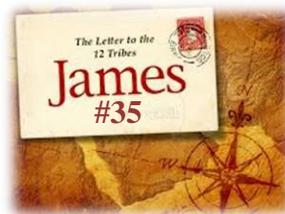




Chico Alliance Church  
November 25, 2018  
Pastor David Welch



## “Mirror, Mirror In My Hand”

### *James Review*

Mirror, mirror in my hand who are the faithful in the land. For the past 34 weeks, I have asserted that James’ letter serves as a mirror for our faith. James exposes those areas in our life where we are not living by genuine trust. James exposes times when the beliefs in our head don’t translate into the behavior of our life. He issued no less than 45 instructions concerning how a life lived by trust in the person and work of Jesus should function in a broken and fallen world. Accompanying those instructions were divine insights enabling the perception adjustments necessary to incorporating those instructions in our daily life. Of course, all the word of God serves as a mirror.

Paul declared God’s intent regarding His word.

*All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16-17*

God intended His word to transform not just inform. Sin is deceitful and tries to keep us oblivious of our own destructive ways. Without exposure to a standard, we will fall short of the standard. Counterfeits always look good until compared to the genuine article. My purpose today is to take one more time in front of the standard of true Biblical living as expressed in this most illuminating letter of James to those claiming to live by genuine trust in Jesus.

### **I. Joyfully endure tribulation anticipating the joy of spiritual maturity and stability.**

James specified a clear instruction.

*Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials... James 1:2*

This response to the numerous and varied difficulties that regularly intrude into our life is not the initial or even, many times, a consideration at all. Our natural response is to consider trials, unfair, inconvenient, infuriating, frightening, demoralizing, insufferable but certainly not JOY. The instruction is to consider these storms ALL joy. Calculate the benefits of this difficulty to be a good thing and therefore joy worthy.

Fortunately, James didn’t leave us without reason to consider life’s trials all joy. The key to consider them joy is to consider the benefits.

*knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. James 1:3*

“Do this knowing that.” This has to do with divine perception. This has to do with looking at things with the eyes of faith not sight. On the outside, trials are something to be avoided if not hated. From God’s perspective, trials bring about a positive result. First, endurance. Endurance is the act of remaining under a trial with faith and anticipation of what God may do through this trial.

Accomplishing the first step leads to the second step.

*And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. 1:4*

The ultimate benefit of enduring trials is spiritual maturity and stability. The achievement of maturity and stability is a cause for joy so the encounter with the means of maturity is also a cause for joy. If we highly value spiritual maturity and stability, we will value the trials that produce it as well.

Failure to continually endure trials does not produce maturity. In fact, it produces immaturity. James addresses the symptoms of such immaturity later i.e. selfish ambition, grumbling, quarrels. Amid that tribulation seek God's wisdom. What does God say about this situation? If we ask with faith God promises to answer willingly and liberally. How does God answer that prayer for wisdom? He draws us to His word. He sends someone to enlighten us. He directs us to a source of enlightenment and truth. We must be open to His answer. We must be willing to hear and do what He tells us.

## **II. Humbly accept your station in life.**

If you have plenty, realize that true riches are not material. If you suffer loss, realize that spiritual riches have greater value. God blesses those who endure life's tribulation.

*Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. James 1:12*

## **III. Take personal responsibility for sin and don't blame God.**

*Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.*

*Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.*

*Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. James 1:13-18*

Temptation or solicitation to do evil does not come from God. We fall to temptation to do wrong because we have not addressed fleshly drives and desires. If we allow the left-over sinful passions embedded in our flesh to find expression, we will experience a deadening of the soul and destruction to our relationships.

*Each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. James 1:14-15*

How do you deal with left-over fleshly drives? We keep them under control.

## **Walk in the spirit.**

### **Or live by the direction and power provided by the Holy Spirit.**

*But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. Galatians 5:16*

## **Put to death the deeds of the flesh.**

*Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Galatians 5:24*

*Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Colossians 3:5*

*Let not sin reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, Romans 6:12*

## **Put on Christ.**

### **Make no provisions for the flesh.**

*But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires. Romans 13:14*

*Present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. Rom 6:13*

## **IV. Receive and practice the truth**

The person of faith keeps their heart open and receptive to God's truth.

*Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. James 1:19-21*

The person of faith intentionally allows the word of God to find root in the heart. One cannot claim to be living by faith if there is no intentional effort to regularly interact with the truth. It cannot stop there however. There must also be a conscious effort to apply truth to life.

