



# GOOD NEWS GUIDE

THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE

June, 2015

## Lessons from James Chapter One (Part 1)

One of the great things about spiritual principles is that they are so practical. Chapter 1 of the book of James gives very clear and pointed instructions about the way we ought to live. If you are an inmate, some of these principles apply especially to your present situation. All of them tell us how to behave and prosper, no matter where we are today or will be tomorrow.



Let's look at those lessons that apply especially while you're incarcerated. Next month we'll look at the rest of the chapter.

**Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. ... Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him. (James 1:2-4,12)**

Is James saying that you ought to be glad you got sent to jail? Well, maybe. For some of you, going to jail is the best thing that ever happened to you, because it made it possible for you to meet Jesus and give your heart to Him. But in addition to that, God's word is saying here that you need to have a positive attitude about your incarceration. You should be making the best of it—using the time well, for example, to build the habit of reading the Bible and praying, so that

God can build your faith. You will never have a better opportunity. You ought to be correcting faults as the Holy Spirit leads you. If you want to, this is where you can start to build a new life that is better than the one you had before. Believe it. Make it your constant goal. Work at it, and never give up. If you do what God says, you will never be sorry.

**My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires. Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. (James 1:19-21)**



This reinforces what I just said about starting now to build a new and better life. You need to change some things—to learn to control a hot temper, for example. To clean up your speech by getting rid of profanity, vulgarity, gossip, put-downs, and negative confessions. To clean up your mind by refusing to have anything to do with pornography, dirty jokes, garbage like that.

But you won't change your habits just by having good intentions. You need to want to, and then you must ask Jesus to change you from the inside out. **“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me,”** King David said in Psalm 51. As you get into the Word more and

more, your behavior will change. Psalm 119:9-12 puts it this way:

**“How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word. I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. Praise be to you, O LORD; teach me your decrees.”**



God's word in your heart will make miraculous changes for the better in your life.

**If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does. (James 1:5-8)**

Ah, yes, wisdom! Do you want to be wise? You've tried foolishness, and it didn't work too well. If you had been wiser, you probably would not be spending your time in a cell. We all need all the wisdom we can get. Well, God's word says, ask Him for wisdom! Don't worry about deserving it. Don't worry about anything you might have done in the past—if you've confessed your sins and received salvation, God has forgotten all about those past sins.

Make up your mind that God means what He says, that He'll do what He promises. Forget any doubts. If you ask Him for wisdom, and trust Him, you will get wisdom!

What does applied wisdom look like when you're in jail? I knew a man who had a chip

on his shoulder. Any other inmate, or any guard, for that matter, who rubbed him the wrong way was in for a fight. Eventually he "wised up" and realized he was only making his own life miserable by getting in trouble all the time. It's a shame that it cost him a few extra years in prison, most of it in Maryland's Supermax.

The book of Proverbs says many times, "Get wisdom!" Wasn't it good of God, through James, to tell us how.

So, to summarize these lessons from James:

- Be positive and hang in there—and God will bless you.
- Watch your mouth and your actions—the Holy Spirit wants to clean you up and keep you on the right track. Co-operate!
- Godly wisdom is the very best kind of "smarts" — be sure and get some.

***We have met  
the enemy, and  
he is us!***

**—Pogo**

There are a lot of good ideas and instructions from God in this first chapter of James. Next time we'll look at the rest of it. Until then, walk with Jesus, and be a blessing!

Peace in Him—

***Brother Roland***

## What Casts Out Fear?

A train was overtaken by a great storm. All the passengers were greatly afraid as they saw the lightnings and heard the thunders. On one seat, however, was a little fellow who seemed to be totally undisturbed as he was playing with his toys. One of the passengers turned to him and said, "Little boy, I see that you are all alone in this train. Aren't you afraid to travel alone and in such a storm?" The child then lifted up his head and answered: "No sir, I am not at all afraid, because my father is the conductor of this train."

The storms of this world may indeed disturb us, but that disturbance is dissipated when we realize that it is all in God's hands. Of course, it makes a difference if we have made God our Father through receiving Jesus Christ as our personal Savior (John. 1:12).

## Burdened

A traveler was walking down a country road, and his back was bent beneath a heavy load. An old country doctor came along, riding in a buggy, and offered him a ride. Gladly the fellow accepted.

As they traveled along, the old doctor could not help noticing that his passenger sat holding his heavy parcel on his shoulders. "Wouldn't you like to lay your burden down?" he asked. "Oh, no!" exclaimed the man. "I wouldn't think of asking you to carry both me and my burden."

Many Christians are just like that traveler. They commit themselves into the hands of the Lord, yet continue to carry a heavy load of cares. God is to us as the doctor's buggy. It is our part to rest our burdens upon Him and enjoy the journey. It is His part to uphold and carry us safely down the road of life. He has promised, "Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you." (Isaiah 46:4). Therefore, "Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you." (1 Peter 5:7).

If you are released and want to keep receiving the "Good News Guide," send me your name and your new address. If someone shared this letter with you and you want to be added to our mailing list, send me your name and address. If you have questions about the Bible or the Christian life, and you think the answers might be helpful or interesting to others, send me your questions. I will try to answer them in this portion of the "Good News Guide."

