

(Through the Bible) James 1-2

by Chuck Smith

In this sermon, Chuck Smith explores the themes of faith, temptation, and the importance of seeking wisdom from God as outlined in the book of James.

Duration: 1:12:56

Scripture: Romans 2:13, James 1:22, James 1:25-27

Topics: "Faith And Works", "Temptation And Trials"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the introduction of James in the book of James. James identifies himself as a bond slave of God and Jesus Christ, emphasizing his complete surrender and devotion to serving them. The speaker highlights the importance of enduring temptations and being victorious over them, as well as the consequences of failing to do so. The sermon also emphasizes the need to not only hear the Word of God but also to put it into practice, comparing those who only hear to someone who forgets their own reflection after looking in a mirror.

Transcript

Let's turn to James chapter 1. James introduces himself as a bonds slave of God and of Jesus Christ. It's a title that most of the apostles delighted to take. Renouncing any claim for any rights, turning their lives over totally to God and to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, they did not consider their lives their own.

They were bereft of ambitions in a personal way. They lived solely to serve the Lord and to please Him. A bonds slave was just that.

One who lived completely for his master. He had no rights of ownership, could not hold title to anything. Everything he had belonged to his master.

He was there only to serve. James, bonds slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ. To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, not to the ten lost tribes, for they were not and they have not been.

They are the twelve tribes that are scattered abroad. This is before the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus. In fact, they think that James is probably one of the earliest epistles written.

It predates the Pauline epistles. And so, there are some people who say, well, James wrote his epistle to counteract Paul's teaching on salvation through grace and all. Not so.

James wrote his epistle before Paul wrote his. So, if he wrote it to counteract Paul's epistles, it was a pretty interesting document in that he wrote his epistle probably five years before Paul wrote his first epistle. Two years at least.

So, James addressing the twelve tribes scattered abroad. His greeting. He uses the typical Greek greeting here, which actually is the same word for grace.

My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into diverse temptations. We are constantly faced with temptations. It's just a part of life.

And in each temptation, there has to be a decision on our part whether or not we are going to walk in the flesh or to walk in the Spirit. For temptation is any situation that would draw me into the flesh and into a fleshly reaction. I have to choose.

Will I walk after the flesh? Will I walk after the Spirit? And we realize that there are all kinds of temptations. They come from all directions. As I shared this morning, driving, I think, can be one of the greatest temptations in the world to get in the flesh.

It's interesting. We were recently in Korea and these people are an extremely gracious, wonderful people. They were so kind and gracious to us.

But when they get in a car, they're totally different. I mean, I owe a great deal of my spiritual development to riding in a car in Seoul, Korea. I really learned to pray.

The temptation of responding or reacting in the flesh to the foolish moves of other drivers. Temptations that come because of our possessions. Something happening to my possession because we try to possess our possessions.

We so often find ourselves angered, responding in the flesh because something has happened to my prized possession. Temptations that come because of interpersonal relationships. Temptations that come from so many areas.

Diverse temptations where I am prone to respond after the flesh. I want to respond after the flesh. Now we are told to count it all joy.

A strange response to temptations. Usually I don't like to be tested. I would rather that everything went very smoothly.

I would rather that no one got in my way. I would rather that no one crossed me. No one cut in front of me.

That I would much rather see. But it doesn't happen that way. Life isn't that way.

Life is filled with disappointments. There are always those that are going cross current to you. There will always be those who will be irritants to you.

And irritating situations. I cannot rule and order my life as I would have it. If I did, I would become so spoiled and rotten and pompous.

Wanting everybody to bow. Wanting everybody to yield. Wanting everybody to submit.

Doesn't happen that way. And so for my growth. For my development.

Temptation is necessary. It's a part of the testing. And that's what we are told here.

It's the trying of our faith. Another word for that is the proving of our faith. You say you believe God? Hey, big deal.

Devils do too. The proving of your faith. Now, the proving of the faith is never really for God's benefit.

God knows the truth about you the whole while. Someone told me the other day, Oh, I'm afraid I've disappointed God. I said, No, no, no.

It's impossible to disappoint God. You've disappointed yourself. God knew it all the time.

You didn't. And so you disappointed yourself. You didn't disappoint God.

He knew that was there. He knew that that would be your response. He wasn't at all disappointed.

We disappoint ourselves because we often times think we are further down the road than we really are. I thought I was over that hump. I thought I had conquered that area.

And here comes the situation where I'm tested and Pow, I blow it. No, I'm so disappointed. Why did I say that? Why did I do that? But I shouldn't feel condemned like, Oh, I've let God down or I've disappointed God.

No, God knew it the whole while. But I needed to know it. And so God allowed the situation so I could find it out.

