

## Turning the Crap of Life, Into the Fruit of the Spirit

### Journey Through James: The Key To Dealing with People

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#### Life Questions:

What is the priority of your life? Family, money, power? If you were given the opportunity what is the one thing you would want that you don't have today?

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A journey through James is a study of the book of James from the Bible. In a simple sense, it is the Bible in a simple and thought provoking way. This study helps to examine the book and find the simplest answers to the most complicated questions of life. It is meant to be a simple understanding of a simple book to help you face the things coming at you.

#### James 1:9-11

Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation,<sup>10</sup> but the rich in his humiliation, because as a flower of the field he will pass away.<sup>11</sup> For no sooner has the sun risen with a burning heat than it withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beautiful appearance perishes. So the rich man also will fade away in his pursuits . . .

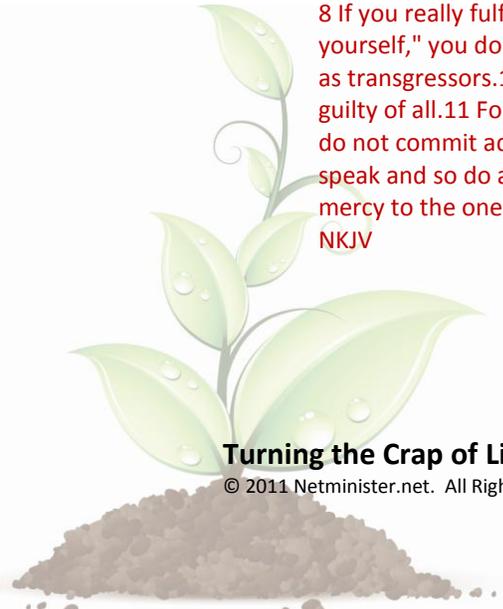
#### James 2:1-13

My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality.<sup>2</sup> For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes,<sup>3</sup> and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, "You sit here in a good place," and say to the poor man, "You stand there," or, "Sit here at my footstool,"<sup>4</sup> have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?

<sup>5</sup> Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?<sup>6</sup> But you have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts?<sup>7</sup> Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you are called?

<sup>8</sup> If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you do well;<sup>9</sup> but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors.<sup>10</sup> For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.<sup>11</sup> For He who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.<sup>12</sup> So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty.<sup>13</sup> For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

NKJV



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## 1. It's all temporary

The verse before we are told not to be a double-minded person, in other words all our efforts on the fence. Because that person isn't able to move in this life, but here we are told that we should be not just happy, but celebrating when we have nothing.

Confusing isn't it? How is it that someone who has nothing can glorify (i.e., celebrate or boast) in his position? Would you sitting at the table trying to reconcile your checkbook mid-way through the month be excited to know that there isn't enough money to cover the bills? And with only half the month gone, what will you do? Is that what James is telling us? In a way, yes.

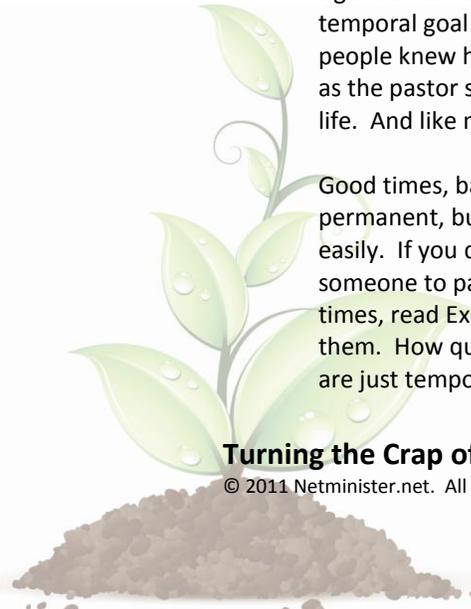
James is calling upon us to rejoice when we, as the lowly brother (which literally means depressed or humiliated in our circumstances) face those situations. That is tough. Why would he say that? What purpose would he have for that? Because when we are humble, we are the closest to what God has for us. Now understand, that doesn't mean God is after you, desiring to make your life a living hell on earth, far from it. Instead, regardless of the circumstances, whether you are rich or poor, with or without, you are to praise God. Because without Him, you wouldn't have anything. And before you say I don't have anything, unless you are sitting here reading this on the street, with no clothes on, haven't eaten in weeks then you have something.

The poor man or woman, exalts or celebrates in their lack of things, but the rich man is warned that he should from his humiliation. Why? Because just like a flower that is all open in the morning until the sun comes out. Your money, your possessions, your riches, are temporal. And by that, they are staying here after you go.

Ever been to an Estate sale or watched an episode of Storage Wars? All the things that were important are there, but they are only important to one person. Papers are thrown away, photos are disregarded, all because when the person is gone, their possessions stay behind. Even the largest coffin will not hold the greatest riches. In Egypt, where Pharaohs were buried with all the wealth imaginable, all of it stayed here on earth. Those tombs were robbed, plundered, all in the name of the possessions inside.

