

James 25-07-27a

Greetings, welcome to Grace and Truth Bible Church. This is the 27th of July, 2025. We're in James chapter one, and we have come to one of the most practical sections in all of scripture for church age believers.

This is the key to making our day count. This is the key to our faith, making a difference in our progress toward the kingdom of God. It is essential to understand these core truths.

James is sending it to the people that are scattered in the first century. It is early in the days of the church. They are just getting their feet under them as church age believers.

This is what converts our day and our time into divine eternal capital. This is what lets us lay up treasure in heaven, lay hold of righteousness by faith. This is what we do in a day.

This is how it happens. Very, very practical. So let's ask God's blessing on our time of fellowship and study, and we'll begin.

Father, it is such a privilege to spend time together looking at your word, attempting to understand it more fully, to see its application in our lives, its pertinence, its meaning in the way we conduct ourselves, in how we spend the time that you have allotted to us. We pray that as we look at this portion of your word and the parallels that we will see this morning, that your Holy Spirit will minister it to each of our hearts, help us to be more fully representative of the Lord Jesus as his body in the time that remains to us in this life. We ask it in Jesus' name, amen.

Let's begin by reviewing our passage. It's been a couple of weeks since we were here. You will recall the first portion of this that begins by recognizing that we are going to be under pressure.

Perazzo translated various trials and testing. This is pressure. Some English translations say when we are under pressure.

If we lack wisdom in verse five, we ask of God. In verse 12, if we endure, if we persevere, if we do what we're supposed to do when we are tested, we are approved by God. You remember Paul talking about this to Timothy.

Be diligent to show yourself approved unto God, to stand at the judgment and be recognized as succeeding. We receive the crown of life. God does not endeavor to make us fall.

He doesn't try to trip us up. We are generally drawn away from the right path by our own desires. And when those desires conceive, they bring forth sin.

Sin, when it is finished, brings forth death. This is basically where we're gonna pick up. This is the threshold of our passage.

This morning. So here's what you can write in the margin of your Bible next to verses 14 and 15. This is what I have in my Bible.

There is a sequence. There is a progress. And they are all similar words.

It begins with seduction. This is what happens in verse 13 and 14. We are drawn away by our own desires.

And seduced, enticed. So the first step is seduction. There is an appeal.

It's an illicit appeal. It promises pleasure. It promises gratification.

It promises self-indulgent and pleasure. Seduction. That's the first step.

This would be a great place for an alarm bell to go off in our soul. And if we are people of prayer, if we are cycling the word of God through our thinking on a regular basis, we will recognize this seduction and do like Barney Fife, nip it in the bud. Stop there.

This is my personal self-gratification desire talking to me. This isn't the word of God talking to me. This isn't the Holy Spirit prompting me.

This is an earthly, lustful, fleshly desire. This is something that will make me happy, not something that will make God happy. Stop it there at the point of seduction.

That's the first stage. And that's what you have there in verse 14. But if we don't stop at seduction and turn away, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.

We saw this in Proverbs, the crafty harlot at the street corner, luring the young man down the dark alley to destruction and death. We are tempted, drawn away by our own desires and enticed, seduction. That's stage one.

Stage two is conception. Our desires conceive. What happens after conception? It brings forth sin.

There is production. Seduction, conception, production. If there was ever a case to be made for stopping something after conception and before it is given birth, this would be it.

You're okay if you can stop sin once it is conceived, but before it is given birth. So production. And what does it say? Sin grows up.

It matures. It is allowed to dwell. It is fed.

It is cultivated. It is nurtured and it grows. It isn't driven out of the house.

It's not sent into the wilderness like the Azazel goat. It is harbored. It's tolerated and it is even nurtured and it becomes full grown.

We move from seduction to conception to production and then to destruction. Sin, when it is finished, brings forth death. Death.

This is operational death. We should be dead to the world and alive to God, but it is the opposite. We are instead basically working for the enemy.

Spiritual death. Do not be deceived. Don't be fooled.

So many believers, and this can happen to any of us if we're not careful, are fooled into thinking that we have a healthy spiritual life when in fact the ends thereof are the ways of death. So do not be deceived. Every good and perfect gift comes from above.

Every good gift and every perfect gift. And these are two different words. One of them means an endowment.

