

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
Fourth Quarter 2014: *The Book of James*
Lesson 4 “Being *and* Doing”

Read for this week’s study

James 1:23, 24; Matt. 19:16–22; Luke 6:27–38; Rom. 8:2–4; 12:9–18; 2 Pet. 1:4.

Memory Text

“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves” (James 1:22).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Knowing Your Enemy
- III. Being a Doer
- IV. The Law of Freedom
- V. Useful or Useless?
- VI. Unlike the World
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Moderator: Daniel Duda

1. “This week we will look at what being a doer of the Word means for those saved by grace.” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. Is the story of the tightrope walker over Niagara Falls a good illustration of “faith & works”? “Hearing and seeing are not enough when it comes to a relationship with God. We may be intellectually convinced about the existence of God, the truth of the gospel, and the Second Coming. We may have even seen for ourselves the reality of God’s love and care. Yet, even with all that, we may not really be ready to commit ourselves fully into His hands, an action that would be revealed by our works.” (Sabbath afternoon)
3. In every generation the Christian church has had to deal with people who just glide along, enjoying what they hear in church, but without it making a real difference in their lives. It is a contemporary problem, and James faced exactly the same problem in the first generation. Why is this choice so dangerous for our spiritual life? How can we best deal with it?

4. Sunday's lesson gives the illustration of the rich young ruler (Matthew 19:16-22) and Peter (Matthew 26:33-35; 69-75) as two examples of people who were self-deceived. What is so dangerous about self-deception?
5. "It's always so easy to see the faults in others but not in ourselves, right? Deep down, though, we probably are more aware of our faults that we want to admit. Look deep into your own soul. What does this view tell you about why you must have a Savior, or else perish for eternity, and justly so?" (Sunday's lesson) What is the antidote to this? If we are self-deceived, is looking deep into our soul the solution? Or will it only confirm what we see and believe?
6. "James combines *being* and *doing*. He does not separate them, nor does he make one more important than the other. They are like two sides of the same coin, inseparable. We are *to be* doers; (...) an ongoing lifestyle of obedience is expected of us now rather than at some indefinite time in the future. The point is, we are to become new people in the Lord, and as a result of what *we become*, *we do* the things that God commands us to. This is something quite different from us merely following rules (which seems to have been the problem with the rich young ruler, as we saw in yesterday's lesson)." (Monday's lesson) Why is "following the rules" not enough?
7. "It is almost as if the more we focus on *doing*, the worse we become; whereas, when we are *being led by the Spirit*, yields a totally different outcome—the fruit of love and obedience." (Monday's lesson) How can this serve as a motivation for right attitudes and actions rather than being an endless frustration that we are not what we are "supposed" to be?
8. In Tuesday's lesson, James speaks about "the perfect law of freedom" (1:25). How is that not a contradiction in terms? Most people see law as something which restricts their freedom and stops them from doing what they want.
9. What is the purpose of James' definition of true Christianity in 1:26.27? How does it compare with Matthew 25:35-40 & Romans 12:9-18? (Wednesday's lesson) What was the purpose of the Exodus?
10. "What does it mean to keep oneself 'unspotted from the world'? (*James 1:27, NKJV*). Our problems and weaknesses do tend to follow us wherever we go. The problem with sin isn't so much what is *out there*, though that certainly plays a role, as much as it is what's *in us*, and in our hearts. That's where the true battle is, and we will have to fight that battle no matter where we live." (Thursday's lesson)
11. What does it mean for us that there are people out there who need our help—and that there is a messy world out there that will try to mess up our lives as well? How do we focus on the first and avoid the second?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

This is the whole argument in the book of Job. The four friends said you must have sinned because now you're poor. And when the rich young ruler was told to sell all that he had and to give it to the poor we sometimes over-simplify that and say the man was greedy. No, that would have been a trivial temptation. The rich young ruler was asked to give up the clearest evidence that he was blessed of God and a virtuous Jew. He was asked to associate with sinners and that was too much for him. It wasn't just greed and selfishness. It was too much for him to give up the evidence of approval, God's approval as accepted by all the Jews and they believe it to this very day.

