

**“The Litmus Test of Holiness”**  
**James 1:19-2:1-13**  
**Jerry Grey 2018, 2023**  
**WBC**

**Introduction:** Many of you remember the little test we used to do in biology class with lichens that would denote if a substance was acidic (red) or alkaline (blue). You put the litmus paper in to see the results. This has been adopted as a statement of fact concerning the substance of something. We call it the litmus test.

I believe that throughout the book of James that there are many tests that James gives us to see what we are made of. This message is going to start the process with three important spiritual litmus tests concerning our true spiritual identity. What is really on the inside of our hearts?

Remember what Paul said in Romans 15:6? We are to glorify God with one heart and one mind. Our mouth should display what's in our hearts. And it does!!! Listen to Jesus.

**Matt 15:7-11**

**7** You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you:

**8** These people honor me with their lips,  
 but their hearts are far from me.

**9** They worship me in vain;  
 their teachings are but rules taught by men.

**10** Jesus called the crowd to him and said, "Listen and understand. **11** What goes into a man's mouth does not make him 'unclean,' but what comes out of his mouth, that is what makes him 'unclean.'"

NIV

## Read Text:

19 My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry,

20 for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life 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.

22 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 a man 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 the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it--he will be blessed in what he does.

26 If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless.

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.

Now these four tests, in my opinion, are four of the hardest tests you will ever have to take. I would like to say upfront that I am still trying my best to pass these tests after all these years.

Are you ready?

### **I. Are you a Spiritual Listener? 19-21**

#### **What is a spiritual listener?**

1. **Take Note- *eido*- consider or perceive.** Understand this. James says “everyone,” listen up. Good way to let

them know that He is talking to everybody. Some folks are always being the Holy Spirit for everybody else. James feels comfy telling them this. He calls them **brother**.

Brothers must speak the truth to each other. A true friend tells you the truth. Do you want people to tell you they love you but never tell you the truth? That's not love.

**Illustration:** After preaching, Big mama used to say. *“Well Bro. John show poured it to them today.”* One day I got enough courage to ask her, *“Where were you when John was pouring it out?”*

2. **You must be a quick listener-** **tachus-** **Tachycardic**, Swift, prompt, or ready. If you are like I am, you will know that usually our first response is to start thinking about what we are going to say instead of listening to the other person.

**Illustration:** Bobby Brooks mother. *“You are always broadcasting instead of tuning in.”* I would like to challenge you to try this for one week and see what happens. Just be quick to listen. **Try this too, don’t jump into conversations where you were not invited. Do that and listen. You’ll find that you speak less often.**

3. **Be slow to speak-** **bradus- bradycardia is a slow heartbeat.** To wait in speaking gives us time to think about what we will say. **Measured words are better.** Patient words allow for proper tone and facial expression. Patient words allow for emotions to be controlled. Patient

words allow for proper dialogue. Patient words keep you from being the one that says something that is regretted.

**Illustration:** If you will be patient and not speak... trust me, if it needs to be said, someone else will say it. Then you will not have to deal with it. God equips certain people with the capacity to deal with these things. Many people speak too quickly, and then suffer with the emotion guilt from speaking. There is a risk reward balance you must be willing to accept when you speak.

**4. Be slow to get angry- *Orge – The word for anger is tied into the word vengeance (violent passion).***

*“Whoever is patient has great understanding, but one who is quick-tempered displays folly.” Prov. 14:29.*

**Proverbs 15:1-2**

A gentle answer turns away wrath,  
but a harsh word stirs up anger.

**2** The tongue of the wise adorns knowledge,  
but the mouth of the fool gushes folly.

**Proverbs 27:4**

**4** Anger is cruel and fury overwhelming,  
but who can stand before jealousy?

**Proverbs 29:8,11**

**8** Mockers stir up a city,  
but the wise turn away anger.

**11** Fools give full vent to their rage,  
but the wise bring calm in the end.

Admitting a problem is not fixing it!