It is something that is received for the benefit of the recipient. And a gift can be for pleasure, for gratification of the person. Give them something that they like and that they will enjoy.

An endowment is something that is given to aid, to enhance, to heighten the quality of someone's life. So these are good and perfect in the sense of complete. It is lacking nothing.

It is sufficient. It provides fullness. These gifts come from God and He doesn't change.

He is always the same. There's no shadow of turning. We pick up here in verse 18 this morning, of His own will, He brought us forth by the word of truth.

And the brought forth is the very same word you have in verse 15. Sin brings forth death. God brought us forth into spiritual life.

How? Here's the point. This is where we're looking this morning. Sin eventuates, it produces and brings forth, gives birth to death.

Nothing more tragic than expecting something to come into the world that is wonderful and beneficial and it is death. God brought us forth by the word of truth as a first fruits. We're a new kind of human being.

What is the us that James is talking about here? Brought us forth by the word of truth. We are the first human beings in all of history that at the point of our spiritual birth, we have the full orb of ministry of the Holy Spirit available to us. He seals us, He indwells us, He gifts us, He leads and guides us.

He can fill us, He can enable and empower us to do things that are impossible in our fallen nature. He can convict us of sin. He has so many wonderful ministries that were not available to the general population of believers in God in earlier days.

We are the first fruits. There is going to be a fulsome harvest when the millennial kingdom

comes because God is gonna pour out His Spirit on all flesh. All of those in the kingdom will receive it.

But we are the first fruits. We're the beginning of that new kind of human being that is enabled and empowered by the Spirit. So then my beloved brethren, there's going to be a series of these appeals that are introduced with this attention getting phrase.

Notice here in verse 19. So then my beloved brethren, pay attention. He's gonna say it again in chapter two, verse one.

My brethren, do not hold the faith in vain. Verse five of chapter two. Listen, my beloved brethren, and so on.

This is not just filler. He's about to make a really important point. And the first of these here, let every man be swift to hear.

Swift to hear what? It is swift to hear the word. We were brought forth by the word of truth. We were brought forth.

And this immediately makes us think of another of the many parallels to the Sermon on the Mount that we have in James. Turn with me back to Matthew chapter seven. Matthew chapter seven.

You remember Matthew five through seven is the Sermon on the Mount. Matthew seven, beginning at verse six. My new King James divides the sections between verse six and verse seven.

I would not do that. I would divide it between verse five and verse six. Verse six belongs with what follows.

What does he say in verse six? This is the Lord Jesus. It's red letter material here. And he says, do not give what is holy to the dogs.

Do not cast your pearls before swine. What is it that is holy? Look at the front of the book that you are currently perusing. What does it say? It doesn't just say Bible.

It's holy Bible. It's the holy scriptures. Do not give what is holy to those who cannot appreciate it.

And we have to be careful. We tend to learn a truth or to know a truth. We see someone who needs that truth, who we would so long to see incorporate that truth into their thinking and into their life, to take it on board, to be comforted and encouraged and strengthened by it, to live it out and enter into the place of blessing and function and opportunity in God's plan and purpose.

But this requires discernment. How do you know if someone is one who can receive the truth

spoken in love or not? Jesus is going to talk about this. By their fruits, you shall know them.

If someone is not asking and seeking, if you are having to bring it up and sort of push it at them, you are endeavoring to give what is holy to someone. This isn't a term of denigration, dogs. In this context, it means completely unable to appreciate.

I don't hand my TV remote to the dog. The dog doesn't know what to do with it, has no concept of its function or its value. For me, it's a wonderful path to information, to entertainment, to utility.

But if I hand it to Chloe, our dog, she has no frame of reference whatsoever. And her paws are too big, she'd never hit the buttons. But do not give what is holy to a creature who is completely incapable of appreciating its value, its function, its usefulness, and so on.

We are commanded by the Lord Jesus Christ, don't give what is holy to the dogs, do not cast pearls before someone. Swine. And this is talking about the value of God's eternal truth.

If you keep your finger here and go over to Matthew chapter 13, this is the chapter that has the pearl of great price. The man who is looking for pearls, he's searching for good pearls. And this is sort of the Israelites and the Jews in Old Testament days up to and including the time of Christ, they are looking for pearls.