My address is: **Brother Roland**  
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I apologize —last month I was supposed to give you the answers to these questions, from the previous month, but I forgot. Here they are:

1. A man is condemned to death. He has to choose between three rooms. The first is full of raging fires, the second is full of assassins with loaded guns, and the third is full of lions that haven't eaten in three years. Which room is safest for him? (*The third room — after three years without eating, the lions are all dead of starvation.*)
2. A woman shoots her husband. Then she holds him under water for more than five minutes. Finally, she hangs him. But five minutes later they go out and enjoy a wonderful dinner together. How can this be? (*She is a professional photographer.*)
3. What is black when you buy it, red when you use it, and gray when you throw it away? (*Charcoal.*)
4. Can you name three consecutive days without using Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, or Sunday? (*Yesterday, today, and tomorrow.*)
5. This is an unusual paragraph. I'm curious how quickly you can find out what is so unusual about it. It looks so plain you would think nothing was wrong with it. In fact, nothing is wrong with it! It is unusual, though. Study it and think about it, but you still may not find anything odd. But if you work at it a bit, you might find out. Try to do so without any coaching! (*Even though 'e' is the most commonly used letter in English, the paragraph does not have a single word containing the letter 'e'.*)

## Lessons from James 1 (Part 1)

God's word is powerful — those who will believe it and learn from it will be blessed by doing so. Here we have some of the truths of the book of James, organized into a word search puzzle. Don't just solve the puzzle — appreciate and absorb God's truth as you do so.

### Puzzle:

L I B L R I I E L A C K I N G N O T H I N G X Q A M D L J M D T  
E F G I A N T V F X E W S C D N G I H A A S J Q K T K N G U B E  
U N M V L N M C T I V R P A H S F T H Y J J R B U O N C P U L R  
F E D E Q A C P R R L L U A U Y S L O W T O S P E A K Y O B E P  
S L I E K H Q X R G A S I T O O B T C E S K A R Y N R D A G F V  
N A I H S X J E N N I S U U A E Y J J A Q L N E B G T T N A I T  
E R J T Q I T Q T B L Q L O C M I N E K O B U S N O S A D F L H  
T G J N Q B M E Y I L A C A E E U L E W Y R K A N N S R O U F W  
S U Z U L A D O K Q C E U H S T D O D H Z I T D U N O W A S O L  
I D F H D I G E R K V S S E T G H J Y N W E N D A W I F F P N N  
L D S S N T A O W P E N R S E L D G T S G A N M S M G J L Z W F  
O R E Y O W G I H T S E E V E E I V I O P A X D J N Q J E J O F  
T R O D A V S K H T V A E K S D B F T R D L O F I G L Z E V R I  
K U V V N D S E L E I I H S A U T W E E E G E D N T R B F N C H  
C T E J O I D H S W L A O D I M O H D H E H N H M H O T R N M E  
I J D M O O M R A E M T F L O L T I E V T I T K E E A W O K B G  
U H A Y U Q E E B R D A D R S G C O I M F E J B P M K V M G R I  
Q O Z B I P P T L N T S K J U E S E N T A A S F Y A P K T G H V  
E V T C O V S T A B P K P E D O C T U S W N H O F N M G E O M E  
B E C H Q U A N Y A U G L N S E Y O A Y E U I Y L W M T M A G S  
R A W X M K W T T P Y O U K R C H G T N Z O V Y P H W A P V J G  
Q Q B U E O H I Z Y X D D D H T O V N V D W D V B O X D T W N E  
Q S O N L E E T G R T F G S I B E M A I N S Q X C D C R A J F N  
K Y O B W N E Z C P R O R W I M D G P M T X T M P O Y R T O V E  
G T I I C K Y O J T I R E D I S N O C L Y S D H K U P F I B D R  
E A N E Q C M Y X J J I B I F I T E F B E S E L E B C I O T R O  
G D L B T H J V N K S T N A W D O G T A H T L T Q T T C N Q E U  
H E W I L L R E C E I V E G Q H Y I R J J J E Q H S E F S M X S  
N D O D K T I N W R S F Y Z T B U W R O P E S S L X L S J K W L  
I F Y O U F A C E T R I A L S N T M X M E G L O C F Q B T N N Y

### Words:

IF YOU FACE TRIALS  
CONSIDER IT JOY  
TESTING YOUR FAITH  
BUILDS PATIENCE  
HELPS YOU MATURE  
MAKES COMPLETE  
LACKING NOTHING  
BLESSED THE MAN  
WHO PERSEVERES  
STANDS THE TEST  
HE WILL RECEIVE  
CROWN OF LIFE  
GOD HAS PROMISED

TAKE NOTE  
BE QUICK TO LISTEN  
SLOW TO SPEAK  
SLOW TO GET ANGRY  
MAN'S ANGER  
DOES NOT MAKE  
THE RIGHTEOUS LIFE  
THAT GOD WANTS  
LOSE THE FILTH  
SHUN THE EVIL  
FLEE FROM TEMPTATION  
RECEIVE GOD'S WORD  
PLANTED IN YOU

IF YOU LACK WISDOM  
ASK GOD FOR IT  
HE GIVES GENEROUSLY  
WITHOUT FINDING FAULT  
WHEN YOU ASK  
YOU MUST BELIEVE  
AND NOT DOUBT  
BECAUSE THE DOUBTER  
IS LIKE A WAVE  
BLOWN AND TOSSED  
BY THE WIND  
THE MAN WHO DOUBTS  
IS DOUBLE MINDED  
A HYPOCRITE  
UNDECIDED AND UNSTABLE