

8. The Declaration's opening Statement established the foundational principle for how a free and functional society ought to order itself which requires a rational appeal to the intellect:

**We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal ...**

9. The egalitarians of our present day are prone to cite this sentence fragment by imputing a period after the word "equal." They do so without reading further, but rather leave the phrase, "created equal," to stand alone as if the entire document rests upon that nebulous statement.

10. However, the sentence does not stop there; instead, following the comma, it stipulates what "these truths" happen to be and with which all members of the nation may engage and enjoy:

**We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness.**

11. What are the "self-evident truths" to which "all Men," who are "created equally," may "pursue"? The first is "Life," the privilege from "their Creator" to live their own lives as they see fit while doing so within the environment of "Liberty."
12. This refers to the Law of Liberty which allows everyone "equally" to "pursue their happiness" restrained only by the laws of the land.
13. "Equality" allows all citizens to function within the environment of "Liberty" in pursuit of those endeavors they trust will result in their "general happiness." Some choose to pursue one path while others pursue another.
14. Those who take advantage of their "Liberty" remain free to make the "pursuit." Some make good choices others not so much. However, this freedom allows each person to make good choices from a position of strength or, sadly, for others, to make poor choices from a position of weakness.
15. We are all equally responsible for our own decisions whether good or bad.
16. Finally, and most importantly, on what are these principles founded? The Statement clearly indicates that "all Men are created equal." But by means of what resource?
17. The next phrase clearly states, "they are endowed by their Creator." This clause reveals the Source of the endowment to be Jesus Christ Who is identified as our Creator in Colossians 1:16–17.



18. Our Lord is said to have endowed us with “certain unalienable Rights” of which some are cited: (1) Life, (2) Liberty, and (3) the Pursuit of Happiness.
19. The words “endow” and “endowment” are primarily defined in modern English dictionaries as a legal grant from a “dower” as the benefactor, to an individual or organization, in the form of funds or property.
20. However, in the 1700s, “endowment” had quite a different meaning and once observed gave important insight into Jefferson’s choice of words:

**Endowment: That which is given or bestowed on the person or mind by the creator; gift of nature; any quality or faculty bestowed by the creator.<sup>2</sup>**

21. What Jefferson included in the divine endowment were, “unalienable Rights.” **Unalienable:** “that cannot be alienated; as *unalienable* rights.”<sup>3</sup>
- The word group under “alien” in Webster’s 1828 dictionary provides the meanings associated with this noun: **Alienability:** The capacity of being transferred. **Alienable:** That which may be sold or transferred to another. **Alienate:** To transfer title, property, or right to another. **Alienation:** A transfer of a legal conveyance of property to another.<sup>4</sup>
22. Some have made the assertion that Jefferson’s use of “unalienable” in the Declaration’s Statement is a misspelling and insist on spelling the word, “inalienable.” As noted above, Webster’s 1828 dictionary includes Jefferson’s spelling with the definition, “cannot be alienated.”
23. Many modern dictionaries cite “unalienable” but reference the reader to “inalienable.” Both spellings were in use in the early 1600s, so there is no need to adjust Jefferson’s spelling.
24. What Jefferson’s statement does is to certify the inflexibility of colonists’ belief that the crown was imposing upon them regulations that violate their “unalienable rights.”
25. Patrick Henry was opposed to Virginia’s ratification of the Constitution unless certain of these “unalienable rights” were amended into the Constitution so that some future tyrant could not deny them afresh.
26. Henry’s efforts resulted in an agreement that once the Constitution was ratified, at Congress’s first assembly, certain rights would be codified into the document. When the first ten Amendments were approved, they became known as the Bill of Rights.

<sup>2</sup> Noah Webster, *American Dictionary of the English Language* (New York: S. Converse, 1820), s.v. “endowment.”

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, s.v. “unalienable.”

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, s.vv. “alienability,” “alienable,” “alienate,” “alienation.”



27. Article V of the Constitution requires that an Amendment may be proposed following a two-thirds vote by both houses of Congress, presently 67 votes in the Senate and 290 votes in the House. Then, three-fourths or presently 38 of the states, must vote yes for ratification.<sup>5</sup>
28. Recently, some governors have ordered the prohibition of certain unalienable rights by prohibiting free exercise of religion, of speech, of peaceable assembly, or bearing of arms, all of which are reserved “to the people.”
29. We are presently seeing daily examples of human good being enforced upon many citizens which violate our “unalienable rights.” Often these efforts are motivated by human good but have the danger of being converted into evil.
40. Underlying these motives is the undercurrent of fear which has been fomented by those currently in positions of authority to violate several constitutional rights and, so far, done so with impunity.
41. There is the sneaking suspicion that death from this virus gives credence to a hidden agenda: the destruction of the economy followed by massive unemployment, failure to pay mortgages, loans, and monthly bills, and the resultant inability to provide necessities for the family unit.
42. And never forget this: the attack of the coronavirus was in the divine decree in eternity past and it has now been allowed to invade client nation America. The loss of establishment and doctrinal thought over the past 100 years has resulted in the potential destruction of our way of life.
43. The prognostications of these circumstances were the subjects of three recent Shreveport Bible Conferences: **(1)** in 2012: *The Divine Decree* (<http://www.joegriffin.org/media-archive/our-class-catalog/sbc12/>), **(2)** in 2013: *Whirlwind: The Four-Generation Curse* (<http://www.joegriffin.org/media-archive/our-class-catalog/sbc13/>), and **(3)** in 2014: *Gospel’s Missionary Journey* <http://www.joegriffin.org/media-archive/our-class-catalog/sbc14/>).
44. The three links above take you to the audio streams of these studies. John Smith edited each of the three into small booklets under the same titles. They are available at the church or by mail order to: Joe Griffin Media Ministries, 1821 South River Road, St. Charles, MO 63303-4124.
45. Human good is on a rampage throughout the country. The problems within the souls of believers and collectively within the churches are what James has been assaulting in our studies since October 02, 2016 when we studied the first verse in *James: Chapter One*.

