



CAPITOL COMMISSION

TO: *LEGISLATORS / SPOUSES*
FROM: *DAN FILE*
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COLORADO

James 1:1-3:12 True Faith... A Review

P.O. Box 1088, Lake City, CO, 81235-1088 / www.capitolcom.org / dan.file@capitolcom.org / Cell 303.345.8830 / Off 970.944.1088

Is there a difference between what you say and what you do? If you say that you believe in Jesus Christ, can I tell you believe in Him by the way you behave? The book of James says that it matters how you live! It's a book that doesn't tell us how to be saved, but rather how to live when you are saved. James is not about creed but conduct. It's not doctrinal but practical. Therefore, James is an extremely helpful book for living life as a Christian in the Capitol, for it matters how we live. James presents the encouragement, challenge and exhortation we need for living out a true faith in the Capitol and beyond...for it matters how we live. As we meet together in this first session, let's review the truths we have already studied and may we submit ourselves to the sound insight that James gives us as we continue our study together about true faith!

I. TRUE FAITH - JAMES 1:1-3:12 REVIEW

A. TRUE FAITH ENDURES TRIALS- JAMES 1:1-12

James 1:1-12 reminded us that true faith endures to maturity through any kind of trials and testing that will come our way. Surrendering to the testing God brings leads us to the perfecting work He accomplishes in our lives resulting in maturity and becoming like Christ. We are tried as metal is by fire and purified, thus approved. The approving process, the refining process, the purifying work is the testing of our faith. As we persevere through trials to maturity, our faith is proof that we love God. Joy results from confidence and peace in God's sovereignty, as we look down the road of our life to the end result of maturity and ultimately being with Christ eternally. We must *let* endurance have its intended result of bringing about obedience to Christ, maturity, wholeness and completeness where we lack nothing of spiritual importance or value.

B. TRUE FAITH ENDURES TEMPTATION- JAMES 1:13-18

James directs our focus from the outward trials to the inward temptations to sin. Temptations can bring about sin and death instead of eternal life. One we are to *endure through* and the other we are *never to give in to* because it is sin. Satan *tempts* us to sin which destroys. God *tests* to build character and maturity which results in pure silver useful for the Lord's work. Both are a matter of choice. Both require God's wisdom and God will provide His way of escape through both, but one is God's way and one is man's way. (1 Corinthians 10:13) The solution for not yielding to sin in our lives is found in a close relationship with Jesus Christ and submitted to the Word of God to the point that we actually respond to God's Word with obedience and godliness. Do we hunger and desire for time in His Word? Does our heart ache to be nourished by His life changing truth? That's

how we will grow, mature and become as pure silver refined!

C. TRUE FAITH IS A DOER OF THE WORD- JAMES 1:19-27

The true believer will listen quickly and eagerly to God's Word willing to submit and obey it, giving way to God's work in their life. These verses reveal the contrast of receiving the Word and resisting the Word. James says that we are to receive the Word of God with holiness by putting aside *all* filthiness which are sinful actions as well as *all* wickedness which are evil, sinful intents or desires. We are to put these away because sin is not pleasing to God and is a serious barrier to hearing and comprehending God's Word just as dirty earwax can hinder our hearing. We are to receive the Word with purity and holiness, dealing with the sin in our lives by putting away all evil actions and desires. The one who abides under the careful work of the Word of God and obeys it will be blessed, fully satisfied by God Himself. Keep in mind that the blessing comes not in the hearing, but in the doing! Receiving and responding to the Word of God is a lifestyle that will characterize all true believers.

D. TRUE FAITH DOESN'T SHOW PARTIALITY BUT LOVE- JAMES 2:1-13

The depth of our love for our neighbor has a direct correlation to the depth of our love for Jesus Christ. To show favoritism to others is totally against the very nature and character of God. We are called to love the Lord God with all our heart, soul, and mind and then secondly to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. Our neighbor is anyone God puts in our path that has a need. James shows that just as those who love their neighbor as themselves fulfill the royal law and reveals a true and genuine faith, so conversely the one who shows partiality habitually, demonstrates their lack of love and gives evidence of a faith that is not genuine. This is serious and James does not deal with it lightly. If this sin of partiality is habitual in our lives, there is reason to conclude that we may not be a true believer in Jesus Christ. True faith shows love and not partiality because that goes against the very character of God. If we say we are a true believer then our response to those in need, should be consistent with God's response to us. Romans 2:11 states clearly, "*For there is no partiality with God.*" Are you merciful and compassionate to all those in need? Do you exemplify the character of Christ with impartiality? Are these traits the habit of your life? Does your life demonstrate a real and genuine faith? True faith responds with love to those in need.

