

SERMON SERIES OUTLINE

By Christiaan Malan and Dave Daniel

TRUE RELIGION

"Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says."

James 1:22

James writes his epistle "to the twelve tribes scattered among the nations" - referencing the people of Israel, but understood metaphorically to represent those of faith who are the covenant people of God, or the "spiritual Israel." While the Jewish religion was based on works of the law, the new-found Christian religion is based on faith apart from the law.

What then is the relationship between faith and works?

James sets out the theme of good works which *demonstrate* true faith: "So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead" (James 2:17). James emphasises the idea that genuine and authentic faith - true religion - is inevitably accompanied by tangible and righteous actions.

The apostle John wrote in his first epistle, the two marks of a true disciple are: to keep His commands (2:3-4, 2:29, 3:6, 3:9-10) and to love others (2:10-11, 3:11-14, 3:16-18, 3:23). Similarly, James challenges believers to demonstrate their faith through practical expressions of love, and obedience to God's commands. He uses examples such as caring for the needy and showing impartiality to emphasise the importance of works as evidence of authentic faith.

This series will challenge our people to test and grow the genuineness of their faith, expressed by their works, and teach some *practical examples* of how true religion is evidenced in the life of a believer.

Why we are doing this series:

Ultimately this is a series on Lordship - how our professed faith in God is manifested in our lives. The objective of each sermon is:

1. To teach and encourage our people that true religion also involves facing the challenges and trials of life with patience and perseverance.
2. To teach our people to pray with expectant faith in any circumstance - whether we need wisdom, face trouble, or are sick - with full expectation that God hears the righteous to provide, heal and give wisdom.
3. To extol the virtue of humility, both as we stand before God, and the posture of our hearts toward one-another.

4. To teach what true religion would look like practically in daily life - faith that expresses itself through action, and actions that are not void of faith.
5. To exhort our hearers to demonstrate and value self-control, e.g. over their tongue, because of the power it has to build up or destroy. Maturity involves growing in self-control, which produces righteousness and blessing.
6. To challenge our churches to be communities of social responsibility - showing no favouritism - and to particularly urge the wealthy not to become complacent but demonstrate their faith through generous justice.

Series Outline (Scriptures for each sermon follow below):

Title	James
1: Patient Perseverance	What: James again insists that the evidence of genuine faith is proven through patience and perseverance through trials and suffering. He encourages believers to view trials as opportunities for growth and spiritual maturity, and a deeper reliance on God. Additionally, he urges believers to endure patiently in the face of challenges and hardships, trusting in God's ultimate justice and the rewards of faithful living. James 1:2-4, 12 <i>2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. 4 Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.</i> <i>12 Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.</i> James 5:7-11 <i>7 Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains. 8 You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. 9 Don't grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!</i> <i>10 Brothers and sisters, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. 11 As you know, we count as blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.</i>

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This is consistent with what Peter says: **1 Peter 1:6-7** “6 *In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*”

So what? (Why):

The common misconception is that a Christian life should always be prosperous and problem-free.

James, however, underscores the inevitability of trials and challenges in the Christian life and the transformative potential they hold. The Christian life is not storm-free, but can be storm-*proof*.

James highlights the importance (and value) of perseverance, endurance, and patience to perfect our faith and help us navigate difficult circumstances, while maintaining trust in God's sovereignty and goodness and justice.

This sermon will deepen our theology of suffering and the value of perseverance in salvation.

Now what? (Application):

- Believers should embrace trials as opportunities for spiritual growth and character development, trusting that God can use them for their good.
- They should cultivate perseverance, endurance, and patience in the face of adversity, leaning on God's promises and relying on His strength to sustain them.
- This may involve seeking support from fellow believers, leaning on prayer and Scripture for encouragement, and actively seeking to grow in faith and trust during challenging seasons.

James' teachings give us a comprehensive understanding of trials, perseverance, endurance, and patience, along with practical applications for our people to incorporate these principles into their lives as they navigate difficulties and hardships.