And so temptation, something that is common to all men, counted all joy because temptation is the testing of our faith and this testing of our faith develops patience or works patience. What a needed quality. Patience.

So often our failure is in waiting upon God. And that is true throughout the Bible. So many within the Scriptures got into trouble because they didn't wait upon God.

They failed in the test of faith in areas of their lives. Abraham, though he passed the test magnificently with Isaac, yet failed in the birth of Isaac when God promised to give him a son. He wasn't patient.

Sarah finally came and said, Oh, come on, Abraham, it's not going to work. You take my handmaid and you have a son by her. And when the child is born, I'll take it on my lap and it'll be as my child.

But I'm just not going to be able to bear a child, Abraham. Now let's be reasonable about this. Failure of faith.

They didn't wait upon God until God responded or answered. The testing of our faith develops patience. But like Abraham, whenever I do not wait upon God, I'm always botching things up, creating problems for myself.

So it's important that I'm tested, that I learn to wait upon God. Knowing this, that the trying of your faith works patience, but let patience have her complete work. That you might be fully mature.

And that's the whole purpose of God is to bring you into a maturity. That we quit acting and responding like little children to the disappointments of life. That we quit throwing our little tantrums at God, stomping our

foot and walking away and saying, I'm not going to talk to you anymore.

But that we grow up and become mature, complete, wanting nothing. Now, if any of you lack in wisdom, I don't suppose that's addressed to this crowd tonight. We always know exactly what to do, don't we? But if there happens to be one out there that lacks in wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men liberally or freely.

What a glorious promise this is. How many times in coming to God do I come on the basis of this verse, I don't know what to do. There are so many things in life that I really don't know what is the right way.

I lack wisdom. And it's wonderful to be able to come to God and ask God for wisdom. And realize that He'll give to all men freely and He upbraids not.

He's not going to say, oh, come on, you stupid thing. What's the matter with you? Can't you see this is what... You know, He doesn't upbraid you when you come for wisdom. Doesn't give you a hassle or bad time.

But He gives to us freely. Upbraids not. And it shall be given Him.

Glorious promise. If I need wisdom, I can ask of God. Now, when I ask, it's important that I ask in faith, nothing wavering.

For He that wavers is like the wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed. A stormy sea, the waves seem to be rolling back and forth, tossed by the winds. So is the man who doubts, tossed to and fro, lacking stability.

For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord, for he is a double-minded man, unstable in all of his ways. My commitment to God needs to be a complete commitment. I'm not to hold things out and then pull them back.

I'm not to offer God my life and then take it back. I'm not really to ask for wisdom and then do my own thing. It isn't asking for wisdom and then making up my mind whether or not I want to follow it.

Asking God to reveal His will so I can determine whether or not I want to yield to it. I must make a decision. I must make a commitment.

I must determine that I'm going to just commit my life to the Lord's keeping and then just believe the Lord to keep it. And when things aren't going quite right or I can't quite understand what's happening, I say, oh, I better take over here now. You know, I don't know what the Lord is doing.

And this is so common among us. This wavering bit. Not really for sure.

Offering and then taking back. You become unstable in everything. Now, let the brother who is poor rejoice in that he is exalted, but the rich in that he is made low, because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away.

For the sun no sooner is risen with the burning heat, but it withers the grass and the flower thereof falls and the grace and the fashion of it perishes so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways. So, James has quite a few things to say concerning the rich. And that is those who are possessed by their riches.

He rebukes in chapter 2 those people in the church who pay special respect to the rich people because the person has money sort of giving them special favors. That's a policy rebuked in chapter 2. Here in chapter 1, he speaks out against those rich who would use their riches to oppress others to gain a special position. He says, hey, you're going to fade like a flower in the field.

You're going to pass away. The man of low degree let him rejoice in that he is exalted, but the rich in that he is made low. In the final chapter of the book, he says, Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for the miseries that have come upon you.

For you've laid up your gold and silver for the last days, but now it's worthless. Blessed is the man or happy is the man that endures temptations, that has victory over temptations. What a glorious thing it is when I have been tempted and I'm victorious.

I didn't respond after the flesh. I didn't get all upset and angry and say mean things that now I'm sorry for. Have you ever noticed how miserable you are whenever you fail? Whenever you blow it? Whenever you just give over to the flesh and you say all these nasty things and you just yell and say mean things to people? Afterwards, have you ever noticed how miserable you are? How you just sort of hate yourself and you're embarrassed to go around to people again.

You know you've got to apologize for the things you said. And you just feel horrible. You feel miserable.

I got in the flesh. It's a miserable experience. But oh, how blessed it is when you have victory.

