

Wisdom and Instruction for the Maturing Disciple

James 1:1-5:1

INTRODUCTION:

- **This is written by James.** *“James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,”*
 - Probably James the brother of Christ.
 - He is the pastor of the Jerusalem church.
 - He is therefore shepherding his people.
 - He is probably sending this letter out by the hand of the apostles themselves.
- **This is written to Jewish Christians.** *“To the twelve tribes”*
 - This is written to Jewish believers.
 - This hints to a time when the gospel has not yet gone out to the gentiles.
- **James is writing to individuals who have been scattered.** *“in the Dispersion: Greetings.”*
 - Acts 7-10.
 - Post martyrdom of Steven.
 - Pre-encounter with Cornelius the centurion.
 - 34 to 39 A.D.
 - They are running from Jewish leaders including Saul of Tarsus who is determined to imprison all Christians.

CHAPTER 1 SPIRITUAL MATURITY DOES NOT HAPPEN SEPARATE FROM GOD.

(Key Verse) James 1:18 *“Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.”*

1st Imperative: As you face the inevitable trials of life which will vary in intensity, length, and scope; determine to find joy in them. *“(2) Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds,”*

- Those who suffer in the name of Christ are blessed. (Matthew 5:10-12, Luke 6:22-23)
- Those who suffer in the name of Christ have been counted worthy by Christ. (Acts 5:41) *“Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name.”*
- Suffering is part of our inheritance as Disciples of Christ. (Romans 8:17-18)
- In our suffering we have not been separated from Christ. (Romans 8:35-37)
- In our suffering the reality of Christ in us shows through in a greater way. (2 Corinthians 12:9-10, Philippians 1:29)
- It may be through our suffering that the light of Christ in us pierces the darkness. (Philippians 2:17)
- Our suffering in Christ is for the sake of the church. (Colossians 1:24)
- Suffering the loss of the material pleasures of this life are of little value compared to what we have received in Christ. (Hebrews 10:34)
- Suffering while doing good, is a way of entrusting ourselves to God. (1 Peter 4:12-19)
- Suffering in Christ varies from disciple to disciple. (Hebrews 11:36-38)

- The loss of that which we can see proves our faith in Christ who we cannot see. (1 Peter 1:6-8)
- **Trials test the faith of a disciple and will solidify that faith.** *“(3) for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.”*
 - Endurance, character, and hope are products in the life of one who has faced trials. (Romans 5:3-4)
 - Trials test whether or not we believe God is good. (Romans 8:28)
 - Trials test what we really desire from Christ. (2 Corinthians 4:16-18)
- **When faith is solidified in the life of a disciple the disciple is transformed.** *“(4) And let steadfastness have its full effect,”*
 - **God is perfecting that disciple.** *“that you may be perfect”*
 - **God is not yet done working on that disciple.** *“and complete,”*
 - **God does not desire his disciples to fall short of His magnificent design.** *“lacking in nothing.”*

1st Wisdom Statement: God is the giver of wisdom *“(5) If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God,”*

- **God will give wisdom to those who ask for it.** *“who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.”*
- **When asking for wisdom; the disciple does so knowing God is the giver of wisdom and He will give it to those who ask.** *“(6) But let him ask in faith, with no doubting,”*
 - **Those who doubt that God is the giver of wisdom look for it somewhere else.** *“for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind.”*
 - **Those who look for wisdom outside of God’s giving it to them should not expect anything from God.** *“(7) For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord;”*
 - **Those who look for wisdom outside of God’s giving it to them are not convinced where their direction in life should come from.** *“(8) he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.”*

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2nd Imperative: God is to be given the glory and praise for whatever circumstance an individual finds themselves in. *“(9) Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation, (10) and the rich in his humiliation,”*

- **The physical life of both the rich and the poor will come to an end.** *“because like a flower of the grass he will pass away.”*
- **The days of an individual’s life will cause them to age.** *“(11) For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass;”*
 - **They will not be beautiful forever.** *“its flower falls, and its beauty perishes.”*
 - **Their money will not last.** *“So also will the rich man fade away”*
 - **Before they have everything they desire, they will no longer be able to pursue those things.** *“in the midst of his pursuits.”*

2nd Wisdom Statement: The disciple of Christ is revealed through trial. *“(12) Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.” (McReynolds) “Fortunate man who endures pressure, because proved having become he will receive the crown of the life which he promised to the ones loving him.”*

- Be careful of translations which may be misleading.
- Trials do not make the disciple worthy of heaven.
- Trials reveal who the disciples *“because proved having become”* really are.