We had a Rabbi come to speak in Loma Linda one time. Unfortunately he didn't make it. He went way out to Barstow on the desert and didn't make it till lunch time, but he did come to lunch and we asked him what he was going to talk about. He said, "I was going to talk about how it is that when we Jews are prosperous we thank God for His blessing. And when you Christians prosper you're guilty and feel you have to give it all away." (Like Carnegie and Rockefeller—there would be no University of Chicago if Rockefeller hadn't given Standard Oil money to build that great institution where I got my degree.) The Rabbi said, "When we're blessed we praise the Lord." It's approval—wealth to a Jew is evidence of divine approval. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio presentation, *We've Camped Around This Mountain Long Enough*, number 1, recorded July, 1989, South Dakota Conference Ministers Meeting} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:*
<http://pkp.cc/1MMCAMPED>

A few hours later Peter was cursing and swearing in the courtyard to prove he was not one of Christ's disciples. He did not even know Him!

Then the rooster crowed, just as Jesus had predicted the night before—right after Peter's bold speech that, though others might let him down, he would give his life for the Lord.

When Peter heard that sound, he looked to see if Jesus had noticed. Though he was on trial for his life and had suffered so much already, Jesus was more concerned about his erring disciple out there in the courtyard. He turned and looked straight at Peter.

As Peter knew God up to that time, he may well have expected to see wrath and indignation in the face of Christ. He surely deserved it! But instead he saw sorrow, disappointment, and pity—the face of the one who just the night before had knelt down and washed his dirty feet.

Peter went out and wept bitterly. (See Luke 22:54-62)

A little later Judas came into the court, threw down the thirty pieces of silver, and confessed that he had betrayed innocent blood. Then he, too, looked at Jesus. He saw the same sorrow

and pity that had touched Peter's heart—the face of the one who just the night before had knelt down and washed his dirty feet. Overcome, Judas went out and hanged himself. (See Matthew 27:3-5)

If only Judas had responded as Peter did to that look on Jesus' face! If Judas had found where Peter was weeping and the two disciples had knelt down together and become new men, what a scene that would have been for all heaven to watch.

Imagine how Peter felt all that Sabbath. What a fool he had made of himself the past twenty-four hours! Twice he had spoken impetuously in the upper room. Twice he had disgraced himself in the Garden of Gethsemane. And such cowardice and disloyalty while his Lord was being tried! Now Jesus was dead, and there was no chance for him to make things right.

No wonder he rushed to the tomb on Sunday morning when he heard the news that the grave was empty! {Maxwell, Graham. *Servants or Friends*, 145-147. Redlands, California: Pine Knoll Publications, 1992.} <http://www.pineknoll.org/graham/sof/chapter10.html>

If it is true that God values nothing higher than our freedom, why has He made so much use of law? If all He asks is trust and love, and these cannot be commanded or produced by force, then why did He give us the Decalogue, which seems to demand our love and obedience under threat of execution? If He doesn't wish to be seen as arbitrary, exacting, and severe, why has He surrounded us with innumerable rules?

Paul understood all about trust and freedom. He emphasized it so much that he was accused of doing away with these rules, doing away with God's law. "No," he said, "I intend no such thing. Faith does not abolish law. Faith establishes the law, by putting it in its proper perspective." But what is the right perspective from which to view God's use of law? It is mentioned in Galatians 3, the first text on the Bible Reference Sheet. Paul raises the question his audience was asking: "Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions." (RSV)

Then Paul goes on to explain why the law was added. Using the *King James* language, (which is not on the sheet; you remember it from memory) he said, "The law was our school master to bring us to Christ." The Greek word behind it, and I've tried not to pronounce too many Greek words in our conversations, The Greek word is *paidagōgos*. Can you hear pedagogue in that, the pedagogical method? But that word actually was the name given to a trusted slave whose duty it was to take the children to school, to make sure they got there, stayed there, and then it was his duty to bring them home. He was not the teacher. He was the guardian; he was the protector.

Now can you see the reason for the translation in the next passage? See Galatians 3:24, 25 on the sheet:

So the Law has been our attendant, [some have translated “guardian,” “guide,” “governess,” even] our attendant on our way to Christ, so that we might be made upright through faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer in the charge of the attendant. (Goodspeed).

You might compare with that, the *New International Version* translation right underneath:

“So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law.” (NIV)

Now which law in your judgment is he talking about? Which law was added because of transgression to lead us to Christ? Was it the ceremonial law? Was it the moral law? *Was it all law?* Would you dare include the Ten Commandments? Well, consider how God gave the Ten Commandments. One day, you recall, He gathered His misbehaving children together at the foot of Sinai. He announced, “I want all the murdering to stop, and all the hating to stop. I want all the stealing, cheating, the lying, and the immorality to stop. I want you to stop going after other gods.” What an emergency in His family, when He had to ask His children to stop doing all those things! You recognize, of course, the Decalogue. It was added because of transgression.