*“Anger is a wind that blows out the lamp of the mind.”*

*Anonymous*

**Verse 20:** The Results of speaking too quickly and not thinking in anger, which comes from not being a spiritual listener.

James says that anger does not bring about righteousness. God's desire is for us to have a righteous life.

**Illustration:** As it often is, a person's family can hide a member of the family's temper. Jonathan Edwards had a daughter that had a terrible temper. A young man came to Edwards and asked could he marry her, to which, Edwards said, no. The boy persisted and said but I love her. He still said no. Then the boy said she loves me too. Edwards said no. The young man asked well why not? She's a Christian isn't she? Edwards said yes, she is a Christian, but only the grace of God can live with some people with whom no one else could ever live. American puritan, preacher, philosopher, revivalists.

One student told his professor that when he gets angry he gets it out and then it's all over in a moment. The professor said, yes just like a hydrogen bomb, it's over in a second with devastating results for years. (GS)

**Verse 21:** Notice that James equates this type of anger with moral filth.

- **“Get rid of”** or more literally “lay aside” moral filth.
- That which is **(perisseia) prevalent...** or in abundance or superfluity. Superabundance.
- Get rid of evil and malice.
- Accept humbly the engrafted or planted word that was planted in you, which can save you.

**Greek:** Root: **phuo-** (Planted or Engrafted) to blow or puff. To germinate or be implanted. To spring. To swell up. We are told

to receive the word that is germinating in us. Like a seed that puffs up and bursts with life when it opens up. When it opens up it begins the process of growing a bigger life or plant.

When you were saved, God put a seed of righteousness in you. He also placed within you a desire to know and to study the word of God. If that seed is not in you, then you are not saved.

Key word here is ***prautes- humbly or meekly accept the word***. Many people spend their lives trying to prove that the word has errors and problems in it. They say the word doesn't make sense. Let me speak this word of truth to you right now, ***“You do not prove it wrong; it proves you wrong.”***

- This engrafted word is so powerful it has the ability to save you. You want to do battle with something that powerful?

*So test # 1 asks this question... ***are you a spiritual listener?****

## ***II. Test Number 2: Are you a doer of the word? 22-25***

- The greatest task you will ever have is doing what you know. This hour, every Sunday, is your greatest task of the week. What will be said today that applies to you? With the Spirit's help you must achieve that answer and apply.
- Will you read the word this week? And will you listen without being deceived? Will you make excuses or obey when you are convicted?
- Will you do what it says? This is a sacred hour for the pastor. I take this seriously. Your disobedience will not be aided by weak sermons and little ditties from this pulpit. Hearing the truth never changed anyone.... Doing the truth changes people.

**Illustration:** There is one thing that I know to be true, a mirror never lies. Somebody say amen. Another thing I know is that the scriptures never lie. If you look into the mirror and see what you see, and then lie to yourself... then you are responsible.

“Well, that’s not so bad, you say.” Folks treat the word the same way. They look into the truth and expect it not to speak. But it does speak. That’s the nature of the book. The Word speaks. So does the mirror. If you look at the truth, and walk away without doing its will, you are like a man who looks into a mirror and sees his very own face, and then walks away and forgets who he is. How can a man look at his own face, see that it is he, and then disregard the truth that he is the one that he saw? He has to lie. He has to play a game with himself. He has to love what he sees in the perfect mirror and then forcefully ignore what he saw when he walks away. This is a dangerous game. If you see a melanoma on your face and try to say the mirror is lying, you could die.

The text says that when the person leaves the mirror he straightway or immediately forgets (v.24). It goes out of his mind. The reflection gets lost. That is so true. Think of all the things you have heard me preach that at the time were such a blessing to you. Most of it you forgot as soon as you went out the door. ***That’s why repetition is so important.***

Now how does a man or woman get blessed? Well, look at verse 25. Here is the key to holiness.