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3rd Wisdom Statement: God is not the cause of our inability to live in righteousness and true holiness. *“(13) Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God,”*

- **God is never personally associated with sin nor drawn to it.** *“for God cannot be tempted with evil,”*
- **God does not lay traps for us.** *“and he himself tempts no one.”*
- **Temptation to sin rises from within an individual according to their own lust.** *“(14) But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.”*
 - **When the lust within an individual has its full affect that individual will sin.** *“(15) Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin,”*
 - **If the sin is allowed to grow and develop in an individual it will bring death.** *“and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.”*
- **It is a strategy of Christ’s enemies to make us believe that bad things come from God and good things come from man.** *“(16) Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers.”*
 - **Everything good is from God.** *“(17) Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above,”*
 - **Everything good comes from the creator God.** *“coming down from the Father of lights,”*
 - **God always has and always will give good things perfectly.** *“with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.”*

4th Wisdom Statement: The disciples of Christ are the beginning of a redemption plan that will one day affect the entire creation. *“(18) Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.”*

5th Wisdom Statement: Self-control, which is produced through the Holy Spirit in us, produces the righteousness of God in our actions. *“(19) Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; (20) for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.”*

- *(Gal 5:16-26) “But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. (17) For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. (18) But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. (19) Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, (20) idolatry, sorcery,*

enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, (21) envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. (22) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, (23) gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. (24) And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. (25) If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. (26) Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.”

- **Spirit-control is not produced in the lives of those living in the flesh.** “(21) Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness”
- **Spirit-control is a result of God’s Word transforming His disciples into individuals who are controlled by the Holy Spirit.** “and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.”
 - **Those who respond in obedience to what they have heard will be changed.** “(22) But be doers of the word,”
 - **Those who do not obey what they have heard are lying to themselves when they say they are OK.** “and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.”
 - **Those who do not obey see what needs to change but pretend everything is fine.** “(23) For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror.”
 - **Those who do not obey turn away from Scripture forgetting what God has revealed to them.** “(24) For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like.”
 - **The disciple who responds in obedience to the Word of God and refuses to not be changed by it will be blessed in their pursuit.** “(25) But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.”
 - God wants to change us.
 - Those who want what God wants; receive what God gives.
- **Spirit-control is a picture of whether an individual’s religion has any value.** “(26) If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person’s religion is worthless.”
 - If an individual determines they are spiritual.
 - Yet they cannot control what they say, how they say it, or the place in which it is proper to speak.
 - That person is not spiritual.
 - They are lying to themselves.
 - And the spirituality that they think they have is not helpful.

6th Wisdom Statement: Genuine worship of God brings the disciple to... “(27) Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this:”

- ... see outside of their own needs and realize the needs of others; drawing them to do something about those needs. “to visit orphans and widows in their affliction,”
- ... see themselves in the light of a holy God propelling them to cast off every sinful action. “and to keep oneself unstained from the world.”

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CHAPTER 2 SPIRITUAL MATURITY IS SEEN PHYSICALLY

(Key Verse: James 2:26 *“For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.”*)

3rd Imperative: While living out your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; accept every person without distinction. *“(2:1) My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory.”* McReynolds *“Brothers of me, not in receiving faces hold the trust of the Master of us Jesus Christ of the splendor.”*

