

The Whole Christ - An Introduction to James

James 1:18-22

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¹⁸ Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

¹⁹ Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; ²⁰ for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

²¹ Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

²² But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves

Main Idea

The grace of God is a package deal, beginning with His sovereign election and effectual calling, and continuing with His power to set us apart and transform our lives. All moral imperatives for the Christian life are rooted in this grace.

James 2:14

¹⁴ What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him?

James 2:24

²⁴ You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.

The Whole Christ

The central message of James is not a message about meritorious works... it's not about doing good in order to earn God's favor. It's about the effectiveness and power of the grace of God on behalf of His people.

James is teaching us about the nature of saving faith: that we're justified by faith alone, but justifying faith is never alone - it's accompanied by a love of God and inclination to obey Him.

James calls us to obedience, not as an enemy of grace, but precisely because of grace. The obedience is part of grace... The works are a part of grace.

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Legalism:

Treating the Law or other moral behavior as the grounds of our acceptance with God. Believing that good works are meritorious.

Antinomianism:

Treating the Law or other moral behavior as irrelevant and unnecessary for the Christian life. Denying that good works are a legitimate expectation for Christians.

The Whole Christ – All of God's Grace

By Grace:

• God willed to for us to be saved before we were willing to be saved (vs 18)

¹⁸ **Of his own will** he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

Ephesians 1:3-5

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴ even as

he chose us in him **before the foundation of the**

world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵ he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus

Christ, **according to the purpose of his will**

Our election was a decisive action based on God's deliberate choice
apart from our merit

Romans 9:16

¹⁶ So then it [salvation] depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy.

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By Grace:

1. God willed to for us to be saved before we were willing to be saved (vs 18)
2. God brought us to life through the gospel message (vs 18)

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Ephesians 2:1-5

... **you were dead** in the trespasses and sins ² in which you once walked... and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. ⁴ **But God**, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, **made us alive** together with Christ—by grace you have been saved

Our effectual calling was an act of God, whereby He raised us up from spiritual deadness and made us alive

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Ephesians 1:11-13

¹¹ In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, ¹² so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. ¹³ In him you also, when you heard **the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation**, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit

Our effectual calling was an act of God, whereby He used the Holy Spirit and the Word of God to regenerate us.

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James 2:10-13

... **whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it.** ¹¹ For he who said, “Do not commit adultery,” also said, “Do not murder.” If you do not commit adultery but do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.

¹² So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty. ¹³ For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy...

James 2:10

¹⁰ For **whoever** keeps the whole law and yet **stumbles in one point,**
he has become guilty of all.

James 3:2

... we all stumble in many ways. And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body

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2. God brought us to life through the gospel message (vs 18)
3. He set us apart to be consecrated to Him for worship (vs 18)

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1 Peter 2:9

⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, **a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you** out of darkness into his marvelous light.

God's Grace bestowed upon us is intended to result in His worship

Ephesians 2:8-10

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For **we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.**

God's Grace includes good works that saved-by-grace Christians can expect to walk in.

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4. He gives us confidence to live a life of love and obedience (19-22)

...²¹ Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. ²² But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves

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