- He Looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom. You stop and stoop down to see the truth.
- ***parakupto, beside and to bend down. To lean over so as to peer within.*** When was the last time you took a really close look at the Word? Real study, I would ask? This is not a two-minute devotion.
- ***Parameno-*** Remain **in** it, **on** it, **beside** it, and any other way you can. Stick with it continuously. The HCSB says that the person **perseveres** in the Word. I like that!

- Memorize it. Stick it up everywhere. Fertilize it. Water it. Hear it. Teach it. Preach it. Tattoo it on your heart. Share it. Explain it. **But above all else... do it!!!!**

## How does James describe the Word? (The Perfect Law of Freedom)

- Learn that the Word brings **freedom**. This is one of the most important things I can teach you about the Word.

**Greek: “The Perfect Law of Liberty” v. 25- Teleios** means complete. A design for finality. There was a cause in the design. WOW! Perfect. Fully grown. **Eleutheria** - freedom or liberty. The Word is not a hinderance to your behavior. The Word is not a joy killer, or just a book of rules. The Word is the law of liberty. Listen to me carefully. If you submit to the truth. The truth brings **freedom**. If you live by your own rules and deceive yourself, you will put yourself into **bondage**.

Listen to me. Sin has a hook in it. A man says to himself. I can handle this substance. I am grown and can make my own choices because I am free. I don't have to listen to anybody because I am a free man and an adult. He partakes. At some point in time, in his freedom, he becomes a prisoner. He locks himself up in the jail of pot or crack, or alcohol, or pornography, or whatever it is that seizes him.

Dr. Rogers used to say about idols... “*You mold them and then they mold you.*” Freedom puts you in bondage. Bondage to Jesus Christ brings freedom. The Word is perfect and complete. The Word is health, life, and peace.

- If you chooses the word and continue in it, you will have **BLESSINGS** (v. 25).

#1 Are You a Spiritual Listener?

#2 Are You a Doer of The Word?

### **III. Test 3: Can you control your tongue? 26-27**

- James hits us in the nose right here. We will look at this in detail in chapter three but for now lets just quickly read over it.

#### **James 3:1-12**

3 Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. 2 We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check.

3 When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. 4 Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. 5 Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. 6 The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.

7 All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles, and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man, 8 but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

9 With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. 10

Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be. 11 Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? 12 My brothers, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.

NIV

- James tells us that our holiness or religion is judged by how we speak. Can you reign it in?

**Greek: Verse 26- Religious- *threskos/threskeia*...**

ceremonious in worship. To be pious. Its root means to frighten or to clamor. To wail. This is the picture of one who is sinful on Saturday night, but makes a lot of wailing sounds on Sunday morning (Lots of Religious Sounds). Y'all alright? This Word reminds me of a Pharisee that prayed loudly so that all could hear him. He wants all to think he is holy.

I don't like the word "**religious**," but in this context it fits. We are not religious, but we purport to be pious. Religion is man's way of seeking God, and that way is pitiful. Christianity is God's way of seeking man, and it is precious.

**Greek:** Bridleth or reigneth (v.26)- ***chalinagogeo***- to be a "bit" leader. A curb. From ***chalinos*** which is to head-stall (A part of a halter or bridal), the curbing of the spirit. Also from "**ago**" to lead, carry, or bring forth. To be able to maneuver something.

A person of real holiness can head-stall, or curb his tongue. You can picture in your mind a man riding a big tongue out in the pasture and the rider has it tacked up like a horse with bit and bridle. Your tongue is the horse, the bit is the Holy Spirit. The bridal pulls the bit to create discomfort so as to control the tongue.

If you **can't** control your tongue, James says you are deceived, and your Christianity is worthless or vain (**mataios, profitless and an idol**). Pretty strong words folks. It is one thing to deceive others, but to deceive yourself is crazy.

**Verse 27: Greek- Kathara is pure... undefined is**

**amiantos.** Worship that God accepts is that which comes from one who controls their tongue, who is pure, and who is not worldly. That kind of worship results in service to the widows and orphans. They are doers of the Word.