- **Example: Socioeconomic distinction among the gathering of disciples.**
 - **One man enters who appears wealthy.** *“(2) For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly,”*
 - **One man enters who appears poor.** *“and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in,”*
 - **The wealthy looking man is given a respectful position.** *“(3) and if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, “You sit here in a good place,””*
 - **The poor looking man is put in a corner or seated on the floor.** *“while you say to the poor man, “You stand over there,” or, “Sit down at my feet,””*
 - **Because you do not think correctly you have decided which person has more value among the brethren.** *“(4) have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?”*
- **Instruction: When a distinction of honor is made because of socioeconomic status the works of Christ are being ignored.** *“(5) Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him?”*
 - **The poor are not given positions of honor even among Christ’s disciples.** *“(6) But you have dishonored the poor man.”*
 - **The rich have used their influence to hurt the body of Christ.** *“Are not the rich the ones who oppress you,”*
 - **The rich have taken disciples before judges.** *“and the ones who drag you into court?”*
 - **The rich have mocked and ridiculed Christ and His disciples.** *“(7) Are they not the ones who blaspheme the honorable name by which you were called?”*
 - **Those who provide for everyone the way they would provide for themselves are living in obedience to Christ.** *“(8) If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing well.”*
 - **Those who make distinctions in their treatment of others are sinning against God.** *“(9) But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.”*

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7th Wisdom Statement: If an individual cannot keep the law perfectly without exception he has not kept the law at all. *“(10) For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it.”*

- **God has established every part of the law.** *“(11) For he who said, “Do not commit adultery,” also said, “Do not murder.”*
- **When any part of the law is broken the one who broke it is guilty of the whole law.** *“If you do not commit adultery but do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.”*

4th Imperative: Unconstrained by the law (because Christ has fulfilled it in His death) live as one who is being evaluated by it. *“(12) So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty.”*

- **Those who are unkind to others will not receive mercy when judged.** *“(13) For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy.”*
- **Those who show kindness will be evaluated well.** *“Mercy triumphs over judgment.”*

8th Wisdom Statement: Faith that transforms internally is manifested externally. *“(14) What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him?”*

- **Example: An individual in need of physical care.**
 - **A close friend is without basic physical needs coming to you for help.** *“(15) If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food,”*
 - **You respond by saying “I hope all goes well for you.”** *“(16) and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,”*
 - **They leave without the basic physical needs cared for.** *“without giving them the things needed for the body,”*
 - **Were you a help to them at all?** *“what good is that?”*
- **Instruction: Faith that does not manifest itself in external change is not effective.** *“(17) So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.”*
 - **When an individual does not manifest externally the change taking place inside them; they will try to reason with others about their lack of evidence.** *“(18) But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.”*
 - **That individual will have a hard time proving they have been transformed internally without showing it externally.** *“Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.”*
 - **It takes more than belief in God to transform a life.** *“(19) You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!”*
- **Example: Abraham and Isaac** *“(20) Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless?”*
 - **The internal reality manifested itself in external obedience.** *“(21) Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar?”*
 - **Abraham’s faith is demonstrated by his actions** *“(22) You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works;”*

- **Through his actions Abraham proved he believe God.** *“(23) and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”—and he was called a friend of God.”*
- **Instruction: It is through external manifestation that internal change is perceived by those watching.** *“(24) You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.”*
McReynolds, “See that from works is made right man and not from trust alone.”
 - **Rahab proved her faith when she hid and rescued the Israelites** *“(25) And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?”*
 - **The physical is a manifestation of the spiritual.** *“(26) For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.”*

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CHAPTER 3 SPIRITUAL MATURITY POURS OUT ON OTHERS

(Key Verse: James 3:13 *“Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom.”*

5th Imperative: Those who teach will be judged more strictly and therefore should become teachers carefully. *“(3:1) Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.”*

9th Wisdom Statement: The ability to not offend in words is a sign that an individual has restrained his entire body. *“(2) For we all stumble in many ways. And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body.”*

- **Example: Horses and bits** *“(3) If we put bits into the mouths of horses so that they obey us, we guide their whole bodies as well.”*
- **Example: Ships and rudders** *“(4) Look at the ships also: though they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs.”*
- **Instruction: Words have great power to encourage, strengthen, or destroy.** *“(5) So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things.”*
- **Example: Forest Fires** *“How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire!”*
 - **When the tongue is out of control it will quickly spread destruction.** *“(6) And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness.”*
 - **A life which is good by every other respect can be ruined by words.** *“The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell.”*
- **Example: Training Animals** *“(7) For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature,”*
 - **Man has learned how to and has successfully controlled every creature.** *“can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind,”*
 - **No man has understood how to control the tongue.** *“(8) but no human being can tame the tongue.”*