Have you ever had to do this in your home? Some of you fathers might say in the morning at worship, say, next Monday morning before the children leave for school, “Now Billy, let us see if we all can make this a very good day in our family. Billy, when you are at school today, do you promise not to murder any of your friends?”

“Yes, Daddy, if you insist.”

“And Mary, do you promise not to steal any more while you are in school?”

“Well yes, Daddy, if you insist.”

Then you turn to your wife and say, “And when I am at work, please do not commit adultery again. Do you promise, wife?”

“Well yes, if you insist.”

If you do this in the morning, be sure not to leave your window open, or the neighbors will assume that terrible things are happening in your home. And you don’t think the devil mocked God for having to say to His children, “Please, I want all this to stop”?

The law was added because of sin. There was no need before sin entered the universe to say to the loyal angels, I want all this misbehavior to stop. They didn’t need a law to do what was right. They did what was right—because it *was* right. But here on this earth, the law was added because of sin. Of course when sin entered the universe, there came the first day when God had to speak of law. Then the first awesome day when God had to say that sin, rebelliousness, disorderliness, and lawlessness result in death.

But there are many dangers inherent in the use of law. One danger is that now that the law has been expressed, one will assume that doing right means merely obeying the rules, that sin is merely disobeying the rules. And that the penalty for breaking the rules is that the Rule-giver will execute you.

“But God does offer forgiveness—and then He won’t have to execute you!” How has He made this possible? “Someone else paid the legal penalty, so it’s all right for God to forgive you.” What if you turn down the offer? “Then you will be painfully destroyed, perhaps more painfully because of your ingratitude!” You know how that understanding can lead to the *obedience that springs from fear*.

But if one takes the larger view of all sixty-six books, you see that what God really wants is not mere obedience to the rules: He wants us to *do what is right because it is right*. He wants the obedience that springs from love and trust and that is offered in the highest sense of freedom.

And what if I choose to go my own rebellious way? What will He do to me?

He will sadly let me go, as He let His Son go. I will die and He will cry. But there is no need to be afraid. Those who watch me die will not serve Him from fear having watched my sad end. God wishes that to be understood for all eternity. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, session 11, “God’s Emergency Measures” recorded April, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/11MMCAG>*

Recommended Listening:

Conversations About God session 12 “God’s Law Is No Threat To Our Freedom” is available at: <http://pkp.cc/12MMCAG>

Further Study with Ellen White

The loveliness of the character of Christ will be seen in His followers. It was His delight to do the will of God. Love to God, zeal for His glory, was the controlling power in our Saviour’s life. Love beautified and ennobled all His actions. Love is of God. The unconsecrated heart cannot originate or produce it. It is found only in the heart where Jesus reigns. “We love, because He first loved us.” 1 John 4:19, R.V. In the heart renewed by divine grace, love is the principle of action. It modifies the character, governs the impulses, controls the passions, subdues enmity, and ennobles the affections. This love, cherished in the soul, sweetens the life and sheds a refining influence on all around. {SC 59.3}

Every soul that refuses to give himself to God is under the control of another power. He is not his own. He may talk of freedom, but he is in the most abject slavery. He is not allowed to see

the beauty of truth, for his mind is under the control of Satan. While he flatters himself that he is following the dictates of his own judgment, he obeys the will of the prince of darkness. Christ came to break the shackles of sin-slavery from the soul. "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" sets us "free from the law of sin and death." Romans 8:2. {DA 466.3}

In the work of redemption there is no compulsion. No external force is employed. Under the influence of the Spirit of God, man is left free to choose whom he will serve. In the change that takes place when the soul surrenders to Christ, there is the highest sense of freedom. The expulsion of sin is the act of the soul itself. True, we have no power to free ourselves from Satan's control; but when we desire to be set free from sin, and in our great need cry out for a power out of and above ourselves, the powers of the soul are imbued with the divine energy of the Holy Spirit, and they obey the dictates of the will in fulfilling the will of God. {DA 466.4}

The nearer we come to Jesus, and the more clearly we discern the purity of His character, the more clearly shall we see the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the less shall we feel like exalting ourselves. There will be a continual reaching out of the soul after God, a continual, earnest, heartbreaking confession of sin and humbling of the heart before Him. At every advance step in our Christian experience our repentance will deepen. We shall know that our sufficiency is in Christ alone and shall make the apostle's confession our own: "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing." "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Romans 7:18; Galatians 6:14. {AA 561.2}

Jesus, considered as a man, was perfect, yet He grew in grace. Luke 2:52: "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." Even the most perfect Christian may increase continually in the knowledge and love of God. {1T 339.8}

