



GOOD NEWS GUIDE

THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE

July, 2015

Lessons from James Chapter One (Part 2)

Last month we looked at several instructive passages from the first chapter of the book of James, ideas and instructions from God's word that I thought might apply to your inmate situation. This month we'll look at the rest of the chapter, and consider what he says that might apply after you get back outside.



The brother in humble circumstances ought to take pride in his high position. But the one who is rich should take pride in his low position, because he

will pass away like a wild flower. For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant; its blossom falls and its beauty is destroyed. In the same way, the rich man will fade away even while he goes about his business. (James 1:9-11)

Which would you rather be, rich or poor? James is telling us that it shouldn't matter to us; that we should be content to be poor or rich, whichever God wants us to be. Can you see yourself as a poor man saying, "I'm so glad I'm rich"? Can you picture yourself as a rich man saying, "I'm glad I'm so poor"? But poverty and wealth are both temporary, earthly conditions. Neither one matters in God's eternal scheme of things. What matters most is your relationship to Him.

Don't be deceived, my dear brothers. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly

lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created. (James 1:16-18)



As Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, God knows what we need and He will provide it. We are not to worry about food or clothing or the future. Watch out, though. He will almost certainly want you to earn your living, by getting and keeping a job. If you will do what you should do to get a job, then show up on time every day and do the best you can for that employer, God will do His part.

Here James goes on to say that God's gifts include not only what we need to live on earth, but eternal life as well. God will supply everything we need, now and forever.

When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. (James 1:13-15)

Temptation is something you don't want to mess around with. If there are places where you are tempted to fall back into bad habits or sinful actions, you ought to stay far, far away from those places. You might be strong enough to resist the temptation a few times, but in the end you will fail because

you have willingly put yourself in a position to be tempted. Don't do it. I repeat, DO NOT DO IT! In 1 Timothy 6:11 Paul advises young Timothy to flee from temptation and to pursue righteousness. That is excellent advice. Take it.



Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does. (James 1:22-25)

It's not enough to know the right things to do. You need to do them if you want to get the blessing that goes along with them. Jesus said, about things He was trying to teach the disciples, *"Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them."* The blessing comes with the doing.

If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless. Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world. (James 1:26-27)

Three final points James makes at the end of the chapter: Watch what you say, help those in need, and don't let the cares or temptations of the world lead you astray. Let me close with a similar thought from Hebrews 12:1-3:

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

Let me summarize what has been said in these passages:

1. Be content with what you have, and don't worry about finances—trust God to provide all that you need.
2. However, you are responsible for earning your own living—be a hard worker.
3. Temptation is not from God, it's from Satan or your own desires (flesh). Run from it. If you don't you will fall into sin. Concentrate on pleasing God, and avoid temptation.
4. God's Word doesn't do you any good until you apply it. You have to do what the Word says to do to get the benefits.
5. Finally, watch what you say, help others, and keep on the straight and narrow.

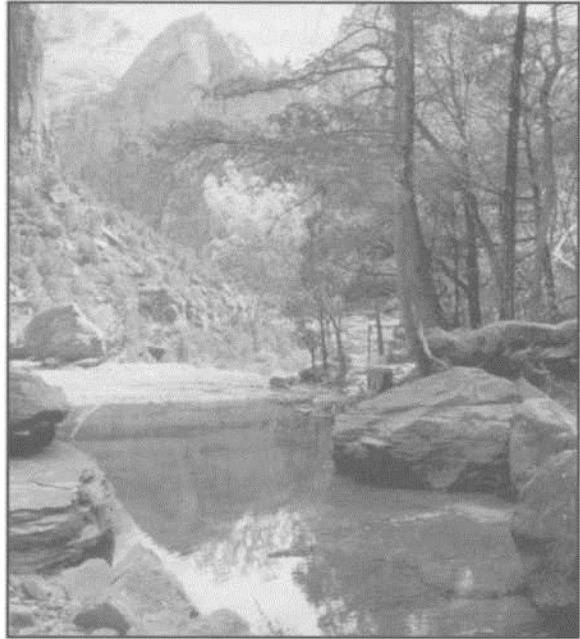
Spend some time studying these passages from James. They will help you, no matter what circumstances you are in.

Peace in Him—

Brother Roland

Celebrating Life!

The NIV version of the Bible translates the words of Jesus in John 10:10 "...I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." The Christian doesn't have a life that is common, ordinary, or just living. Jesus came to give us life that is above the common; *extraordinary* life. There is a vast difference between life and abundant life.



Two traveling men met for breakfast in a hotel dining room. A bubbly and gracious waitress that went out of her way to make them feel at home greeted them. She served them a delicious breakfast. When they finished she walked to the door with them and said, "Have a wonderful day, and, gentlemen, live alive all day." As they walked to their separate cars, they talked about that unusual comment: "Live alive all day." They were so intrigued that before starting their day's work they agreed to meet at the same hotel for breakfast the next morning.

Arriving at the hotel dining room the second time, the two men were greeted by the same friendly and outgoing waitress. As they were being seated, one of them said, "Yesterday, when we left, you told us to "live alive all day." That's a marvelous philosophy of life you have." She replied, "That isn't a philosophy of life; it is Christ. He's my answer. He brought me alive out of all kinds of sickness, darkness, and trouble. When I found Him I found life."

Because of Christ's resurrection it means He is alive today to give people life. He has given us reason to CELEBRATE!

Prayer

Our Father, we thank You for the abundant life that Jesus came to forgive. Thank You for the cleansing, the forgiveness that You offer to us through the blood of Christ. Help us to celebrate that life in such a way that those we meet each day will recognize by our words and our actions that we enjoy a great relationship with You. In Christ's name, Amen

Additional Reading: John 6:22-35

Taken from "Prayers and Meditations," © 2003 by Christian Appalachian Project

Here's the deal: We're glad to send the "Good News Guide" to any inmate or former inmate (anyone in the USA who wants it, for that matter) — but we need to know the address. For current Maryland inmates we need both the DOC number and the SID number. Tell others about the "Good News Guide." Finally, send us your Bible questions — it's sometimes very worthwhile to share the answers or at least provide food for thought that might be a blessing to another person. Write to:

Brother Roland
P O Box 14
Fayetteville, PA 17222

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I hope and pray that you will not just read this newsletter and then put it aside and forget what you read. I pray that you will go to the book of James in your Bible and read what is written there. Study it until you know it without having to go back and read it again. This is good advice for us all. We are so blessed to have been given God's Word — let's treasure it and follow it! Enjoy the puzzle!

Puzzle:

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

Words:

IF YOU ARE POOR
EXALT YOURSELF
IF YOU ARE RICH
HUMBLE YOURSELF
RICHES DO NOT LAST

EVERY GOOD GIFT
IS FROM ABOVE
COMING DOWN
FROM THE FATHER
OF HEAVENLY LIGHTS
HE DOES NOT CHANGE

HE GAVE US BIRTH
BY THE WORD OF TRUTH
WE ARE FIRSTFRUITS
OF ALL HE CREATED

WHEN YOU ARE TEMPTED
DO NOT BLAME GOD
HE CANNOT BE TEMPTED
HE WON'T TEMPT YOU
OUR EVIL DESIRES
CAUSE US TO SIN
CONTINUING IN SIN
LEADS TO DEATH

DON'T JUST LISTEN
TO GOD'S WORD
DO WHAT IT SAYS
YOU WILL BE BLESSED

GUARD YOUR TONGUE
LOOK AFTER THE NEEDY
ORPHANS AND WIDOWS
DON'T LET WORLDLY SINS
MESS YOU UP
THEN YOU WILL BE
PLEASING TO GOD