**Illustration:** The true test of piousness or holiness. Verse 27.

True and faultless holiness, or religion, is to **episkeptomai**. To scout out or to look in on the **orphanos**, the fatherless. To look in on, or look out for, widows... those doing without. The people that are in **distress**.

Then keep yourself unspotted from the world. That's a full-time job. No stain or soil.

Many Christians, even mature believers, like to adopt the practices of the world. We often times like to dress, talk, act, behave, learn, and mimic the culture. We like to do what they do, and be cool like they are.

We like to watch ungodly reality shows and see what they are doing. Many know all the hip hop songs and rap songs. Many know all the slang terms and speak like the world, but they don't know what Biblical Justification or Atonement means.

They can't headstall their tongue. You can be gangster, hip, down wid it, woke, be in the know, worldly speaking, and also be on your way to hell. Christian, be uncontaminated by the world. And by the way, that word **world**, is the word cosmos. And that's exactly how it's translated. You know what the world is.

Christians will look into, or bend over, to peer into the lives of worldly people, but will never look intently into the perfect law of liberty and freedom. They know who is on the Bachelor, but have no idea what God's Word says.

**Quote:** “All through history, men have tried to make ritual and liturgy a substitute for sacrifice and service. They have made

*religion splendid **within** the church at the expense of neglecting it **outside** the church.”*

**Greek: “Παρα Τῷ Θεῷ” - before God-** The NIV doesn't stress this phrase ,but it is important. Religion or worship that is **“before God”** or that is acceptable is proven by restraint of the tongue. You see, you can fool others, but you cannot fool God. Our worship is open to Him.

You may be outwardly pious to men in worship but always remember that God is the one who must be pleased.

### **Recap:**

1. Are You a Spiritual Listener?
2. Are You a Doer of the Word?
3. Are You in Control of Your Tongue?

### **Test # 4: Are you Spiritually Receptive of Others? 1-13**

I was very careful to word this test properly. I want to make sure that you understand that God intends for you to rightly evaluate others for your safety, but at the same time, not to judge by appearance. This is not as easy as it seems. We welcome everyone to come to Christ, but we do not tolerate sin for peace. We are not to tolerate open sin for the sake of tolerance or wokeism.

- We all know that in this day and age we, must evaluate others quickly so as to stay safe. However, James brings up a problem that many people deal with, called favoritism. Favoritism can also be an accusation from others because they disagree with you on some matter. This accusation is like a sexual harassment claim. Coaches, preachers, and managers are accused every day.

- In spite of the problems associated with favoritism, we still need to address this issue that James tells us to watch.

**Illustration:** A coach mistreats his son on his team because he wants to make sure he's not accused of nepotism. That's not fair either and is just as bad as nepotism. Just treat your son like you treat everybody else. Don't let criticism or accusations lead you into the very thing you are trying to avoid.

**Greek: Verse 1:** The word, and its cognates, that James uses for favoritism is really cool. It explains the word perfectly.

**Prosopolepsia**- respecter of persons.

**Root: prosopoleptes**- an accepter of a face or individual. One who shows partiality.

**Root: prosopon**- outward appearance, countenance, face, fashion, presence, from **pro**. Also related to **optanomai**... vision, gaze or to see. Observation.

- James says do not simply show favor because of what you see, a person's fashion, their presence, their beauty or face, or their individuality. If you hire employees based on looks, you are going to get a rude awakening.
- The reason that this is so important is because of the other phrase here in verse 1. **“Glory”**- James mentions the **Lord of Glory**.
- First and foremost, your loyalty is towards Jesus, The Lord of Glory. **No one outshines Jesus.** No one who comes into our fellowship, or your life, is to be thought of as being more glorious, or important than

Jesus. Sports figures, preachers and movie stars are all just people. When will we learn this?

- Likewise, your faith in The Lord of Glory should govern the way you (*lambano*) receive people.