Sanctification is not the work of a moment, an hour, or a day. It is a continual growth in grace. We know not one day how strong will be our conflict the next. Satan lives, and is active, and every day we need to cry earnestly to God for help and strength to resist him. As long as Satan reigns we shall have self to subdue, besetments to overcome, and there is no stopping place, there is no point to which we can come and say we have fully attained. {1T 340.2}

The Christian life is constantly an onward march. {1T 340.4}

As in nature, so in grace; there can be no life without growth. The plant must either grow or die. As its growth is silent and imperceptible, but continuous, so is the development of the Christian life. At every stage of development our life may be perfect; yet if God's purpose for us is fulfilled, there will be continual advancement. Sanctification is the work of a lifetime. As our opportunities multiply, our experience will enlarge, and our knowledge increase. We shall

become strong to bear responsibility, and our maturity will be in proportion to our privileges. {COL 65.2}

God's ideal for His children is higher than the highest human thought can reach. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." This command is a promise. The plan of redemption contemplates our complete recovery from the power of Satan. Christ always separates the contrite soul from sin. . . . {DA 311.2}

When the Lord has a genuine channel of light, there are always plenty of counterfeits. Satan will surely enter any door thrown open for him. He will give messages of truth mingling with the truth ideas of his own, prepared to mislead souls. . . . In God's dealings with His people, all is quiet; with those who trust in Him, all is calm and unpretending. There will be simple, true, earnest believers in the Bible, and there will be doers of the Word as well as hearers. There will be sound, earnest, sensible waiting upon God.—Letter 102, 1894. {2SM 22.1}

Such transformation of character as is seen in the life of John is ever the result of communion with Christ. There may be marked defects in the character of an individual, yet when he becomes a true disciple of Christ, the power of divine grace transforms and sanctifies him. Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, he is changed from glory to glory, until he is like Him whom he adores. {AA 559.1}

As God is holy in His sphere, so fallen man, through faith in Christ, is to be holy in his sphere. {AA 559.2}

Those who are in connection with God are channels for the power of the Holy Spirit. . . . The inner life of the soul will reveal itself in the outward conduct. {HP 22.8}

Our Saviour compares Himself to a vine, of which His followers are the branches. He plainly declares that all who would be His disciples must bring forth fruit; and then He shows how they may become fruitful branches. "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me" (John 15:4). {SL 80.1}

While the wind is itself invisible, it produces effects that are seen and felt. So the work of the Spirit upon the soul will reveal itself in every act of him who has felt its saving power. When the Spirit of God takes possession of the heart, it transforms the life. Sinful thoughts are put away, evil deeds are renounced; love, humility, and peace take the place of anger, envy, and strife. Joy takes the place of sadness, and the countenance reflects the light of heaven. No one sees the hand that lifts the burden, or beholds the light descend from the courts above. The blessing comes when by faith the soul surrenders itself to God. Then that power which no human eye can see creates a new being in the image of God. {DA 173.1}

It is impossible for finite minds to comprehend the work of redemption. Its mystery exceeds human knowledge; yet he who passes from death to life realizes that it is a divine reality. The

beginning of redemption we may know here through a personal experience. Its results reach through the eternal ages. {DA 173.2}

Thus it is with the truly righteous man. He is unconscious of his goodness and piety. Religious principle has become the spring of his life and conduct, and it is just as natural for him to bear the fruits of the Spirit as for the fig tree to bear figs or for the rosebush to yield roses. His nature is so thoroughly imbued with love for God and his fellow men that he works the works of Christ with a willing heart. {SL 13.1}

All who come within the sphere of his influence perceive the beauty and fragrance of his Christian life, while he himself is unconscious of it, for it is in harmony with his habits and inclinations. He prays for divine light, and loves to walk in that light. It is his meat and drink to do the will of his heavenly Father. His life is hid with Christ in God; yet he does not boast of this, nor seem conscious of it. God smiles upon the humble and lowly ones who follow closely in the footsteps of the Master. Angels are attracted to them, and love to linger about their path. They may be passed by as unworthy of notice by those who claim exalted attainments and who delight in making prominent their good works, but heavenly angels bend lovingly over them and are as a wall of fire round about them. {SL 13.2}

Christ Himself calls our attention to the growth of the vegetable world as an illustration of the agency of His Spirit in sustaining spiritual life. The sap of the vine, ascending from the root, is diffused to the branches, sustaining growth and producing blossoms and fruit. So the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Saviour, pervades the soul, renews the motives and affections, and brings even the thoughts into obedience to the will of God, enabling the receiver to bear the precious fruit of holy deeds. {AA 284.1}