No matter how hard you try, your possessions will not go with you. One of the saddest viewings I have ever been to was a few years ago. This guy had tons of people around him, knew numerous people, was into almost everything imaginable – many people knew him, but no one really knew him. As people filed by the coffin, they offered condolences to the family, then they walked right out the door. No one told stories of the way he was simply because no one knew him! His temporal goal was to be a known man and yet the irony was that at the end of his life, while people knew his name, they never bothered to get to know the man. This was never so obvious as the pastor struggled to tell stories, only having one about this man. His goals were just in this life. And like money, power and fame, they passed away with the man.

Good times, bad time, they are all temporary. You may say well my temporary sure seems permanent, but let me remind you, eternity is a lot longer. The things of this life pass away easily. If you don't believe that, talk to people about 9/11. That raw anger, that desire to someone to pay surely fell off, even with the tremendous loss of life. It is the same in bible times, read Exodus and see how quickly the children of Israel forgot what God had done for them. How quickly we forget the good and how long we remember the bad, but regardless, both are just temporary.



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## 2. Learn to be Impartial, ugh

You are sitting in a small group bible study at church on Sunday morning. It is a large group, 30 to 40 people. All are dressed the same, talk the same until one couple walks in, one is a doctor the other an attorney. How much different are they treated? Everyone wants them sitting by them. No one wants to be left out of the conversation. We all want a piece of them, not because they are good people, fun to be around, but because we want to be associated with someone of power and influence. We have none of our own, but they do. Doctors and attorneys have all kinds of importance. Is that the way we should act?

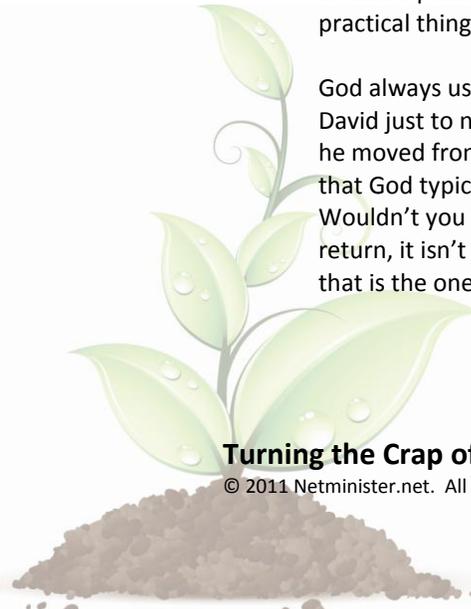
Or take the guy that talks to you until he knows that you aren't important enough to waste his time on. You can tell this man, or woman, because whenever someone of more importance enters the room, he goes and talks to that person, many times without even excusing himself, he simply walks off. Like a child on a playground, we gravitate to the kid with the most toys. In James 2:1, we get the start of how we should deal with that person and others we encounter.

When we allow ourselves to become partial, in other words saying one person is of more value than another, we aren't following God's will. Here James tells us that the most important thing is to not even have a partial thought because we risk becoming judges of that person.

Say you have a flat tire on the road and along comes the doctor from your Sunday school class, he is headed to the hospital for his daily work. Behind him comes the guy that works at the local tire plant, dirty and tired from working all night. Which one do you think is going to stop for you and help? Sometimes personal favoritism, partiality as it were, comes back to bite you in the backside. Changes are you are going to fix that tire yourself, be late for work, miss a meeting the an important client, lose that client, get fired for messing up – ALL because you treated one person better than another. Not that the doctor wouldn't stop and if you are doctor reading this then stop next time, but the point is the same. Whether a tire builder or a doctor, God wants us treating everyone the same, with impartiality.

James goes on to point out a few practical reasons, if you need one more than don't do it from God! Chances are that should be enough of a practical reason given that God can bring a whole lot more punishment on you than any other person, but just in case God also gives James some practical things.

God always used the lowest of people to do His will in the bible. Look at Moses, Noah, Paul, David just to name a few. Most were shepherds, the lowest of the low in the society, yet David he moved from being the lowest to being the highest as King. What a turnaround! So we can say that God typically uses the lowest of people in our eyes to achieve the most in His Kingdom. Wouldn't you want to be around that person? I mean if you were looking to get something in return, it isn't coming from the rich guy whom God isn't using, but the poor guy. James tells us that is the one God uses, stories in the bible tells us that is the one God uses.



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Not only is that the one God uses, but James goes on to say that the rich guy, he is the one that is going to drag you to court at the drop of a hat. James tells us that they are the ones the oppress you, or exercise dominion over you. So why would you give him favor?

Ever really sucked up to someone, I mean at work or in a social situation because you knew that something good would come of it? You work that person like a champ, get them what they want, take care of them see to their needs every chance you get. How do they view you? How does a master view his best slave? Are you really wanting to be a slave to someone that doesn't treat you well? And why would you allow yourself to be made into that slave? Does it ever come back and help? Your position in life ever changed by this effort or are you constantly known as a kiss up, not worthy of being called a friend?