2: Persistent Prayer / A prayerful life	<i>What:</i> James discusses the power and efficacy of a prayerful life, emphasising the need for continuous and fervent prayer, whether we need wisdom, provision, healing, forgiveness. James reminds us that the prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective, and we are promised that if we ask expectantly, we can be assured that God hears and gives generously.
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James 1:5-8

5 If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. 6 But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. 7 That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. 8 Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.

James 4:1-3

“What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don’t they come from your desires that battle within you? 2 You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. 3 When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.”

James 5:13-18

13 Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. 14 Is anyone among you sick? 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. 15 And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. 16 Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. 17 Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. 18 Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit.

So what? (Why):

This highlights the importance of continuous prayer in the life of a believer and its sufficiency for provision and restoration, in all circumstances. It underscores the significance of genuine, heartfelt communication with God and the connection between righteousness and the effectiveness of prayer.

Now what? (Application):

- Believers should prioritise prayer in their lives, recognizing it as a powerful means of communication with God.
 - They should cultivate a habit of sincere and fervent prayer as the first response to every situation, seeking God's guidance, provision, and healing in all aspects of life.
 - This may involve setting aside dedicated time for prayer, interceding for others in need, and aligning prayers with God's will as revealed in Scripture.
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- Additionally, believers should strive to live righteous lives, knowing that their prayers are most effective when they are in alignment with God's character and purposes.

3: A Humble Heart	What: The life of a believer is a life of quiet and humble submission - perfectly modelled by Jesus in his final hours: <i>“Yet not my will, but yours be done.”</i> On the contrary, we live in a world that believes a smart or wise person is a loud person, full of opinion, certainty, ambition and merciless divisiveness. Often they are boastful and presumptuous about their plans, ambitions and the future. In summary: PROUD. Preacher: have you ever been caught out for pride? What was the most humbling moment of your life? Why? There is a certain spiritual humility, however, that lives in reverence of God and recognises the limitations of human wisdom, the deception of envy and selfish ambition, and even perhaps demonic influence we may all be susceptible to. James cautions us against pride and presumptuousness in the way we live, instead calling for the “humility that comes from wisdom.” In fact, sometimes it is necessary to get serious in our reverence - drawing near to God with contrition and repentance - so that in due course he will “lift us up.” James 1:9-11 <i>9 Believers in humble circumstances ought to take pride in their high position. 10 But the rich should take pride in their humiliation—since they will pass away like a wild flower. 11 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 will fade away even while they go about their business.</i> James 3:13-18 <i>“13 Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. 14 But if you harbour bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. 15 Such ‘wisdom’ does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. 16 For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.</i>
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17 But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. 18 Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.”

James 4:6-10

“6 But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says:

*‘God opposes the proud
but shows favour to the humble.’*

7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9 Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.”

James 4:13-17

“13 Now listen, you who say, ‘Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.’ 14 Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. 15 Instead, you ought to say, ‘If it is the Lord’s will, we will live and do this or that.’ 16 As it is, you boast in your arrogant schemes. All such boasting is evil. 17 If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn’t do it, it is sin for them.”

So what? (Why):

The wisdom of this world which speaks with presumption and certainty, amplified loudly through our opinions on social media, is not like the wisdom of God. We are to reflect our utter dependence on God through the way we humbly acknowledge our limitations of knowledge and control, and approach relationships and decisions with appropriate humility.

This is important, because God resists pride in all its various expressions (self-assurance, ego, presumptuousness), and a great many people are stunted in their spiritual growth because of an inability to grasp their human frailty.

At some point, all of our discipleship reaches a dead-end where we need to grow in self-awareness we previously didn’t have in order to grow in character. An honest self-assessment and awareness of the right heart posture is a required reality-check to keep us growing spiritually.

Now what? (Application):

- Search your heart - is there pride in your speech and/or thinking about relationships, decisions, and the future?
- Repent and acknowledge your utter dependence on God, even for your every breath. Humble yourself before Him and seek Him!
- Consider how you can change the way you think and speak, about situations, decisions, and the future.

**4:
Self control**

What:

James gets practical on the fruit of the Spirit, namely self-control. He acknowledges that we are all tempted ("when we are tempted", not "if"!) and "we all stumble in many ways" - however - we are all called to "live a righteous life" (James 1:20) and control our sinful desires, reactivity, anger, and speech - paying special attention to the latter due to the extraordinary potential harm that the tongue can cause (especially to our Christian witness).