James gives us a scenario to help us. Simply put... two people come into church (*Literally, sunagogue*) and the one who is rich looking and dressed well, gets special treatment. The rich man gets the best seat, and the poor man gets the footstool.

- The root word for special attention, or respect, in verse 3, relates as well to vision (*blepo*). Isn't it funny that we are just that shallow. It's all about the visual when it comes to partiality. We see gold and fine clothes and think everything is safe. A well-dressed man can rob you just as fast.
- Many of the folks I know that are rich have been the least likely to give, serve, and care.
- Many poor people I know have given what they did not have and worked without strength to serve Christ.
- Likewise, it is unfair to assume that a rich man is bad because he has money. ***We are to make a right judgment.*** Those who have means and love God can be used in mighty ways. Yet, the gifts of the poor are equal in the spiritual realm.

### ***Acts 10:34-37***

*34 Then Peter began to speak: I now realize how true it is that God does not show **favoritism** 35 but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right. 36 You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.*

*NIV*

**Rom 2:11**

11 For God does not show **favoritism**.  
NIV

**Eph 6:9**

9 And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no **favoritism** with him.  
NIV

**Col 3:23-25**

23 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, 24 since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. 25 Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there is no **favoritism**.  
NIV

- **Verse 4b:** Why is partiality so wrong? Because when we show favoritism, we become the judge, and James says that is evil. Only God has the right, or ability, to assess a man's heart that fast. We place ourselves in the place of God and become the judge. God will judge righteously and we will judge with evil thoughts.
- **Verse 5** is proof that what Abraham Lincoln said is true... “God must love common folks cause He made so many of them” (Barclay).

There is something that is quite evident about those who have less means than others; the poor have learned to trust God for help. They have no one to help them at times but God. He is their provider and sustainer.

The scriptures bear out the words of James regarding their inheritance and predestination.

**Luke 4:18-19**

18 "The Spirit of the Lord is on me,  
because he has anointed me  
to preach good news to the **poor**.

He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners  
and recovery of sight for the blind,  
to release the oppressed,

19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

NIV

**Matt 5:3-6**

3 "Blessed are the **poor** in spirit,  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4 Blessed are those who mourn,  
for they will be comforted.

5 Blessed are the meek,  
for they will inherit the earth.

6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,  
for they will be filled.

NIV

**Matt 11:4-6**

4 Jesus replied, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: 5 The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the **poor**. 6 Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of me."

NIV

**Quote:** "God is not interested in the fact that you have stood with the great; He is interested that you have sat with the broken."

- Many are poor in the eyes of the world but rich in love and faith in the Kingdom.

**Verses 6-7:** During the days of James it was the rich that did so much damage to the poor. In those days a man could hold a family ransom and actually make slaves out of them due to debts unpaid. They could be brought into court and punished. Jesus actually used this as a parable in the unmerciful servant. James says the rich actually were blaspheming the “worth” or “noble” name of our God that was spoken over them at baptism. That’s a powerful statement.

### **Matt 18:21-35**

21 Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?"

22 Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.

23 "Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. 24 As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. 25 Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.

26 "The servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.' 27 The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.

28 "But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded.

29 "His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.'

30 "But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. 31 When the other servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened.

32 "Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to.

33 Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' 34 In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

35 "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart."

NIV

**Verses 8-11:** The Greek text uses the word **basileus** to describe the law. It is translated here as royal in the NIV. The word refers to the King. *I like to translate it as the law of the King or the Kingly law.*

It is obvious that James is quoting from Lev. 19:18. *"Love your neighbor as yourself."*

- Jesus also used this to answer the expert in the law about how to get to heaven. The story of the good Samaritan comes from this question. The Parable is in Luke 10:25ff. In the end, Jesus turns the question around on the man who was trying to justify himself. **It is not, "who is my neighbor; but to whom can I be a neighbor?"**
- The shocking thing about the story is that the hero is a *half-breed*. Is it possible that a Samaritan could actually love a Jew or a Gentile or even a poor fool left for dead in a ditch? Can blacks and whites actually set aside differences and love each other? Will Jews and Palestinians ever make peace? Can the Chinese love the Japanese?
- The Great Commandment says to love God with all your heart and your neighbor as yourself. James tells us that to show favoritism is to break the law. If we break the law in

one point we have broken all of it. WOW!!! To hate your neighbor is to be a murderer.

