

3. The **third** virtue is **εὐπειθής** (*eupeithēs*), translated, “reasonable.” The King James Version translates this word with the phrase, “easy to be entreated.” That’s not quite it. This word is used for submission to military discipline in particular and it generally refers to being easily persuaded, willing to yield, and to be compliant. Here’s some background:

In Plato, it refers to the person who obeys the laws, and in Josephus, disciplined troops; but this obedience becomes more flexible in Philo and especially in Epictetus, where the wise person is open to reasonable persuasion and, being deferent, characterized by compliance (*eupeítheia*) [disposition to please or comply]. Thus, *eupeítheia* in the first century implies goodwill and mutual understanding: it refers not to passive obedience but to an inclination to accept suggestions and conform to them willingly.

The connection with *epieikēs* in James 3:17 suggests that *eupeithēs* should have a coordinate meaning: wisdom is open to reasons that are supplied; it is willing to be convinced, agrees to follow instructions, strives to be conciliatory. The papyri confirm this meaning: “to be in agreement, to be satisfied.”⁴

Use of the word, “reasonable” is fine to define *eupeithēs*, but the better word to capture the essence of *eupeithēs* is the adjective, **affable**, which “implies easy approachability and readiness to respond pleasantly to requests or proposals (MWCD. 11th ed.).

4. The **fourth** entry includes two concepts: (1) full of mercy, and (2) good fruits. We will take them up independently.

The phrase “full of mercy” includes the ablative of source of the noun, **ἔλεος** (*éleos*): “mercy.” “Full” is the descriptive adjective, **μεστός** (*mestós*). This describes the person’s full investment in the principle of mercy.

The concept is the mental attitude of compassion:

Éleos is the feeling of one who is moved by the sight of another’s suffering and in a way shares in it: compassion.

⁴ Ibid., “εὐπειθής,” 2:129–130.



Aristotle defines *éleos* as “a pain following upon the sight of a destructive or painful evil that strikes a person who does not deserve it and that one might expect to suffer oneself or see one’s own dear ones suffer.”⁵

The phrase, “full of mercy,” refers to the status quo of wisdom in the soul of a mature believer which in this case exemplifies the power maximum doctrine produces in opposition to the various verbal sins vilified by James in James 3:1–16.

When a believer’s wisdom is so cultivated that no matter what the circumstance, he is able to respond with divine viewpoint. Consequently, when a believer applies principles of divine viewpoint to difficult situations common to human life, he is displaying the virtues of mercy, sympathy, commiseration, and **compassion**.

The sequence continues with the application of this compassion:

5. The **fifth** phrase, “good fruits,” is a way to describe the volitional decision to execute the mental attitude of compassion which results in divine good.

First is the adjective **ἀγαθός (*agathós*)**: “good,” which is both beneficial and benevolent and describes the resultant production of “good works.”

These good works are mentioned next by the plural noun **καρπός (*karpós*)**: “the metaphorical use of the term to describe the production of the believer enabled by “the Holy Spirit.”

In this context, the **production of divine good** is made functional by the filling ministry of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit’s enabling power combined with application from a doctrinal inventory results in putting grace into action.

Divine Good may be defined as those Christian works and Christian service which are acceptable to God and His standards. They must originate from the grace of God under the filling of the Holy Spirit and spiritual growth.

Here are some pertinent principles on the believer’s production of divine good:

Principles on Divine Good Compared with Human Good

1. The Greek word for “good” is **ἀγαθός (*agathós*)** and in Scripture it has two prevalent applications, divine good and human good.

⁵ Ibid., “ἐλεος,” 1:471–472.



2. Divine good finds its source in God while human good is associated with the personal works of mankind. Motivated by principles found in Scripture, believers are enabled to produce divine good under the mentorship of the Holy Spirit.
3. Human good is accomplished by multiple resources that vary with different cultures and are frequently inspired by the religions that define them.
4. Divine good is the production of biblically stimulated decisions that apply biblical principles to life and circumstances. As a result, these efforts are rewardable at the Evaluation Tribunal of Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:10 cp., Revelation 2–3)
5. Therefore, divine good is based on the eternal standards and doctrines of Scripture that are retained in the souls of the believer.
6. When he volitionally recalls and applies these divine ideas, he has produced divine good. Human good is based on standards concocted from the cosmic systems and corrupted by human viewpoint.
7. Divine good performed by the believer is the result of the grace provisions of God: **(1)** the filling of the Holy Spirit, **(2)** problem-solving devices, **(3)** promises, **(4)** doctrines, and **(5)** application of these assets.
8. Summary: Unless the steps noted in point 7 are followed, no divinely approved works will result.
9. The “work” produced is by means of grace. The impact of the work is based on divine policies learned, facilitated, and applied by the ministries of the Holy Spirit.
10. The false doctrine that salvation is attainable only by performing “good works” means the power to acquire salvation is dependent upon the efforts of an unbeliever.
11. The works for salvation were accomplished by Jesus Christ on the cross: **(1)** He confirmed the power of submitting totally to divine guidance from the Holy Spirit, **(2)** He rejected all temptations to do otherwise, and **(3)** He willingly did the work of being judged for the sins of the human race up to the point he proclaimed, “It is finished” (John 19:30).
12. Jesus Christ did the work; the unbeliever benefits by placing his personal faith in Jesus Christ for salvation and eternal life:



John 3:16 “For God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes [πιστεύω (*pisteúō*): a transitive verb that demands an object] in Him [αὐτός (*autós*): Jesus Christ Who is the working object)] shall not perish, but have eternal life.”
(NASB)

13. The person to whom Jesus made His remarks was Nicodemus, a Pharisee and during that period of his life was an unbeliever. As such, he was unable to discern spiritual concepts.
14. Because of this deficiency, Nicodemus came to the Lord with this question:

John 3:2 “Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do the things that You do unless God is with Him.”

15. To this Jesus responded with a comment which was totally confusing to the soul of Nicodemus, nevertheless, the Lord began His comments by affirming the accuracy of what He was about to say:

John 3:3 “Truly, truly [Ἀμήν, ἀμήν (*Amēn*, *amēn*): “I am telling you the truth”], I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of heaven.”

16. Nicodemus was incapable of discerning the Lord’s statement indicated by his response in:

John 3:4 Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born, can he?”

17. Obviously not, if the conversation is to be interpreted literally. What the Lord is saying is indeed a literal statement. It must be interpreted not from logical, human rationales, but rather from the viewpoint of divine absolutes. The Lord’s answer was oriented to the latter in:

John 3:5 “I am telling you the truth; I say to you, unless one is born of water [physical birth] and the Spirit [spiritual birth] he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

18. Nicodemus ultimately came around to the Lord’s way of thinking. This category of thinking required Nicodemus to focus his thinking on spiritual principles rather than those of an earthly variety.