I didn't respond according to the flesh. When I responded after the Spirit. When I did the right thing.

And you feel so good because you know that the Lord gave you the strength to respond in the Spirit. Happy is the man that endures temptation for when he is tempted or when he is tried, faith is tested. We turn out to be true.

And it's important that the faith be tested because we are so prone to deceive ourselves. In the next chapter, actually in this chapter, he's going to talk twice of self-deception. If you're a hearer of the Word only, you're deceiving yourself.

If you think that you're a religious person and yet you don't bridle your own tongue, you're deceiving yourself. Your religion is vain. So, it is important that faith be tested.

It's important that I know where I am. That I know what God knows about me. That I not think more highly of myself than I ought to.

That I am not deceived and living in a false sense of security. But that I know the truth. And God allows the temptations, the testings, in order that I might know the truth about myself.

God said to the children of Israel for 40 years, I suffered you in the wilderness and I tempted you and I proved you to see what was in your heart. Not that God would see what was in their heart. He knew it, but they didn't know it.

So, He tested them so that they could see what was in their heart. For the heart is deceitful and desperately wicked. It is deceitful.

And we are guilty so often of deceiving ourselves. Be not deceived, Paul said. Testing is a great way to learn the truth about me.

It comes out in the time of trial. Again, when everything is going great. Everything is running smooth.

I don't know the truth about me. I don't know how I would respond in real adversity. God allows the adversity so that I can see the truth about myself and how I would respond in adversity.

And when the adversity comes and I respond after the Spirit, oh man, what a joyful delight. I often say, hey, that's not me. That's the Lord working in me because that isn't the way I would naturally respond.

And it's a joy to see God's Spirit working in our lives, transforming us into the image of Jesus Christ. When we've been tried, we shall receive the crown of life. Now, Jesus to the church of Smyrna in His letter to the church of Smyrna in Revelation 2, He spoke about the trials that they were going to go through.

But He said, Be thou faithful unto death and I will give to thee a crown of life. And so this glorious crown of life, that eternal life that we have through Jesus Christ, which the Lord hath promised to those that love Him. Now, let no man when he is tempted say, I've been tempted by God.

For God cannot be tempted with evil and neither tempteth He any man. Now, this is temptation in a little different sense. This is temptation which is a solicitation to evil.

It isn't a testing that you can find out where you are, but this is actually a solicitation to evil. God doesn't solicit any man to evil. Satan solicits man to evil.

Satan solicited Eve to evil. You remember when there were the 5,000 who had followed Jesus to a wilderness place and it was evening and Jesus said to Philip, you better go into town and buy bread for this multitude. And John said, this He said proving Him.

The word prove there is the same Greek word as tempt. This He said tempting Him. Because Jesus knew what He was going to do.

He just wanted Philip to say, oh man, what do you mean Lord? Where can we buy enough bread for all these people? And so Jesus said this, testing Him. Proving Him. The Greek word is the same use for tempting Him.

But it wasn't a solicitation to evil. It is how are you going to respond in the flesh or in the spirit. And so when our temptations come, if it is a solicitation to evil, it isn't of God.

It's from Satan. So when I am tempted, solicited to do something evil, I shouldn't say, oh well God really tempted me today, you know. I saw a man drop his wallet and I could see a hundred dollar bill and boy I was tempted by God to keep that.

No, no, no, no. You weren't tempted by God to keep that. So don't let any man say when he's tempted, I've been tempted by God.

God is not tempted with evil nor does He tempt man with evil. God does put tests before us that we might have the opportunity to respond in the flesh or in the spirit. But God doesn't tempt us or solicit us to evil.

But every man is tempted or solicited to evil when he is drawn away of his own desires or lust and enticed. Now there is deep within every man a great desire for fulfillment. There is deep within every man a thirst which creates sort of a frustration with life, an awareness that there's got to be more to life than this.

Jesus was referring to that in the 7th chapter of John on the great day of the feast when He said if any man thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He's talking about the spiritual thirst that man has, not the physical. There's this desire, deep desire that I have for meaning, for fulfillment in life.

Now Satan comes along and he suggests to me that in order to have fulfillment, I don't have to be patient and walk the path that God has set before me. But temptation usually involves the idea that I can have immediate fulfillment if I will just turn aside from God's path. Now when Satan came to Jesus, that was the whole idea behind the temptation.

You've come to redeem the world. You've come to bring the world back under the sphere and dominion of God. God has sent you for that purpose, to redeem the world.

And God has purposed that you go to the cross and that you suffer and you die in order to redeem the world. I'll tell you what, you can escape the cross. You don't have to take God's path by way of the cross.

That's a painful way. You can have immediate fulfillment. I'll tell you how.

