

## The Book of James

The word "perfect" (a reference to maturity) is found many times in James. Thus the term maturity will be used in outlining this book.

- I. SUFFERING MAKES A MATURE MAN (JAMES 1:1-15),
  - A. The background of sufferings. Both God and Satan are usually involved in the sufferings of a Christian.
    - 1. God's purpose is to purify and strengthen us. He wants to make us better (1:2, 12).
    - 2. Satan's purpose is to pervert and weaken us. He wants to make us bitter (1:13-15).
  - B. The purpose of suffering.
    - 1. It produces endurance down here (1:3, 4).
    - 2. It promises rewards up there (1:12).
  - C. The response to suffering.
    - 1. Positive:
      - a. We are to praise God for it (1:2).
      - b. We are to pray while in it (1:5).
      - c. We are to persevere through it (1:12).
    - 2. Negative:
      - a. We are not to become as tossed waves (1:6-8).
      - b. We are not to become as wilted flowers (1:9-11).

- II. SCRIPTURE STUDY MAKES A MATURE MAN (1:16-25).
  - A. Its author--the Father (1:17).
  - B. Its accomplishments (1:18).
  - C. Its admonitions (1:19-22).
    - 1. Our talk is to be pure (1:19).
    - 2. Our walk is to be pure (1:21,22).
  - D. Its analogy (1:23, 24).
  - E. Its assurance (1:25).

- III. SINCERITY MAKES A MATURE MAN (2:1-13).
  - A. Commands against partiality (2:1-8).
    - 1. An earthly example (2:2-4).
    - 2. A heavenly example (2:5).
  - B. Consequences of partiality (2:9-13).
    - 1. To be guilty of the law (2:9-11).
    - 2. To be judged by the law (2:12, 13).

- IV. CHRISTIAN SERVICE MAKES A MATURE MAN (2:14-26).
  - A. The problem. Some have imagined a contradiction between James and Paul. Note:
    - 1. Paul's words:

"For by grace ere ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8, 9).

- 2. James' words:

"What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only" (2:14, 24).

- B. The particulars.
  - 1. Paul speaks about vertical justification before God.
  - 2. James speaks about horizontal justification before man.
- C. The pattern.
  - 1. Two examples of head faith only.
    - a. Concerning the destitute (2:15, 16).
    - b. Concerning the devil (2:19).
  - 2. Two examples of head and heart faith.
    - a. Abraham (2:21-23).
    - b. Rahab (2:25).
- D. The principle.

"Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone" (2:17).

V. SOUND SPEECH MAKES A MATURE MAN (3:1-18; 1:26, 27).

- A. Importance of the tongue (3:2).
- B. Illustration of the tongue.
  - 1. How it can control.
    - a. It is as a bridle to a horse (3:3).
    - b. It is as a rudder to a ship (3:4).
    - c. It is as a fire to a forest (3:5).
  - 2. How it can consume (3:5).
- C. Iniquity of the tongue (3:5, 6; 1:26).
  - 1. It can destroy our witness for God (1:26).
  - 2. It can defile our walk with God (3:6).
- D. Incurability of the tongue (3:7, 8).
- E. Inconsistency of the tongue (3:9-12).
  - 1. The contradiction (3:9, 10).
  - 2. The conclusion.

"Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh"(3:11, 12).

- F. Instructions for the tongue.
  - 1. Seek and speak the wisdom of God (3:13, 17, 18).
  - 2. Refuse and renounce the slander of Satan (3:14-16).

VI. SUBMISSION TO GOD MAKES A MATURE MAN (4:1-17).

- A. What we escape when we do this
  - 1. The flesh (4:1-3, 11, 12, 16, 17).
  - 2. The world (4:4, 5).
  - 3. The devil (4:7).
- B. What we enjoy when we do this.
  - 1. God's grace (4:6).
  - 2. God's guarantee.
    - a. Of his presence (4:8).
    - b. Of his promotion (4:10).
  - 3. God's guidance (4:13-15).

VII. SELF-SACRIFICE MAKES A MATURE MAN (5:1-6).

- A. The consternation of the selfish rich (5:1).
- B. The corruption of the selfish rich (5:2, 5).
- C. The cruelty of the selfish rich (5:4, 6).
- D. The condemnation of the selfish rich (5:3).

VIII. STEADFASTNESS MAKES A MATURE MAN (5:7-11).

- A. A past example--Job and his trials (5:10, 11).
- B. A present example--a farmer and his crops (5:7)
- C. A future example--the Savior and his return (5:8, 9).

IX. SUPPLICATION MAKES A MATURE MAN (5:12-18).

- A. The seasons of prayer: when one should pray.
  - 1. In times of trouble (5:13, 14),
  - 2. In times of triumph (5:13).
- B. The reasons for prayer: why one should pray.
  - 1. Prayer can heal the sick (5:14, 15).
  - 2. Prayer can restore the carnal (5:16).
  - 3. Prayer can accomplish the impossible (5:17, 18).

X. SOULWINNING MAKES A MATURE MAN (5:19, 20).

"Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins" (5:20).