They are seeking that which is valuable. And those who are seeking like Anna and Simeon and John the Baptist and the parents of the Lord Jesus and John the Baptist's parents and others who were waiting for the salvation of Israel, watching for the fulfillment of God's promises, who were godly people and righteous individuals, they were seeking pearls. Here comes the Lord Jesus who tells Pilate at his trial, for this cause came I into the world.

This is the reason I was born, to bear witness to the truth. The Lord Jesus embodies the truth. He is the word of truth.

Incarnate, he speaks it, he lives it, he expresses it, he makes it available to us, right? So when this searcher for good pearls finds this one great pearl, those who find the Lord Jesus, who is the summation and the culmination and the fulfillment of all of the wonderful truths that God has revealed to man, he sells everything he has to get that pearl. That's the pearl of great price. It is the truth.

It is God's word, God's revelation of himself and his plan and purpose for us, his salvation embodied in the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the pearl. Do not cast your pearls before swine.

Complete inability, people get hung up because, well, you're calling people dogs and pigs and how rude and you're not gonna win people over. This isn't something you lead with when you're going to share the gospel with someone. By the way, the word of God says you're a dog and a pig.

The idea here is to recognize there are those who are looking for pearls. They are not swine. Those who are seeking what is holy, what is sanctified, what comes from God are not dogs.

But it is a convenient metaphor for those who have no ability to appreciate the value of what is holy, the value of the pearl, especially the pearl of greatest price, truths centered in and expressed in and through the Lord Jesus himself. So what do you do with the word of truth? In Matthew 7, verse six, they will trample them under their feet and turn and tear you in pieces. We want to benefit the individual.

If you just, let me share with you this biblical truth that I have come to know and understand. I've applied it in my own life. It's been a wonderful blessing for me.

Be careful, be sure. It's a wonderful thing to speak the truth in love, to encourage one another, to build one another up in our most holy faith, but it has to be a one another. This is where your spheres of love are so important to identify.

If someone is not in the one another category, you've got to be really perspicacious. You need to be perceptive. You need to stop, reflect, and pray before throwing pearls, giving holy things out.

Be careful. They will turn and tear you to pieces. It has the opposite effect.

It doesn't unite. It doesn't build up. It doesn't encourage.

It doesn't edify. It doesn't bring blessing. It brings destruction.

It divides relationships to do this. That's verse six. Now, verse seven.

What are we talking about here again? We were given birth by the Father through the word of truth. And so our passage in James says, we have got to, in verse 21, receive with meekness the implanted word. He brought us forth by the word.

So we need to be swift to hear. Hear what? Hear the word of truth. It is what birthed us.

And you have this in so many places. The word is what enables us and empowers us. Without it, we are nothing because the Lord Jesus is the word.

He's revealed in the word. His power enters into us and is expressed from us by the word. This is why we're a Bible church.

We're not grace and truth spirit church. We're not grace and truth anything else other than the word. It is the word and the spirit.

That is how the power of God enters our lives. So we have to be careful with it. We value it as the pearl and we don't cast it away trying to influence others.

We have a hard enough time applying it for ourselves. And you see this in Matthew chapter

seven. We've seen it here in verse six.

He's gonna talk in verse seven through 11 about asking and seeking and knocking. For what? What shall be given? It reflects what we saw here in James chapter one. If you lack wisdom, ask of God.

He gives, he is the giver. He provides the gift. And there's such a wonderful parallel of Matthew chapter seven with James chapter one in so many different ways.

It's reformulated. It is expressed somewhat differently, but the truths are the same. The emphasis is the same.

Ask and seek and knock. It is the father who gives. If you know how to give gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly father give to those who ask him? And James was there for that sermon and others like it that the Lord Jesus delivered.

So these good endowments and these complete and perfect gifts come down from the father. It is all of grace. God gives in accordance with his promise.

And it doesn't depend on us. We don't have to grovel or go back and wallow in the mire of our past failures. We are confessing.

We are repenting. We are endeavoring to get back on the narrow road and head for the straight gate. And God gives.

Good, wonderful, complete provision for us. As you continue in the parallel back in Matthew chapter seven, you find in verse 12, the, what has been called the golden rule. Do unto others as you would have others do unto you.