BIBLE STUDIES:

LEGISLATORS: TUESDAY @ 7:15 AM, RM 0109 – COLORADO STATE CAPITOL
STAFF, LOBBYISTS, SERGEANTS & JOURNALISTS: TUESDAY @ 12:00 PM, RM 271 – COLORADO STATE CAPITOL

E. TRUE FAITH PRODUCES GOOD WORKS- JAMES 2:14-26

James goes to great lengths to show that true faith works. A living faith **must** express itself in good works. They demonstrate the reality of that true and living faith. Good works can never be separated from true, saving faith. If that faith is genuine, it will be demonstrated by active obedience with a submitted heart, will and life fully to Jesus Christ. God wants us to be assured beyond a shadow of a doubt that just as the body has no life apart from the indwelling spirit and is a useless, dead corpse, so also a faith without works is a useless and dead faith. And if that's the kind of faith you possess, don't be deceived, you are not a true believer in Jesus Christ. Yours is a dead and lifeless faith, powerless to save, vain and useless. May we count the cost and live a life of courage and commitment as we fulfill our commission of bearing fruit that pleases Jesus Christ. And in that great privilege of service, may we find the abiding joy of intimacy with our Lord whereby He calls us fiends! There can be no deeper relationship and no greater fulfillment than this. For this is a true and genuine life of faith that works!

F. TRUE FAITH CONTROLS ITS' TONGUE- JAMES 3:1-12

James insists that a living faith must be revealed by a demonstration of good works. There is no place where we can see the relationship between faith and works more clearly than in a person's speech. Our speech, our words reflect what's in our heart and controlling the tongue is a matter of the heart. The genuineness of one's faith will eventually be evidenced by one's speech. A faith that is real is able to bridle, control the tongue. We will all give account for every word we say. Scripture has much to say regarding the power of the tongue. The tongue can prove to be the greatest source of either enormous good or immense evil. Because speech has such a tremendous affect on its hearers, the tongue is quite possibly the key to self control for a virtuous life of faith. You cannot be religious and profane at the same time. James chapter three charges the unchecked tongue with the power to hurt, destroy and change the course of one's life through reckless words, malicious rumors, false flattery and verbal venom while at the same time professing to love God. James issues a stern warning by saying, "these things ought not to be this way." This is a shameful sin that cannot be tolerated. If you think you are religious but have an unbridled tongue, your religion is vain and worthless. (James 1:26) For, true faith works in every aspect of your life.

James' point is this; how can our tongue offer praise to God, while at the same time hurl insults and verbal abuse with devastating effects against those who were created by the One we just praised? We cannot bless God and then curse man whom God made! Jesus said in Matthew 5:21 that anyone who is angry and calls another good for nothing, is worthless and doesn't deserve to live. Do we realize the seriousness of our insulting and hurtful words? God does. Given the sobering warning from

Scripture regarding the propensity of our tongue towards such great evil, may we submit our tongue, which no man can tame, to the work and will of our Lord. A true believer that possesses a genuine faith is able to bridle their tongue and that tongue reveals a wisdom that comes from above.

II. TRUE FAITH – EXAMINE YOUR LIFE

James insists that faith has not reached its' end until it demonstrates itself in a righteous life. If there is no righteous life, there is no living faith. A true and living faith that is powerful to save is perfected and brought to its complete and intended goal of bearing good fruit. But a faith that does not mature to its end of bearing good fruit demonstrates a dead and lifeless faith, powerless to save, vain and useless. God does not want us to be deceived into thinking that mere intellectual knowledge is enough for eternal salvation. Our faith must give testimony, visible evidence to a submissive and obedient life surrendered to God alone. The exhortation and applications of these studies must knock on the door of your heart.

A. DOES YOUR BELIEF MATCH YOUR BEHAVIOR?

If your belief doesn't match your behavior then James is written for you and you need to be saved. Faith, without these good works, is no faith at all! It is not a true, genuine and saving faith resulting in eternal salvation. It is not the works that save, rather the works that result from a saving faith! James does not want you to be deceived. In the book of Romans, Paul answers the question of how eternal salvation is received. *It is by faith alone.* James answers the question of how our eternal salvation is verified. *It is by works alone.* James says it matters how you live! It is Biblical to examine and test to see if you are in the faith. Does your faith in God reflect the same qualities as James lays out? Think on the following

- *Psalm 139:23-24 "Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; and see if there be any hurtful way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way."*
- *Lamentations 3:40 "Let us examine and probe our ways, and let us return to the Lord."*
- *Ezekiel 18:28 "Because he considered and turned away from all his transgressions which he had committed, he shall surely live; he shall not die."*
- *1 John 2:5 "but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him."*

B. FAITH THAT'S REAL, FAITH THAT WORKS & ENDURES!

Secondly, James teaches us how to live out a true and genuine faith in a difficult world with trials and testing at every turn. In James, we will study a faith that's real, a faith that works, and a faith that endures. True faith endures patiently till Christ's return with works that result and bring glory to God. The overall theme of the book of James is our faith in Christ, if true and genuine, will be verified by our righteous deeds.