- **Instruction: An unrestrained tongue will bring destruction.** *“It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.”*

10th Wisdom Statement: Our speech shows our hypocrisy, through it we both worship God and destroy people. *“(9) With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God.”*

- **We encourage, exhort, profess Christ with our words.** *“(10) From the same mouth come blessing”*
- **We also rant, gossip, judge motives with our words.** *“and cursing.”*
- **This is not the sign of an individual walking in the Spirit of God.** *“My brothers, these things ought not to be so.”*
- **Example: Water Springs** *“(11) Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt water?”*
- **Example: Fruit trees** *“(12) Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs?”*
- **Example: Bodies of Water** *“Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water.”*

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11th Wisdom Statement: Those who are wise show their wisdom in conduct born through meekness. *“(13) Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom.”*

- **Signs that an individual is not wise.** *“(14) But if you have...”*
 - **They are deeply devoted to their resentment.** *“bitter jealousy”*
 - **They are driven out of a desire to make themselves look better than others.** *“and selfish ambition”*
 - **These characteristics have become the core of their life.** *“in your hearts,”*
 - **When bitter jealousy and selfish ambition consume an individual, they downplay their internal reality and mislead others into thinking they are wise.** *“do not boast and be false to the truth.”*
 - **Wisdom that is from God does not come with these entrapments or manipulations.** *“(15) This is not the wisdom that comes down from above,”*
 - **These characteristics are:**
 - **Of human wisdom.** *“but is earthly,”*
 - **Of natural origin.** *“unspiritual,”*
 - **In line with Satan’s thinking.** *“demonic.”*
 - **This way of living leads to sin compounded by more sin.** *“(16) For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice.”*
- **Signs that an individual is wise.** *“(17) But the wisdom from above is”*
 - **The individual is morally right.** *“first pure,”*
 - **The individual is not consumed with worry.** *“then peaceable,”*
 - **The individual is not quarrelsome.** *“gentle,”*
 - **The individual is willing to listen.** *“open to reason,”*
 - **The individual has an abundance of concern for those in need.** *“full of mercy”*

- **The individual displays an abundance of positive moral qualities.** *“and good fruits,”*
- **The individual genuinely cares without discrimination.** *“impartial and sincere.”*
- **The life of the wise leads to good pouring out in peace on others.** *“(18) And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.”*

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CHAPTER 4 SPIRITUAL MATURITY REDUCES PRIDE

(Key Verse: James 4:6 But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”)

12th Wisdom Statement: Fighting is the result of individuals not getting their own way.

- **The Question: Where do fights come from?** *“(4:1) What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you?”*
- **Answer: Fights result when desire wins over good.** *“Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you?”* McReynolds *“Not from here, from the pleasures of you the soldiering in the members of you?”*
 - **Example: Murder** *“(2) You desire and do not have, so you murder.”*
 - **Example: Disunity** *“You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel.”*
 - **Example: Prayer**
 - **Some do not have what they desire because they never ask God for those things.** *“You do not have, because you do not ask.”*
 - **Some do not have what they desire because their motivation is wrong.** *“(3) You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.”*

13th Wisdom Statement: It is not possible to be a disciple of Christ and conformed by this world’s standards. *“(4) You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God?”*

- **Instruction: A choice must be made between God and the world.** *“Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”*
- **Warning: God is angry (like a jealous husband) when we choose the world over Him because of the relationship that has been established through the indwelling Holy Spirit.** *“(5) Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, “He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us”?”*
- **Response: Turn back to God, who desires to pour His grace upon his people.** *“(6) But he gives more grace.”*
 - **God will work against those who stubbornly refuse to repent.** *“Therefore it says, “God opposes the proud”*
 - **God will give grace to those who humble themselves before him.** *“but gives grace to the humble.”*