If you'll just bow down and worship me, I'll just give you all the kingdoms of the world. You see, the idea was turn aside from God's path and you can find immediate fulfillment right here. Now that is what Satan is always using.

The concept of immediate fulfillment. And to different people, he holds out different enticements. You don't have to take God's path.

You don't have to follow the Word of God. You see, God is restricting you. God is holding you back.

That's what He said to Eve. God's keeping you from something good. Here you have fulfillment.

It's right here. It's in this fruit, Eve. And God's trying to keep you from something good because He's afraid that you're going to be as wise as He is when you eat of it because this fruit contains the knowledge of good and evil.

God doesn't want you to share this knowledge with Him. He's holding back from you. Now you can have immediate fulfillment, Eve.

Eat and you can have immediate fulfillment. And so He holds to us forbidden fruit. Something that is contrary to the Word of God.

Oh, you don't have to take God's path. You can have immediate fulfillment. It lies in this relationship.

Maybe fornication. Maybe adultery. But oh, He holds it up and here's the immediate fulfillment.

You don't have to follow God's path of the cross denying yourself, denying the flesh. No, no. It lies in turning aside from God's path and indulging the flesh.

You can have fulfillment now. This is what you're really desiring. And He holds out the enticement of immediate fulfillment.

Paul said something quite interesting in his letter to the Ephesians. He said, Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be ye filled with the Spirit. Now those seem like two very unlikely things to relate together.

The alcoholic to the Spirit-filled man. And they seem a very unlikely combination to put together. But if you look at it carefully, it isn't.

The man who turns to alcohol, what is he looking for? An immediate fulfillment. And Satan has deceived him and said, Hey, here it is. Here's a way to get happy.

Here's the way to forget your problems. Here's the way to cope with life. Just enjoy a few drinks till your mind gets fuzzy.

And you don't have to think about these things. You know, it'll just relax you and it'll just release the tensions and you can have immediate fulfillment. You don't have to follow God's path.

But what happens to the man who is filled with the Spirit? He has that fulfillment. He has that sense of well-being. He has that peace.

He is a relaxed person. So, one is searching for it in alcohol. The other has found it in the fullness of the Spirit.

And that man who is joyful in the fullness of the Spirit has exactly what the other man is really looking for and searching for. But he's turned aside from God's path and he's searching in the wrong place. So, every man when he is tempted is drawn away of his own lust and enticed.

There's a great desire inside. Satan is pointing to this path and saying, Hey, hey, don't have to go the way of the cross. You don't have to deny yourself.

You don't have to take up the cross and follow Jesus. Tell you what, you just follow my path and I'll give it to you instantly. You don't have to wait.

I can have it right now. Now, when this desire has conceived, it brings forth sin. The sin isn't in the temptation.

We all of us experience temptation. Even Jesus was tempted of the devil. The sin doesn't lie in the temptation.

The sin is there when I give in to my desire of my flesh and I turn after the path that Satan suggests. That, when the lust is conceived, it gives birth to sin. That's the beginning of sin.

And sin, when it is finished, brings death. Spiritual death. Ultimately, physical death.

Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift. Now, this Greek word here is different from the second Greek word for gift.

This is *dosis* and the other one comes from *dorimi*. And one refers to the giver and the other refers to the gift. The first one here refers to the giver.

The act of giving. Every good gift that is given and every good giver, in a sense, and every perfect gift is from above. The gifts of God to us, His goodness, His grace, His love, comes from above, comes down

from the Father of lights with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

The immutability of God. He said, Behold, I am the Lord God, I change not. What does that mean? It means that He doesn't alter the rules for you.

You're no special exception and you have no special case. It's interesting how Satan so often seeks to lie to people and say, Hey, hey, you know, that doesn't apply to you. You know, this is special.

I mean, this is real love. You know, and so the rules don't apply to you. You've got a special dispensation of indulgence that God has granted.

No way. God does not change the rules for anybody. There's neither shadow nor variableness of turning with Him.

Of His own will, begot He us with the word of truth. Interesting. Interesting.

In John chapter 1, the Gospel, it says who were born, talking about being born again, not by the will of man nor by the will of the flesh, but by the will of God. Have you been born again? How is it that you were born again? Because you chose to be born again? Not really. Because God chose that you should be born again.

You were born again not of the will of man nor of the will of the flesh, but of the will of God. Jesus said, you didn't choose me, I chose you. And ordained that you should be my disciples and that you should bring forth fruit and that your fruit should remain.

That to me is a glorious, glorious truth that God chose me. That thrills me that God would choose me. It thrills me because God chose me on the basis of His foreknowledge.

Whom He did foreknow, He did also predestinate. And on the basis of His foreknowledge, He chose me and I have been begotten again by the will of God. I've been born again by the will of God.