You know what it feels like to feel welcome in a room, to know you are loved. And summarily you know, if you have in-laws, what it is like to be unwelcome. Okay maybe not all in-laws are that way, but say they are for the sake of this argument. How often would you want to visit them? That's right, never. But you go a few times to keep problems down with your own household. That being said, how many people would want to come into your small group or your church if they are not loved, treated poorly or dismissed because someone more important comes in? That's right, never! Wonder where the people are?

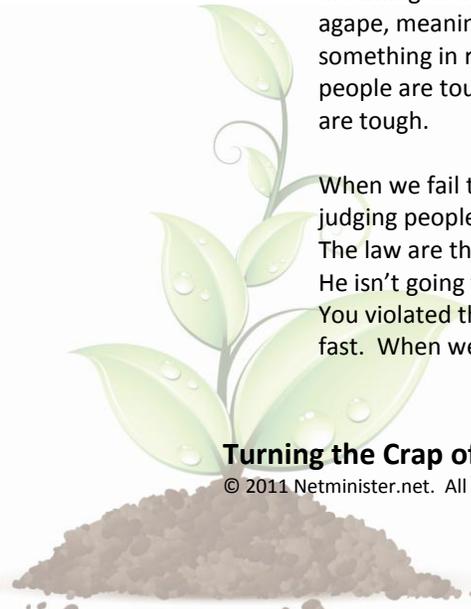
Being impartial in life means that you may have to deal with difficult people, but it means that you are following God's command not to be partial. We should celebrate everyone we deal with even when who we deal with isn't the easiest? Why? Because that is what the world would never do, we aren't of this world as a believer in Christ.

### 3. Gotta Put The Love to Work

James tells us in Verse 8, if you really, now stop there for a moment and put your tent down. If you really. Do you really? Ever said someone only to have someone say, "did you really mean that?" If you really fulfill the royal law, that is scripture, you should love your neighbor, UGH, like myself?! Are you kidding?! This guy stinks, his job is awful, he can never help me make money or get me better position in life. Do you realize that . . . oh yeah neither is this other guy.

This the key that opens the door to relationships that are more than just acquaintances. Go back with me a moment to the viewing. As each person left immediately, there was no conversation, the room was silent. No laughs about the past, no stories of events long since gone, just the drowning silence. You see love works to create relationships, the word for love there is the word agape, meaning unconditional. Unconditional love loves a person without the desire for something in return. Are you doing that? I know I am not all the time. It is a struggle. Some people are tough to love, the easy ones are fun to be around. But those tough ones, whew they are tough.

When we fail to let love be our purpose, then we are committing sin. Not just in the sense of judging people unworthy of our time and attention, but we put ourselves into doers of the law. The law are the rules. You know the rules especially when you are pulled over by a police officer. He isn't going to accept that you didn't see the speed limit sign, all he knows is that is the law. You violated the law, now the punishment. Either a ticket or maybe jail if you were going really fast. When we use the law as the bludgeon, we need to be aware that road travels both ways.

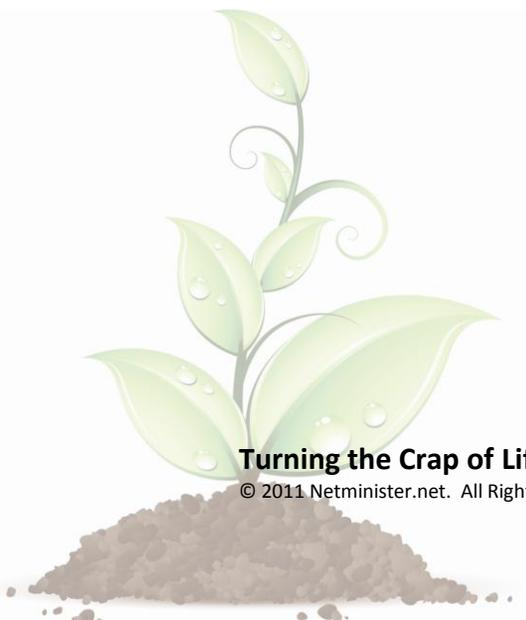


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James tells us that judgment is without mercy. When you get pulled over isn't mercy all you want at that moment? Lord have mercy on me, officer have mercy on me, spouse at home that I will have to tell have mercy on me. In those rare instances, there is mercy, is there anything better? At that moment you are given a warning, wow! Don't you just sit there and praise the Lord for it? So remember, mercy overcomes judgment. Seek to love the people you are around, regardless of their position, power or authority, love them unconditionally. Because like you, they need it too.

**Final Analysis:**

How you deal with someone is important. There are two ways, the biblical way and the human way. Everyone will agree with you when you deal with folks the human way, most folks, including Christians, will look at you strangely when you do it the biblical way. In short, cut them a break, be humble, it could be you they are talking about and love them. Not easy statements to follow, I would be the first to admit. Important people are important for a reason, but even the most important people, eventually pass. Even the most power men who have walked the earth are now laying in the dirt somewhere, their power divided and gone. It is only for a while, both good and bad. Knowing that means that I can learn to see people more for who God wants them to be and less for who I think they are. Be that person James talks about, and at your funeral, they will sing about the guy or girl you were.



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