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- **Instruction: These are steps to humbly returning to God.**
 - **Place yourself under God's direction and care.** *"(7) Submit yourselves therefore to God."*
 - **Determine to be unmoved by temptation.** *"Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."*
 - **Go to God and He will pull you close.** *"(8) Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you."*
 - **Work through the physical realities of your sin** *"Cleanse your hands, you sinners,"*
 - **Fill your heart and mind with what is right and good.** *"and purify your hearts, you double-minded."*
 - **Hate the sin and the scars it will leave on your life.** *"(9) Be wretched and mourn and weep."*
 - **Cry over this terrible thing that has taken place in your life.** *"Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom."*
 - **Prostrate yourself before God and let Him raise you to His desired state.** *"(10) Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you."*

True Confession

Psalm 51:1-19

"To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba."

True Confession acknowledges the reason for our forgiveness is Father's determination to not give us what we deserve. *"Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions."*

True Confession seeks mercy while acknowledging rebellion against Father. *"(2) Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!"*

True Confession acknowledges knowingly sinning against Father. *"(3) For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me."*

True Confession sees the wickedness of the sin committed before Father. *"(4) Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight,"*

True Confession shows a willingness to face the punishment for sin. *"so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment."*

True Confession comes through an acceptance of the ability to sin against Father. *"(5) Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."*

True Confession is inward first. *"(6) Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart."*

True Confession manifests itself outwardly. *"(7) Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."*

True Confession results in...

- **Emotional/physical restoration.** *"(8) Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have broken rejoice."*
- **Restored Fellowship with God.** *"(9) Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities."*

- **A Restored Spiritual life.** *“(10) Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.”*
- **A longing to enjoy God again.** *“(11) Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. (12) Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.”*
- **A renewed determination to show others how to follow Father.** *“(13) Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you.”*
- **Freedom from the guilt of sin committed.** *“(14) Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, O God of my salvation,”*
- **Praise given to Father for the work only he could do.** *“and my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness.”*

True Confession brings the individual back into reliance upon God. *“(15) O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.”*

True Confession is better than worship. *“(16) For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering.”*

True Confession is a sweet-smelling sacrifice. *“(17) The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.”*

True Confession allows an individual to boldly ask much of our Father. *“(18) Do good to Zion in your good pleasure; build up the walls of Jerusalem; (19) then will you delight in right sacrifices, in burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings; then bulls will be offered on your altar.”*

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6th Imperative: Brothers in Christ do not slander each other. *“(11) Do not speak evil against one another, brothers.”*

- **Those who slander their brothers are doing the opposite of what the law instructs and treats it as ineffective.** *“The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law and judges the law.”*
- **Those who determine that the law is ineffective have made themselves the law.** *“But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge.”*
- **Those who make themselves the law have forgotten their place.**
 - **God alone establishes the law and judges according to it.** *“(12) There is only one lawgiver and judge,”*
 - **God alone determines who receives mercy and who receives judgment.** *“he who is able to save and to destroy.”*
 - **You are not God.** *“But who are you to judge your neighbor?”*

14th Wisdom Statement: It is unwise to act as if you are in control of outcomes. *“(13) Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit”*

- **These individuals boast about something they cannot know.** *“(14) yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring.”*

- **Life is short, and one cannot know how long theirs will last.** *“What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes.”*
- **Instruction: When laying out a plan, preface the statement to include God’s sovereign hand.** *“(15) Instead you ought to say, ‘If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.’”*
- **When the sovereignty of God is not included in an individual’s plans they are full of pride.** *“(16) As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.”*

15th Wisdom Statement: When an individual knows they are not speaking or acting in the way they should they are sinning. *“(17) So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.”*

05/31/2020

CHAPTER 5 SPIRITUAL MATURITY PRODUCES AN ETERNAL FOCUS

(Key Verse: James 5:8 *“You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.”*)

16th Wisdom Statement: God will hold the affluent responsible for the way they handle their wealth. *“(5:1) Come now, you rich,”*