Who've been born not by the will of man nor the will of flesh, but by the will of God. I love it. That God should choose me, I love it.

I love it especially because He chose me on the basis of His foreknowledge, which means He knew the end from the beginning. And He chose me on the basis of what He knew would be the end of my walk and fellowship with Him. You see, God wouldn't be so foolish as to choose losers.

If you had the power of foreknowledge, you wouldn't choose losers. That'd be ridiculous, wouldn't it? Think of what you could do if you could make all of your choices with the advantage of foreknowledge. You knew exactly what would be the result of this choice.

I knew exactly which horse was going to win every race. I knew the results. You know, win, place and show or whatever they do.

Now, if you had that kind of knowledge, if you knew in advance, as God does, and you'd go to Santa Anita, would you pick a bunch of losers? You'd be foolish if you did. Of course you wouldn't. You'd pick winners.

Now, God has that kind of knowledge and He chose you. Hey, what's it mean? It means you're a winner. It means you can't lose.

Who have been born again of God. Peter in his first epistle said, Thanks be unto God who has begotten us again. But how would you say who has borned us again? But that's literally what it is.

Who has borned us again. My being born again is a work of God. God has chosen me and I was born again by a work of God's Spirit.

Not by even my own will. Not the will of man or the will of the flesh, but by the will of God. So here again, of His own will He begot us with His word of truth that we should be kind of first fruits of His creation.

New creatures in Christ. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath. Now if you've done much counseling with Romain, you know that he informs you that God gave you two ears and one mouth.

Now think about that. It means that he wants you to hear twice as much as what you speak. Don't be so quick to speak Be quick to hear, but slow to speak, slow to wrath.

Oh, if I'd only been slower to speak. If I'd just kept my mouth shut, how much easier things could have been. But when we are quick to speak, so often we are wrong.

And we have to then later take back what we said. So, slow to wrath, for the wrath of man does not work the righteousness of God. Wherefore, set aside all the filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, whatever that is.

Superfluid. Another good word would be overflowing. Fluid.

Flows. Super is over. So the overflowing of wickedness or the abounding of wickedness.

So set apart all filthiness, overflowing of wickedness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word which is able to save your soul. Set aside our pride. Set aside our wicked ways.

And let's just hear the word of God because it is by the word of God that we are born again. It is the seed planted that brings the new birth. The word of God, sown in our hearts, brings new life, new birth.

And so receive with meekness the engrafted word which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourself. For if any man is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass.

For he beholds himself and then he goes away and immediately he forgets what manner of man he was. It's so easy to get sort of an exalted opinion of ourselves. Nothing like little granddaughters to keep you honest, you know.

I mean, you look in the mirror and you say, you know, look at that flaw and oh my, you know. Then you go away and you forget until my little granddaughter says, Grandpa, your teeth are yellow. I'm prone to forget that.

Grandpa, you got crinkles on your face. And so the man who is a hearer of the word, you begin to get a false concept of yourself. Well, after all, I go to Bible studies and I'm really studying the Word of God.

I really know the Scriptures. I've memorized the book of John Really know the Scriptures. Yeah, but are you doing them? You see, if you're just a hearer and not a doer of the Word, then you are deceiving

yourself.

You think that you're in better shape than you really are. You're not acknowledging the truth about yourself. And so we need to be the doers of the Word.

It's not those that have the law that are justified, but those that do the law, Paul said. And that was the mistake that the Jewish people were making. They thought, well, we have the law of Moses.

Paul said, no, no, that isn't enough. You've got to keep the law of Moses. James said, well, you say you have the Word of God.

That isn't enough. You've got to be doing the Word of God. There's got to be the practical application.

There's got to be obedience to the commands. Be doers of the Word and not hearers only because you'll deceive yourself. But whoso looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the Word, this man shall be blessed in his deed, in the work, in the deeds that he does.

Now if any man among you seems to be religious and doesn't bridle his tongue, he is deceiving his own heart, and this man's religion is vain. It's empty. But pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this.

Visit the orphans and the widows in their affliction and keep yourself unspotted from the world. That's what it's really all about. Doing good for those that are in need.

Reaching out to help those. That's what it is to be a doer of the Word. It's translated into positive actions of reaching out to help those in need and to just keep yourself unspotted from the world.

Now my brothers, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. This is so difficult. It is so easy for us to fall in the trap of respecting persons.

It's just, I don't know, a part of our whole social structure I guess is that of respecting certain persons above others. We've got to be careful that we don't fall into that trap. So often a person will introduce himself, well, I am a doctor.