James 1:13-15

13 When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; 14 but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. 15 Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

James 1:19-21

19 My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, 20 because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. 21 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 1:26

26 Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless.

James 3:1-12

1 Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. 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. 3 If we put bits into the mouths

of horses so that they obey us, we guide their whole bodies as well. 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. 5 So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things.

How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! 6 And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. 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. 7 For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind, 8 but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. 9 With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. 10 From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. 11 Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt water? 12 Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water.

So what? (Why):

If we go back to the original summary of the book in James 1:27, to keep ourselves uncorrupted by the world is going to require that our lives are marked by self-control.

This is the righteous life God desires (James 1:20), and is an essential part of our internal witness of genuine faith, and our external witness to the onlooking world of the power of the gospel.

James emphasises here the profound potential impact of our actions and speech on individuals and relationships. He also underscores the connection between our hearts and our actions (e.g. speech), indicating that we need to “accept the word planted in us, which can save us!”.

Now what? (Application):

- How is your self-control? Are you easily enticed by temptation (1:14), reactive (1:19-20), or uncontrolled with your tongue?
 - Our people should strive to cultivate self-control - first recognising the destructive power of sin (James 1:15) and then “getting rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent.” What does that look like in your life? TV? Phone? Relationships? Places?
 - How can we “humbly accept the word of truth planted in us?”
 - What does our speech tell others about our lives and beliefs? How does it need to change? (swearing, gossip, boasting etc.)
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- Additionally, believers should regularly examine their hearts, seeking God's help in purifying their motives and attitudes towards others.

5:
Doers of the
Word

What:

We are not saved by faith AND works, but James emphasises the importance of genuine faith which should be evidenced by good works. Even the devil “believes” in God - but that is not the same as saving faith. James stresses the inseparable connection between genuine saving faith and good works which demonstrate it is there, challenging believers to examine the genuineness of their faith, and demonstrate their faith in practical ways - namely expressing love and compassion toward others and keeping ourselves undefiled by the world. He argues that a faith without works is dead - not a living, saving faith.

James 1:22-25 *“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. 23 Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror 24 and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. 25 But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.”*

James 2:14-26; *“What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? 17 So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.”*

“18 But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. 19 You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder! 20 Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? 22 You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; 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. 24 You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. 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? 26 For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.”

Why:

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This sermon highlights the holistic nature of our faith as Christians, which is neither fatalistic (devoid of works) or legalistic (devoid of faith), but includes both belief and action.

Rather, we are setting the standard for what it means to be a Christian, and teaching what true religion would look like practically in daily life - faith that expresses itself through action, and actions that are not void of faith.

It is also an opportunity to make the important clarification that justification by faith should not be misunderstood to mean we can go on living as we did before and think we are truly saved. The “proof is in the pudding”, i.e. the transformative power of genuine faith, which naturally leads to a life characterised by love, kindness, and service.

Note to preachers:

James 2:24 seems at face value to contradict what the apostle Paul teaches in Romans 3:28 - that we are “justified by faith apart from the works of the law.” This is an opportunity to emphasise hermeneutical principles, such as “scripture interprets scripture.” We need to hold them in tension and investigate further to form a correct understanding/belief. We recommend using this opportunity to explain the perceived contradiction, as follows:

- To clarify the seemingly contradictory statement of being saved by faith alone made by Paul and then saved by faith AND works by James, it is important to remember that we believe God’s word to be authentically inspired by Him thus it cannot be contradictory.
- A point made by R.C. Sproul was quite interesting, he stated that the order of justification is important and that both claim that you are saved by faith in that instance - since God is the only one who can truly judge your heart. But to proclaim you have faith without it producing works would put the authenticity of your faith in question. Faith is what saves us but true authentic faith compels us to act.
- We also need to understand that Paul and James were answering a different question to a different audience/recipient. James is asking ‘What good is it to make a profession of faith if you don’t have any works?’, so he is dealing with people who make a profession of faith but do not manifest any fruit of it. In other words he is dealing with people who profess they believe but who have never demonstrated the **reality** of faith they claim to possess. Paul is asking ‘How can an unjust person stand in the presence of a just and holy God?’, his concern for justification is before God, and that is where he says we are justified by faith apart from the works of the law.

