

(To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world)

Marvin J. Ashton

“From the simple scripture that defines pure religion come great guidelines. To be unspotted from the world, one must avoid all of Satan’s evil plans for the inhabitants of the world. Retaliation, fault-finding, deceit, pettiness, hypocrisy, judging, and destroying one another do not belong in the definition of pure religion.

“Empathy is sincere love for self and our fellowmen. Henry David Thoreau said, ‘Could a greater miracle take place than for us to look through each other’s eyes for an instant?’ If this were possible, I’m sure we could visit and help the widowed and fatherless and all who need our help with the pure love of Christ and thus be responsive to the needs of those around us.” (CR, Oct. 1982)

James tells us that we must treat those in need with all the respect they deserve

James 2:2-8

[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?

[5] Harken, 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?

[6] But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats?

[7] Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?

[8] If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well:

How does James contrast the rich and the poor?

(Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom

Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats?

Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called)

Boyd K. Packer

"Such an experience [being hard-pressed financially], however unpleasant, can be, in the eternal scheme of things, very, very useful. If you miss that lesson you may have to make it up before you are spiritually mature, like a course that was missed or a test that was failed.

"That may be what the Lord had in mind when He said, 'It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God' (Matt. 19:24)." (CR April 1977)

The rich have not been tried with afflictions –  
afflictions -> patience (Paul's formula from Romans 5)

James 1:9-11

[9] Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted:

[10] But the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away.

[11] For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways.

How much happiness and fulfillment will riches alone bring us?

(But the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away  
so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways)

Bruce R. McConkie

"Let faithful saints who labor in menial positions in this life rejoice, for they shall inherit thrones and kingdoms in the world to come. Let wealthy saints who are stripped of their goods because of their allegiance to the gospel also rejoice, for worldly riches are fleeting and not to be compared with the riches of eternity. Or, let them rejoice when, through trials, they become lowly in spirit and no longer trust in those things which wither and die in the day's heat". (DNTC 3:248)

It sounds like it's OK to have riches as long as know that everything worthwhile comes from God

Recall what Jacob said about obtaining riches

Jacob 2:17-19

[17] Think of your brethren like unto yourselves, and be familiar with all and free with your substance, that they may be rich like unto you.

[18] But before ye seek for riches, seek ye for the kingdom of God.

[19] And after ye have obtained a hope in Christ ye shall obtain riches, if ye seek them; and ye will seek them for the intent to do good -- to clothe the

naked, and to feed the hungry, and to liberate the captive, and administer relief to the sick and the afflicted.

Note that doing good will be your desire – why you seek riches

### Overcoming Our Carnal Nature

Back to James 1:27, The second part of pure religion be unspotted from the world:

James 1:27

[27] Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

How can we overcome our carnal natures and become unspotted from the world?

Spencer W. Kimball

"In abandoning evil, transforming lives, changing personalities, molding characters or remolding them, we need the help of the Lord, and we may be assured of it if we do our part. The man who leans heavily upon his Lord becomes the master of self and can accomplish anything he sets out to do, whether it be to secure the brass plates, build a ship, overcome a habit, or conquer a deep-seated transgression." (The Miracle of Forgiveness, pg. 176)

Mosiah 5:2

And they all cried with one voice, saying: Yea, we believe all the words which thou hast spoken unto us; and also, we know of their surety and truth, because of the Spirit of the Lord Omnipotent, which has wrought a mighty change in us, or in our hearts, that we have no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually.

Boyd K. Packer

"True doctrine, understood, changes attitudes and behavior. The study of the doctrines of the gospel will improve behavior quicker than a study of behavior will improve behavior." (CR, Oct. 1986)

Studying the scriptures works better than studying self-help books.

Even though it is our nature to be carnal, sensual, and devilish, James reminds us that we still can work at avoiding temptation

James 1:12-15

[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.

[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:

[14] But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

[15] Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

JST James 1:12 Blessed is the man that *resisteth* temptation...

According to verse 14, what happens that causes us to be tempted?

(every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed)

What can we do to avoid being “drawn away” and “enticed” into temptation?

Boyd K. Packer

“When any unworthy desires press into your mind, fight them, resist them, control them. The Apostle Paul taught, ‘There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it’ (1 Cor. 10:13).

“That may be a struggle from which you will not be free in this life. If you do not act on temptations, you need feel no guilt. They may be extremely difficult to resist. But that is better than to yield and bring disappointment and unhappiness to you and those who love you.” (CR, Oct. 2000)

James tells us how important it is to control the things that we say

James 3:1-8

[1] My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.

[2] For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.

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

[4] Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth.

[5] Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!

[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.

[7] 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.

Is it possible for the natural man to control our speech?

(If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man  
But the tongue can no man tame)

Orson Hyde

“I think we shall have plenty to do, at least for the present, to govern our tongues, even the best that are under the sound of my voice; for there is no person but that sometimes speaks unadvisedly with his lips—but that sometimes lets off an improper word; for the tongue or mouth is merely the valve of the heart—the place where the sentiments are discharged that have been confined in the heart, and that is the true index to the real inner man.”  
(JD, 6:150)

But, going back to earlier quotes, what can we do to control this natural obstacle?

Mosiah 5:2 - Christ can change our nature

And James states that we are expected to bridle our tongue

James 1:19-20,26

[19] Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:

[20] For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God

[26] If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.

Why do you think that if we “bridleth not [our] tongue” then our “religion is vain”?

(he wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God)

Orson Hyde

“It is the tongue that causes the evils that exist in the world; it is the tongue that sets nations at war; it is the tongue that causes broils in the domestic circle; it is the tongue that causes the fire of animosity and ill-will to burn in our midst. If we can succeed in governing the tongue according to the mind and will of God, we have got peace in our families, peace in our neighborhoods, peace in our community, and, what is more than all, we have peace with our God.” (JD, 6:150)

James warns us against being envious and contentious

James 3:13-18

[13] Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.



[14] But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.

[15] This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.

[16] For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.

[17] But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

[18] And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

What blessing await us when we strive to avoid envying and strife?

(good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom  
where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work  
But the wisdom that is from above is first pure...)

Marvin J. Ashton

“If the adversary can influence us to pick on each other, to find fault, bash, and undermine, to judge or humiliate or taunt, half his battle is won. Why? Because though this sort of conduct may not equate with succumbing to grievous sin, it nevertheless neutralizes us spiritually. The Spirit of the Lord cannot dwell where there is bickering, judging, contention, or any kind of bashing....

“When we truly become converted to Jesus Christ, committed to Him, an interesting thing happens: our attention turns to the welfare of our fellowman, and the way we treat others becomes increasingly filled with patience, kindness, a gentle acceptance, and a desire to play a positive role in their lives. This is the beginning of true conversion.” (CR, April 1992)

But we must submit ourselves to God, and except help from Him in order to overcome the things of the world

James 4:4-10

[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.

[5] Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?

[6] But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

[7] 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.

[9] Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.

[10] Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

What must we do to overcome our carnal nature?

(God... giveth grace unto the humble  
Submit yourselves therefore to God  
Draw nigh to God  
Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up)

Dallin H. Oaks

“Because of His atoning experience in mortality, our Savior is able to comfort, heal, and strengthen all men and women everywhere, but I believe He does so only for those who seek Him and ask for His help. The Apostle James taught, ‘Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up’ (James 4:10). We qualify for that blessing when we believe in Him and pray for His help.” (CR, Oct. 2015)