So, oh, doctor, who am I? You know, we respect the persons. We shouldn't be respecter of persons. God isn't.

God is no respecter of persons, the Bible says. We shouldn't be. If there comes into your assembly a man with a gold ring, fancy clothes, there comes also a man in with rags that smell, and you have respect to him a man that is wearing the fancy clothing, and you say to him, oh, sit here in this good place.

And you say to the poor man, stand over there in the corner or sit under my footstool. Are you not then partial in yourselves and you become the judges of evil thoughts? Hearken, my beloved brethren, because hasn't God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, to be heirs of the kingdom which He has promised to them that love Him? But you've despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you? Draw you before the courts? Don't they blaspheme that worthy name by which you are called? They've been called Christians.

So, be careful on this business of respecting a person just because he is rich or sort of snubbing a person because he is poor. Now, let's be honest. We are far more apt to stop along the road and help a person

with a flat tire who's driving a Mercedes than we are someone driving a Volkswagen Bug.

I mean, you see someone out there, you know, and in distress, oh my, you know, I'll be glad to help them because who knows, maybe they'll, you know, offer me five bucks, you know, for giving them a hand. But, you've been there. That's respect of persons.

Something we shouldn't be guilty of. Interesting. God has chosen the poor of this world as far as worldly goods, but rich in faith.

God measures riches on a far different standard than do we. We're on the gold standard. Used to be.

We're on no standard now. Used to be gold notes. In effect, they said the government owes you \$20 worth of gold.

Then we went to silver notes. The government owes you \$20 worth of silver. Now they're federal notes.

They're not backed by anything, so it means the government owes you nothing. It's true, it's not backed by anything. Just paper.

The gold is not the standard of heaven. Asphalt up there. They paved the streets with this stuff.

God looks at the heart of a man and he sees the faith and the trust that is there in him. And God says, oh, that's a rich man. He loves me.

He trusts me. God looks at some of the named people in the world who live in the 400 club and God says, oh, what poor wretches. They have nothing.

Now we should look at people as God. We shouldn't have respect for wealthy people, but we should be just as concerned to help the poor. In fact, more concerned to help the poor.

The rich don't really need help so much. It's the poor that need our help, our attention. God help us.

I'm guilty here. God help me. Now if you fulfill the royal law, I love this, the royal law.

What is the royal law? Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. That's the royal law. I like the title for it.

If you fulfill that royal law, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. You do well. Now really, that's where that young ruler sort of failed, isn't it? Who came to Jesus, fell at his feet and said, good master, what must I do to inherit eternal life? Jesus said, keep the commandments.

Which ones? Oh. Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not steal.

Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not bear false witness. Oh Lord, I kept all these from the time I was a kid.

But what do I lack yet? Well, if you will be perfect, keep the royal law. Go sell everything you have and distribute it to the poor. You'll have great riches in heaven.

Keep the royal law. Love your neighbor as yourself. Hard to do, isn't it? Awfully hard to do.

Loving my neighbor as I love myself. But if you keep that, you do well. But if you have respect of persons, you're actually committing sin.

And you're convicted of the law as a transgressor. Convinced of the law, it is pointing its finger of accusation against you. For whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet violate in one point, you're guilty.

Guilty of all. For the law says don't commit adultery. But it also says do not kill.

Now, if you don't commit adultery but yet you kill somebody, you're guilty of violating the law. You're a violator. It doesn't matter which one of the commandments you violated.

Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Oh, I've never done that.

Love thy neighbor as thyself. Oops. But you violate one point, you're guilty of all.

You're guilty of breaking the law. And it really doesn't matter which of the commandments you've broken, you're guilty of having broken the law. If you keep the entire law yet you break one of the commandments, then you're just as guilty as if you've broken all of them.

You are guilty of being a lawbreaker. So speak and so do as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty. For he shall have judgment without mercy that has showed no mercy.

Think about that for a moment. Jesus said, Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy. We are also told in whatever measure you meted out, it's going to be measured to you in judgment.

You know. Judge not, lest you be judged. For in whatever meet you measure, that's the standard by which you're going to be judged.

Now I don't like that. I want one standard for me and another standard for you. But if I stand in judgment against you, and if I begin to point a guilty finger at you and say, Boy, you're really terrible.

Look what you did and all. What you did you may not have known was wrong, but I do because I'm judging you for it. And that means that's the standard by which I'm going to be judged.

Interesting. All you have to do is just change the picture a little bit and put in different faces and oh, it's horrible. Terrible.

How could they do such a thing? Wait a minute. That's me. I've done that.

David had all these beautiful wives. Walking on his roof one day, he saw a gal next door taking a bath, lusted, desired her. Sent his servants over with a message.

This king would like to see you. Committed adultery with her. A few weeks later he gets a note.