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<sup>5</sup> “The Constitution” in *Forty Proclamations: The Theology of Grace Doctrine Church* (St. Charles, MO: Joe Griffin Media Ministries, 2011), 70–71.



46. So far, we have spent 3 and one-half years of studying constant corrections by James about the way we think, the way we speak, and the way we live. It is the failure of the church that permits the human good and evil of the devil's world to gain a foothold in a client nation.
47. We have just finished James's diatribe on envy. In Chapter 4, James once again will point out our failures while offering some encouraging words along the way, yet he relentlessly keeps up the pressure.
48. The undercurrent remains the same: stop your merciless indulgence in mental attitude sins, sins of the tongue, and actions that are overtly sinful.
49. Returning now to our verse in James 3:17, we have been developing the "Six Honorable Virtues" and we now arrive at the last one on the list:
6. The **sixth** predicate adjective is **ἀδιάκριτος** (*adiákritos*) which is translated, "unwavering," in the NASB translation. Other translations include, "without partiality" in the KJV and "impartial" in the NIV, and NET. Here is some commentary on how this word should be translated:

**ἀδιάκριτος. Its only occurrence in the New Testament is at James 3:17. Here it is used of the wisdom which is from above. It means "without doubts and hypocrisy." It expresses the distinctive assurance and resolution of faith, and also the reliability of Jesus Christ. The best rendering is perhaps "without wavering," "unshakable." "... a mind which is unshakable in patience."**<sup>6</sup>

1. The passage describes the character of a believer who is functioning under the Law of Freedom. He has an inventory of doctrine from which he permits others to hold their ideas and opinions freely.
2. His policy is to allow others the latitude to express themselves from their own inventories of ideas without prejudice while still holding fast to his own principles.
3. This is the execution of the Royal Law, which allows others to use their free will to express themselves from their souls' inventories.

<sup>6</sup> Friedrich Büchsel, "ἀδιάκριτος," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1965), 3>950–951.



4. He likewise is also free to hold his own beliefs quite to the contrary, but under the doctrine of “love your neighbor,” he has doctrinal strength of character to remain unbiased toward those who disagree with his viewpoint.
5. The word “**unbiased**” is “more strongly the absence of all prejudice or prepossession and a disposition to be fair to all.”<sup>7</sup>
6. The final two words of the verse are, “without hypocrisy.” The Greek in just one word, another predicate adjective, **ἀνυπόκριτος** (*anupókritos*).
7. This word is a summation of the adjectives that define wisdom throughout the verse. Thus, the summation of the presence of the believer’s possession of pure **σοφία** (*sophía*): “wisdom” is *anupókritos*: “**authentic**.”

**It is indeed true that the sense of sincerity or rectitude is implied in all these occurrences, especially in James 3:17, where wisdom is first of all qualified by pure ἁγνός** (*hagnós*) [pure, perfect, holy] and finally by **ἀδιάκριτος** (*adiákritos*) : “unwavering” which also carries the idea of impartiality.

**This text contrasts the wisdom that comes from above with wisdom that is terrestrial, diabolical (verse 15), and the eight characteristics listed are intended to define the true *sophía* in terms of its essential components so that it can be distinguished from counterfeits. This amounts to conformity with the very nature of virtue, and *anupókritos*<sup>8</sup> must be translated “authentic.”<sup>9</sup>**

8. Verse 17 contains James’s counterpoint to all of the critiques he has addressed throughout the third chapter. The verse contains eight qualifiers for a believer to possess “**authenticity**.”
9. Here is the expanded translation of:

<sup>7</sup> *Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary* (1953), s.v., “fair”: synonym (2), “unbiased.”

<sup>8</sup> *Υποκριτής* (*Hupokrités*) refers to the Greek actor, the comic player; hence Hippocrates: “Comedians and deceivers—say, in front of people who know them, certain things and have other things in mind. The first meaning of *anupókritos*: is this “not good at acting on stage, then: “one must be an honest person, without pretense” (Ceslas Spicq, “ἀνυπόκριτος,” in *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*, trans. and ed. James D. Ernest (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 1:134).

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:134–35).