- This does not mean that we all have to like other's opinions, or philosophy, or political stances, or vocabulary, or be mistreated by others. It does mean that I treat you as God has treated me. I may not take you into my confidence, or want to even go to dinner with you, but I must remember the mercy God gave me. As a matter of fact, if we will be honest with ourselves, we will admit there are some people that we don't even like. Some people have done such egregious things in society that I can't accept them, and when that happens, the laws of God take care of it.

### **For Example:**

1. Abortion-
2. Rape-
3. Child molestation-
4. Hitler-
5. Human atrocities-

**Illustration:** Dr Dobson spoke with Ted Bundy prior to his death. As heinous as his crimes were, Dr. Dobson went in and shared the gospel with him. How hard that must have been to fulfill the Royal law.

**Verse 12-13:** *You might say, “Bro. Jerry, How could anyone have any sympathy for such a murderer?”*

- **Verse 12:** Speak and act as one who will be judged by the same law. Remember that James says, *if I have sinned in one point of the law I have sinned in all points*. Here is what the Son of God said.

**Matt 5:21-22**

21 "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.' 22 But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment.

**Matt 5:27-28**

27 "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.' 28 But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

NKJV

**Matt 5:38-42**

38 "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' 39 But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. 40 If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. 41 And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. 42 Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.

NKJV

**Closing:** As James concludes his thoughts here in this little section he has a few reminders to the churches to help them succeed.

**To pass this test of holiness remember this:**

1. You and I live under the law of liberty- We are not Pharisees that hold people to the letter of the law. I do not wake up each day and worry about how I am going to keep the law that day. I am motivated by love, not law. I deal with others as a man under grace and liberty. Paul said...

**2 Cor 5:14**  
*“It is the love of Christ that constrains me.”*

I do not love my neighbor for fear of God or because of the command of God...I love my neighbor because I live under that law of love that constrains me. I am at liberty to do so.

2. I also remember that if I do not show mercy, I shall inherit judgment and not mercy. Mercy is greater. The **Greek** text says ***kauchaomai***, which means to vaunt, boast, or glory over. Mercy rises above and conquers judgment. When you give mercy you rise above. When you give mercy you are acting like God acted towards you. You are forgiven as you forgive.

**Recap:**

- 1. Are You a Spiritual Listener?**
- 2. Are You a Doer of the Word?**
- 3. Are You in Control of Your Tongue?**
- 4. Are You Spiritually Receptive of Others?**

**Illustration:**

Mercy Came Running  
[Phillips, Craig & Dean](#)

Once there was a holy place  
 Evidence of God's embrace  
 And I can almost see mercy's face  
 Pressed against the veil  
 Looking down with longing eyes  
 Mercy must have realized  
 That once His blood was sacrificed  
 Freedom would prevail  
 And as the sky grew dark

And the earth began to shake  
With justice no longer in the way

**[Chorus:]**

**Mercy came running  
Like a prisoner set free  
Past all my failures to the point of my need  
When the sin that I carried  
Was all I could see  
And when I could not reach mercy  
Mercy came running to me**

Once there was a broken heart  
Way to human from the start  
And all the years left it torn apart  
Hopeless and afraid  
Walls I never meant to build  
Left this prisoner unfulfilled  
Freedom called but even still  
It seemed so far away  
I was bound by the chains  
From the wages of my sin  
Just when I felt like giving in

**[Chorus:]**

Sometimes I still feel so far  
So far from where I really should be  
He gently calls to my heart  
Just to remind me