Dear David, I'm pregnant. Bathsheba. So David sends a message to his general to send her husband home on furlough.

Her husband comes home. David says, Well, how's everything going? How's the battle? All fine. Well, you know, go home and spend the night with your wife.

Talk to you in the morning. He didn't go home. He slept on David's porch.

In the morning, the servants said, Hey, he didn't go home last night. He slept right here on the porch. And David called him in and said, Hey, what's the matter with you, man? You've got a beautiful wife there.

You ought to go home and spend the night with her. Enjoy your wife. What's your problem? And the guy says, Well, he said, You know, I was thinking of all my buddies.

They're out there in the foxholes. And it wouldn't be fair for me to go in and enjoy an evening with my wife while those guys are out there in the trenches. That wouldn't be very honorable.

So David got him all soused. Told the servants, Keep his wine cup full. So the guy was drunk.

Figured he'd stagger home and spend the night with his wife. But instead he had staggered to David's porch and went to sleep again. In the morning, the servants said, He spent the night here.

The Bible says, He that seeks to cover his sin shall not prosper. David tried to cover his sin in a very dastardly way. He sent secret orders with this man back to Joab the general.

It said, Put him in the front of the battle. When things get tough, withdraw. The support from him.

And so Joab did as David commanded and he was killed in battle. Got the report. Killed in battle.

David took Bathsheba as his wife. Figured he'd covered his tracks. The child was born.

David looked like he was a very magnanimous person. Here her husband was killed in battle and now David takes her as one of his wives to raise, you know, the child. Isn't that wonderful? No, it isn't.

Nathan, the prophet, came to David. David thought nobody knew. He'd covered it pretty well.

Nathan came to him and said, David, man in your kingdom. Very wealthy man. Boy, he had, you know, more than he could ever spend.

Tremendous herds. Sheep. He lived next door to an extremely poor man who had as his sole possession one little ewe lamb that he loved greatly.

In fact, it was sort of a pet. He slept with it at night. Slept in the house and it ate at the guy's table.

And the rich man had company and he ordered his servants to go next door and by force to take the ewe lamb from this man and kill it in order that he might give it to his company. He might feed his company. David got angry and he said to Nathan, That man will be surely put to death.

Nathan said, David, you're the man. You know, you've had all these wives. Here's your neighbor.

You take away. You're the man, David. You see, if we show no mercy, we will be shown no mercy.

Whatever measure we meted out, it's going to be measured to us again. That's why it's so dangerous to put yourself in the position of a judge. Judging other people's actions.

I can't understand why they would do something like that. That's horrible for them to do that. Watch out now.

You're setting a standard by which you're going to be judged. Blessed are the merciful, they shall obtain mercy. He who doesn't show mercy, he who judges without mercy, will be shown no mercy.

But true mercy rejoices against judgment. Now what does it profit, my brethren? Though a man says he has faith and doesn't have works, can faith save him? Now at this point, many people see James and Paul

in conflict in teaching. I don't.

Paul teaches that salvation is through faith, faith alone. By grace are you saved through faith? Not of yourselves. It is a gift of God.

Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship. Then what does James say? Can faith save him? The answer is yes, faith can save him.

A true faith. But make sure you have a true faith. For if you have a true faith, it will be manifested by the works.

In other words, to just say you have faith doesn't cut it. Saying it isn't enough. I've had people come to me and say, Oh, I have all the faith in the world.

Baloney! Nobody has all the faith in the world. And saying it doesn't make it so. If you believe certain things to be so, then your life is going to be lived accordingly.

And so your life testifies of your faith or your beliefs. And to say that you believe in God and that God is supreme and God is first in your life, then it will follow that there will be certain evidence that will verify that fact that you have declared to be so. And by the works that you do, your faith will be proved or proclaimed.

And to say that you have faith and not have any works that correspond is totally wrong. You've deceived yourself. You aren't really walking in faith.

If you are truly walking in faith, your works are going to be manifesting that truth. So what does it profit? If a man says he has faith and he doesn't have works, can that kind of faith save him? No, it can't. If a brother or sister is naked or is destitute of daily food and you say to them, Oh, depart in peace, be warm and filled.

But yet you don't give them any clothes or any food. What good are your words? They can't make him warm. They can't fill his stomach.

Even so, faith if it has not works is dead if you try to stand alone. Yes, a man may say, you have faith and I have works. But you show me your faith without your works.

I will show you my faith by my works. So it isn't just the declaration. It's declaration that has something behind it.

The proof behind it is the works that I do. Now the works don't save me. They only prove that I have saving faith.