And we're going to see this picked up in James a little bit further down in our context, verses 26 and 27 of our chapter. If you just glance down there in James, if anyone among you thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue, but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless. This slow to speak thing is important.

If we're slow to speak, we're going to be quicker to hear and to think about what we have heard, to reflect, to meditate, to apply what we know of the word of truth, the word of God. But we can think we're religious. We can think we're spiritual.

We can think we're on the road. We're mature. We've got it going on.

And yet we have not bridled our tongue. What is included in bridling the tongue? What did we just see in Matthew chapter seven? Be careful about talking truth in places where it is not appreciated. It won't be received.

They will just turn and tear you to pieces. This happens even among believers. And there's so much division and strife in denominational Christianity, in organized Christianity, within

churches, especially larger churches, where people adopt a position and it's all talk.

It's controversy. It is strife. It is contention.

It is difference of opinion. And people do not bridle their tongue. If you have a truth and you may have even expressed this truth and it is not well-received, stop talking.

Do not push. Do not strive about words to the detriment of the hearers. It is actually worse than if you hadn't spoken because now you're driving them into further sin.

They will turn and tear you to pieces. We have to be sensitive and watch for those who are asking and seeking. And God may be using us to provide the truth that they're looking for, but we have to be so careful to not preach at people who aren't there to hear a sermon.

Bridle the tongue. But look at how it continues in verse 27. Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father.

This is the measure, not what people think is religion, not what I think is religion. God, our Father, knows what true religion is. And what is it? Visit orphan and widows in their trouble.

This is pay attention to the needs of those in your immediate vicinity. They are close enough that you can visit them. You're not mailing a check to Timbuktu.

Visit means make contact. They're in your periphery. You see a need, you meet a need.

Orphans and widows. And these are emblematic for anyone who is in need. In their affliction, this is philipsis, that they're having trouble.

They need support. This isn't the same as perazzo in their testing. Try to fend off temptation for them.

This is philipsis. This is translated tribulation in other contexts. In their time of difficulty, time of trouble, time of Jacob's philipsis.

Visit orphans and widows, those who do not have the normal means of support. If they've got a husband, it's the husband's job. If they've got parents, it's the parent's job.

But people who are bereft of the normal support structure, and they are in our periphery, and we can put a shoulder under their load. We can help them in their time of affliction. This is genuine religion.

It is outward looking. It is perspicacious. It discerns whether this is a place where I should intervene.

Pastors have sometimes tried to help a woman that is having trouble with her husband, and he gets in the wrong place at the wrong time, and horrible things happen, because that is the husband's job. And if there's a problem in the marriage, the pastor needs to be talking to the

husband, not the wife. And huge buckets of trouble would have been avoided if pastors understood that if your counsel is somehow needed in a marriage, you talk to the husband.

He's the guy on the yellow footprints in front of God's desk. If you go straight to the wife, you are inviting no end of difficulty. Not the same if it is a widow.

There is no husband. And an orphan, there is no father. And support structure.

Now you are free to put a shoulder under that load in a godly and loving way. Genuine love. Visit them in their affliction, and keep oneself unstained.

This unstained idea, oh my goodness. When you see this in scripture, this is a qualification to move ahead. Keeping ourselves unspotted, unstained by the world.

True religion. Do unto others as you would have others do unto you. Straight out of Matthew chapter seven.

And watch yourself. Be sure you are qualified. That you have not been contaminated, polluted, defiled by what is going on in the world.

We should not look like the world. We shouldn't act like the world. We shouldn't be motivated like the world.

We shouldn't measure ourselves or others the way the world does. Unspotted, unstained by the world. Well, this is so critical.

Our lives are centered in the word of truth. The word of truth. That is what enables us, defines us, leads us, guides us.

It is the light of life. It is the presence of Jesus Christ. It's what makes living a day meaningful.

If the word of truth, if the Lord Jesus, if our role as children of God and co-heirs with Christ is meaningless, God giving us time and breath is a complete waste. It's going in the great dumpster fire of history. The only way we redeem the time is thinking about everything in terms of does it please my heavenly father? Does it represent the truth of the Lord Jesus Christ? Who am I? Why am I here? Well, we'll continue this study when we come back from the break.