- **Warning: Those who hoard the resources God has entrusted them with are in danger of His wrath.** *“weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you.”*
 - **Resources have a shelf life.** *“(2) Your riches have rotted”*
 - **Unused resources are broken down.** *“and your garments are moth-eaten.”*
 - **The ruin of non-corrosive resources shows your greedy accumulation.** *“(3) Your gold and silver have corroded, and their corrosion will be evidence against you”*
 - **The presentation of this evidence will consume you with guilt.** *“and will eat your flesh like fire.”*
 - **During these days of all day’s selfishness with resources is a great waste.** *“You have laid up treasure in the last days.”*
- **Warning: Those individuals whose employers did not give them what they deserve for their work will be defended by Christ.** *“(4) Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud,”*
 - **These employees are hurting because of your greed.** *“are crying out against you,”*
 - **Jesus has heard their cries against you.** *“and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts.”*
 - **He has seen your lavish lifestyle.** *“(5) You have lived on the earth in luxury and in self-indulgence.”*
 - **He knows your greed goes to your core.** *“You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter.”*
 - **He knows your actions have led to the death of His children.** *“(6) You have condemned and murdered the righteous person.”*
 - **He knows they cannot defend themselves** *“He does not resist you.”*
- **Instruction: Wait to be made rich by Christ when He comes.** *“(7) Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord.”*

- **Example: The farmer does not harvest until it is time.** *“See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth,”*
 - **When it is harvest time, he knows.** *“being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains.”*
 - **When Christ is ready, and the work is complete we will know, if we are looking for Him.** *“(8) You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.”*

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7th Imperative: Do not complain about your fellow disciples. *“(9) Do not grumble against one another, brothers,”*

- **Complaining about others, places you in position to be judged yourself.** *“so that you may not be judged;”*
- **Remember this: Jesus is watching what is going on.** *“behold, the Judge is standing at the door.”*

17th Wisdom Statement: Learn from the faithful how to be faithful in difficult times. *“(10) As an example of suffering and patience,”*

- **The prophets of old are set as individuals to imitate because they were not distracted from the task given to them even though it was hard.** *“brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. (11) Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast.”*
- **Job is set as an individual to imitate because he does not turn from God when undergoing a trial.** *“You have heard of the steadfastness of Job,”*
 - **God shows His sovereignty through Job’s trial.** *“and you have seen the purpose of the Lord,”*
 - **God shows His love and care for Job in the completion of the trial.** *“how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.”*

8th Imperative: Live in such a way that contracts are not necessary for people to believe you will do what you have said. *“(12) But above all, my brothers, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath,”*

- **When you say you will do something; do it.** *“but let your “yes” be yes”*
- **When you say you are not going to do something then stay out of it.** *“and your “no” be no,”*
- **By keeping your word; you will be unaccusable** *“so that you may not fall under condemnation.”*

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9th Imperative: Live a life of prayerfulness.

- **Prayer is the avenue to God when facing struggles.** *“(13) Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray.”*

- **Prayer is the position of the heart when shouting out in thanksgiving.** *“Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise.”*
 - **Prayer is the response of those in need of healing.** *“(14) Is anyone among you sick?”*
 - **Ask for faithful churchmen to come and pray with you.** *“Let him call for the elders of the church,”*
 - **Ask them to pray over you.** *“and let them pray over him,”*
 - **Allow them to pour olive oil upon you.** *“anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.”*
 - **Praying in obedience will deliver the sick individual.** *“(15) And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick,”*
 - **You have placed their care into God’s hands.** *“and the Lord will raise him up.”*
 - **Their sins are forgiven.** *“And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.”*
 - **Prayerful fellowship and confession of sin bring healing to the entire body of Christ.** *“(16) Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed.”*
 - **During the prayer of those justified by Christ a great power is at work.** *“The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.”*
 - **Example: Elijah was similar to us.** *“(17) Elijah was a man with a nature like ours,”*
 - **Yet when he prayed the rain stopped for 3 and a half years.** *“and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth.”*
 - **He prayed again, and it rained.** *“(18) Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit.”*
- 10th Imperative: Do not let individuals turn from truth without a fight.** *“(19) My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back,”*
- **When an unregenerate person turns to follow Truth they are saved from death.** *“(20) let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death”*
 - **Their sins have been cared for.** *“and will cover a multitude of sins.”*