And if I don't have works that are corresponding to what I am declaring, then I do not have saving faith. Just the declaration, the verbal affirmation isn't enough and it won't do it. Now, a lot of people have made mistakes going forward and saying the sinner's prayer and then going away and living the same kind of life, doing the same kind of things.

They say, Oh yeah, I was saved. I went forward and I said the sinner's prayer. No, no.

The sinner's prayer isn't going to save you. It is a living faith in Jesus Christ that brings about actual changes in your life. And the proof is in the works.

The proof of your faith. Your works have to be in accordance, in harmony with what you are declaring to be true. You believe that there is one God.

Ah, you do well. The devils believe the same thing and they tremble. Oh, I believe in God.

It's a big deal. Who doesn't? Except some fool. The Bible says a fool is the one that says there is no God.

So, you say you believe in God. It only proves one thing. You're not a fool.

But it doesn't save you. The devils believe in God. They probably believe more firmly in Him than you do.

They said to Jesus, We know who You are. You're the Holy One of God. So you say, Oh, I believe Jesus is the Holy One of God.

So what? Have you submitted your life to His Lordship? Are you doing His works? Are you obeying His commands? You see, not all who say Lord, Lord are going to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. So you say, Oh, Lord. Oh, the Lord.

Oh, the Lord. Yeah, yeah. But saying it is not going to do it.

Jesus said, Not all who say Lord, Lord are going to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but he who does the will of the Father. James is telling you the very same thing. It isn't saying I have faith.

It is demonstrating the faith because of the works of my life are in harmony with what I am declaring that I believe. If I believe that there was a bomb planted in this room set to detonate in two minutes, and I'd stand up here and calmly proclaim to you, You know, huge bomb in this room going to detonate in two minutes and blow this whole place to smithereens. Terrible that people would do that, isn't it? Can't imagine the mind of a person that would plant such a bomb.

Why would they want to destroy us? You say, Oh, you don't really believe there is a bomb here? Why? Because my works don't correspond with what I am declaring that I believe. But if I go running out of the door and say, Get out of there, you know. Bomb is going to blow up in two minutes, you know.

Then you are more apt to believe that at least I believe what I am telling you. Because now my actions are corresponding with what I am declaring that I believe to be so. Now, the same is true, you say, Well, I believe in God and I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Well, do your actions correspond? Do your actions really show that Jesus is the Lord of your life? Is that demonstrated by the works that you do? That's what James is saying. Don't just say it. Don't rest in just words.

Beautiful words. But let's see the actions that demonstrate that you truly believe what you are saying. Will you know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? It isn't really alive.

It isn't a living faith. It isn't a saving faith. Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? You see, his works corresponded with his faith.

He believed God. He believed that through Isaac God was going to raise up a nation because God had promised that. Through Isaac shall thy seed be called.

Now, his very offering up of Isaac was proof of his strong belief in the Word of God. Believing that God would, if necessary, raise Isaac from the dead to keep His promise. And so his faith was in keeping or his works were in keeping with his faith.

Seest thou how faith wrought with his works? They were working together. His faith produced the works as faith will also produce the corresponding works in our life. And by works was faith made perfect.

Not a question mark. In the Greek, there is no question mark there. It's just a declaration.

By works, his faith was made complete. His faith was proved. And the Scripture was fulfilled which said Abraham believed God and it was accounted unto him for righteousness and he was called the friend of God.

You see then how that by works a man is justified and not by faith only. The works being the proof of the faith. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works when she received the messengers and had sent them out another way.

For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also. When your spirit leaves your body, your body is dead. The body without the spirit, dead.

So faith, if it doesn't have corresponding works, is not a true faith. It's dead. It does nothing for you.

It cannot save you. Dead faith can save no one. It's a living faith and a living Lord.

And that living faith can be demonstrated by the actions of my life that are in harmony and corresponding with what I declare to be true and what I declare I believe to be true. There has to be the corresponding works for faith to be alive. Therefore, let us examine ourselves to see if we are in the faith, the true faith that saves.

Not just the verbalizing of the Apostle's Creed. I believe that the actions of my life being in harmony with it. Father, help us that we might indeed be doers of the Word and not hearers only.

That we might not just affirm a belief, but may we demonstrate that belief by the attitudes and actions of our lives. Lord, help us not to be deceived. In Jesus' name, Amen.

May the Lord bless you and guide you as you go this week. As you face the many temptations, may the Lord give you strength and may you walk and live after the Spirit and may you respond after the Spirit. In the temptation, may you not yield to the flesh and react after the flesh.

May your life be pleasing unto God as our actions come into harmony with our declarations of what we believe. May we show it in the works that we do. In Jesus' name.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/6/SID6628.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/chuck-smith/through-the-bible-james-1-2/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net