*But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. James 1:22*

How do you prove that you are a doer of the word? It is clear by life change.

*For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does. James 1:23-25*

It will be evident by the control of our tongue, our compassion for others and our passion to live pure lives.

## **V. Avoid partiality and prejudice**

The person of faith treats others with integrity and respect. Regularly check the mirror for negative attitudes toward people based on some external criteria i.e. race, beliefs, education, dress, status, political party. God calls us to love our neighbor as ourselves. God calls us to show love and kindness even to our enemies.

## **VI. Demonstrate your faith by your actions.**

James spend significant space in his letter making sure that we understand the true nature of faith. Faith is sufficient intellectual and emotional persuasion regarding a person or proposition to inspire ready response. Do we believe we are saved by the work of Jesus on our behalf? The we should demonstrate the depth of that belief by surrendering to Him. Belief without corresponding action is not belief at all. I may claim to trust a chair, but my belief is questionable if I never sit in it.

*What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? James 2:14*

*You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder. But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless? James 2:19-20*

It is vital to stand in front of the mirror that exposes the true fruit of faith. It is vital to our salvation. It is vital to our daily walk. Without such active, verifiable faith you cannot please God. Heb 11 Whatever is not of faith is SIN! Rom 13

## **VII. Control your speech**

True faith keeps a guard on what come out of our mouth. Words can hurt or heal. Words can encourage or discourage. Words can build up or tear down.

*The tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell. James 3:6*

James goes so far as to assert that we can measure our level of maturity by the level of control of our tongue.

*But no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison. With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God; from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way. James 3:8-10*

The control of the tongue begins with a heart check.

*“Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit. You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil. Matthew 12:33-35*

## VIII. Walk in wisdom

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

Our behavior demonstrates our level of wisdom. Right thinking produces right living. Right believing produces right behaving. The mirror doesn't lie. It either exposes wise behavior or foolish behavior.

*But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth.*

*This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. James 3:14-16*

On the other hand, wisdom comes from God.

*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction. Proverbs 1:7*

*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight. Prov 9:10*

Knowing God is the key to godly wisdom. Godly wisdom produces godly living.

What does it look like?

*The wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. James 3:17-18*

## IX. Live above your sinful passions

*You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. James 4:4*

An honest look in the mirror exposes self-centeredness.

Self-interest is the source of all manner of relational conflict.

*What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel.*

*You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. James 4:1-3*

God demands absolute fidelity to Him.

*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"? James 4:5*

If we continue our proud resistance to God, He will oppose us.

*"God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble." James 4:6*

James prescribed a throughout remedy to deal with any worldly bent.

*Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you. James 4:7-10*

1. Humbly submit to God's authority in our life with the will.
2. Resist any authority you may have surrendered to Satan
3. Enthusiastically draw near to God with the heart.
4. Earnestly address and sinful ways.
5. Humbly present yourself to God.

**REPEAT AS OFTEN AS NEEDED**

**X. Consider God's will in all your plans.**

Don't plan out your life without since God may have a different agenda.

*Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that." James 4:15*

It is not wrong to plan.

Just realize that nothing about the future is certain except God.

**XI. Anticipate the Lord's return.**

*Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. James 5:7-8*

In the meantime, don't grumble or complain.

**XII. Pray when you suffer.**

**XIII. Sing praise when you are happy.**

**XIV. Call for help when you feel weak.**

*Is anyone among you weak? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the one who is weak, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. James 5:14-15*

Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another to experience God's healing.

**XV. Seek to win the wanderer**

*My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins. James 5:19-20*

These are all the characteristics of one loving by a genuine trust in Jesus.

The mirror of God's words exposes fake faith.

- Complains about tribulation and doesn't really care about spiritual growth.
- Struggles to accept or perceive value in one's current station in life.
- Blames God and others for failure to live above temptation.
- Neither receives nor practices the Word
- Harbors attitudes of partiality and prejudice.
- Talks the talk without the walk.
- Doesn't control their speech.
- Lives foolishly in jealousy and selfish ambition.
- Constantly dealing with broken relationships.
- Plans out their life without considering what God wants.
- Lives in the here and now.
- Complains when suffering
- Neglects praising God when feeling good.
- Refuses help when struggling.
- Ignores or judges the wanderer.

The entire Bible is a mirror. To ignore its direction will harden you. To heed its instruction will mold you.

*More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward. Who can discern his errors? Declare me innocent from hidden faults. Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me! Then I shall be blameless, and innocent of great transgression. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer. Psalm 19:10-14*