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- But James is asking what about the person who professes faith but has no evidence of it, he is trying to make the clear distinction of a 'dead faith' and a faith that is alive!
- To quote Martin Luther "We are saved by faith alone, but the faith that saves is never alone."

As we say on the Follow course: "We are not saved BY good works, but we are saved FOR good works"

This sermon will remind us that true believers will be known by their fruit.

Skill/ Application/ Response:

- Believers should evaluate their own faith and actions in light of James' teaching, striving to align their behaviour to their faith. Where have you become complacent?
- We should seek to live out our faith in practical ways, actively expressing love and compassion toward others and demonstrating the transformative power of genuine faith through their actions. Where do you express "true religion" in your life?
- It's never too late to start! This may involve seeking opportunities to serve others, show kindness, and extend forgiveness, all while continuously growing in their relationship with God.
- We want to encourage our people to step out of their comfort zones.

We want the church to gain a comprehensive understanding of James' teachings on faith and works, along with practical applications for believers to integrate these principles into their daily lives as they seek to live out their faith in a tangible way.

6:
**Social
Responsibility**

What:

The book of James emphasises the importance of treating all people with fairness and justice, regardless of their social status. James critiques partiality and favouritism within the Christian community, urging believers to act impartially and without prejudice. We as Every Nation are called to be Socially Responsible and to provide a service to the community we are in. Additionally, James addresses issues related to wealth and poverty, cautioning against the complacent arrogance of wealth, misuse of riches, and the dangers of pursuing wealth at the expense of ethical considerations.

James 1:27

"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 2:1-9

My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. 2 For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, 3 and if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, "You sit here in a good place," while you say to the poor man, "You stand over there," or, "Sit down at my feet," 4 have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? 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? 6 But you have dishonoured the poor man. Are not the rich the ones who oppress you, and the ones who drag you into court? 7 Are they not the ones who blaspheme the honourable name by which you were called?

8 If you really fulfil the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself," you are doing well. 9 But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.

James 5:1-6 *"1 Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you. 2 Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten. 3 Your gold and silver have corroded, and their corrosion will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure in the last days. 4 Behold, the wages of the labourers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, are crying out against you, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. 5 You have lived on the earth in luxury and in self-indulgence. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. 6 You have condemned and murdered the righteous person. He does not resist you."*

So what? (Why):

These verses emphasise the interconnectedness of social responsibility, fair treatment, wealth, and poverty and how we as believers should respond/act towards others.

James reminds the reader of the temporal nature of our wealth and security, and that there are eternal realities that invert the world's meritocracy. We are called to live with the eternal Kingdom values. When Paul was given the right hand of fellowship by the other Apostles, it was on condition that he too remember the poor! (Gal 2:10)

This sermon highlights the biblical mandate to care for the marginalised and vulnerable while challenging believers to confront injustices (both in and out of the church) and steward our wealth with Kingdom values. It emphasises the need for Christians, who depend on God's providence, to

embody principles of justice, compassion, and stewardship in their interactions with others and their management of resources.

Note to preachers: Take care to “exegete the culture” with this sermon. We have avoided certain terms in compiling this guidance (e.g. social justice, inclusion, systemic injustices, allies etc.). These are terms that are loaded with social connotation and activism, much of it hostile to the Christian faith, and would encourage you to treat cultural fault lines with care (e.g. BLM, equity & inclusion etc.). Please be thoughtful about your choice of words and examples / illustrations. Let’s aim to affirm truth and Christian compassion without affirming sin or issues which polarise.

Now what? (Application):

- Believers should actively engage with issues of social responsibility, fair treatment, wealth, and poverty in their communities.
- Ask ourselves the question - are we a church open to help those in distressed circumstances - homeless, widows, orphans?
- We should advocate for equitable treatment and opportunities for all people, regardless of social status, while also seeking to address the root causes of poverty and inequality, BUT: charity starts at home. How are we doing personally?
- We should live lives of generosity and stewardship that reflect God's values rather than worldly priorities.

Additional Scriptures

1. Patient Perseverance:

- **James 1:2-4 (ESV):** “Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, 3 for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. 4 And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”
- **Romans 5:3-4 (NIV):** "Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope."
- **Hebrews 10:36 (NIV):** "You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised."
- **1 Corinthians 10:13 (NIV):** "No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it."

- **Colossians 1:11 (NIV):** "Being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience."
- **Hebrews 12:1-2 (NIV):** "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, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

2. **Persistent Prayer / A prayerful life:**

- **James 1:5-8 (ESV):** "5 If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. 6 But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. 7 That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. 8 Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do."
- **Matthew 7:7-8 (NIV):** "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened."
- **Philippians 4:6-7 (NIV):** "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."
- **James 5:16b (NIV):** "The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective."
- **1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (NIV):** "Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."
- **Mark 11:24 (NIV):** "Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours."
- **Jeremiah 29:12 (NIV):** "Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you."
- **Psalms 145:18 (NIV):** "The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth."
- **Romans 12:12 (NIV):** "Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer."
- **Luke 18:1 (NIV):** "Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up."
- **1 John 5:14 (NIV):** "This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us."

3. A Humble Heart:

- **James 1:9-11 (ESV):** "9 Believers in humble circumstances ought to take pride in their high position. 10 But the rich should take pride in their humiliation—since they will pass away like a wild flower. 11 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 will fade away even while they go about their business."
- **1 Corinthians 16:7 (ESV):** "For I do not want to see you now just in passing. I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits."
- **Matthew 5:5 (ESV):** "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."
- **James 4:10 (ESV):** "Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you."
- **Philippians 2:3 (NIV):** "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves."
- **Matthew 11:29 (ESV):** "Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."
- **Proverbs 15:33 (ESV):** "The fear of the Lord is instruction in wisdom, and humility comes before honor."
- **Micah 6:8 (NIV):** "He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."

4. Self control:

- **James 1:13-15 (ESV):** "13 When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; 14 but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. 15 Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death."
- **Proverbs 18:21 (NIV):** "The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit."
- **Proverbs 15:1 (NIV):** "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger."
- **Ephesians 4:29 (NIV):** "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen."
- **James 3:2 (NIV):** "We all stumble in many ways. Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is perfect, able to keep their whole body in check."
- **James 1:26 (NIV):** "Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless."

- **Proverbs 21:23 (NIV):** "Those who guard their mouths and their tongues keep themselves from calamity."
- **Colossians 4:6 (NIV):** "Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone."
- **Matthew 12:36-37 (NIV):** "But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned."
- **Proverbs 10:19 (NIV):** "Sin is not ended by multiplying words, but the prudent hold their tongues."
- **Psalms 141:3 (NIV):** "Set a guard over my mouth, Lord; keep watch over the door of my lips."

5. **Doers of the Word:**

- **James 1:22-25 (NIV):** "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 someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do."
- **1 Thessalonians 1:3 (NIV):** "We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ."
- **1 John 3:18 (NIV):** "Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth."
- **Ephesians 2:8-10 (NIV):** "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

6. **Social Responsibility:**

- **James 1:27 (ESV):** "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."
- **Micah 6:8 (NIV):** "He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."

- **Matthew 7:12 (NIV):** "So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets."
- **Galatians 3:28 (NIV):** "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."
- **Proverbs 22:22-23 (NIV):** "Do not exploit the poor because they are poor and do not crush the needy in court, for the Lord will take up their case and will exact life for life."
- **Romans 12:10 (NIV):** "Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves."
- **Proverbs 31:8-9 (NIV):** "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy."
- **Matthew 6:19-21 (NIV):** "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."
- **Proverbs 19:17 (NIV):** "Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will reward them for what they have done."
- **Luke 12:33-34 (NIV):** "Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."
- **James 2:15-16 (NIV):** "Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, 'Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,' but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it?"
- **Proverbs 22:2 (NIV):** "Rich and poor have this in common: The Lord is the Maker of them all."
- **Proverbs 28:27 (NIV):** "Those who give to the poor will lack nothing, but those who close their eyes to them receive many curses."