

10. The divine attribute of love is the motivation for God's grace policy toward mankind.
2. James describes himself as a "bond-slave" of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is the noun **δοῦλος (*doúlos*)**: "slave; servant." This word is translated "bond-servant" in the New American Standard.
3. There is controversy over how *doúlos* ought to be translated, "slave," or "servant." Each is fine for each contains the idea of being a devotee of someone else, in this case "the Lord Jesus Christ."
4. *Doúlos* is the genitive of possession of the noun **κύριος (*kúrios*)**: "Lord." James is stating that he "belongs to God" whom he identifies as Jesus Christ.
5. This designation is chosen by James instead of his familial relationship to Jesus in His true humanity of half-brother.
6. This shows James's humility which is expressed by his respecting and stressing the hypostatic union of Jesus which consists of His true humanity and undiminished deity.
7. James's *doúlos* relationship with Jesus is described in these annotations about this word in the NET Bible:

Though **δοῦλος (*doúlos*)** is normally translated "servant," the word does not bear the connotation of a free individual serving another. The most accurate translation is "bondservant," in that it often indicates one who sells himself into slavery to another.¹

Undoubtedly the background for the concept of being the Lord's slave or servant is to be found in the Old Testament scriptures. For a Jew this concept did not connote drudgery, but honor and privilege. It was used for national Israel at times (Isaiah 43:10), but was especially associated with famous Old Testament personalities, including such great men as Moses (Joshua 14:7), David (Psalm 89:3); cf. 2 Samuel 7:5, 8) and Elijah (2 Kings 10:10); all these men were "servants (or slaves) of the Lord."²
8. The humility expressed by James stresses the mental attitude that is essential for those who study his Epistle. Preconceived personal opinions by any believer of himself will be dispelled in the course of the five chapters.

¹ The NET Bible (Dallas: Biblical Studies Press, 1996–2005), 2352tn2.

² Ibid., 2352sn2.

9. James, although half-brother of Jesus left that relationship aside in order to express his voluntary submission to the authority of the risen Messiah.
10. True greatness is found in those who put self aside in order to serve God and Christ. Regardless of the trials, exigencies, difficulties, or kerfuffles that naturally define life on this earth, humility, flexibility, and graciousness define the problem-solving devices that are to undergird one's responses.
11. Principle: Honor the Word and you will glorify Christ, not self. God was reconciled by the work of Christ on the cross. Believers are to be reconciled with fellow believers through the same forgiveness that God provided for our sins at salvation.
12. James will present numerous guidelines toward this objective as we observe the numerous imperative moods he presents in his Epistle.

Four Erroneous Perceptions Addressed in the Book of James

I. Your Physical Birth:

1. The fact James was the first-born natural son of Joseph and Mary and half-brother of Jesus gave him no physical or spiritual advantage, no fame or prosperity by association.
2. Researching the family tree is a hobby of some and it is interesting to discover the personalities in one's chart pedigree. Dig deeply and long enough and you may discover some who accomplished noble acts, but also be prepared to unearth some horse thieves in the process.
3. However, honestly and without prejudice know and accept this truth: some of our ancestors are royal family and are presently with the Lord while others reside presently in Torments *en route* to the Great White Throne.
4. You and all your forebears and present progeny were and presently are terminally infected with a sin nature. This problem was resolved for those who placed their faith in Christ.

5. James's parents are regarded as biblical heroes and he is one of the Lord's apostles and writer of one of the books of the New Testament.
6. Neither his family's chart pedigree nor his physical birth meant anything until he placed his faith in Jesus as the Messiah.

II. Talent and Abilities:

1. Unfortunately, some believe that their talents and abilities enable them to win the approbation and approval and even enjoyment of God.
2. Some of the talents that gain wide approval, generate approbation, elicit applause, and confer accolades are the innate abilities to sing, play an instrument, or compose music.
3. Some who are well blessed with these talents develop the notion they are more spiritual than others and wrongly interpret complements as approval from God.
4. For some such individuals, their talents and performances are unfortunately an exercise in human good at best and evil at worse.
5. On the other hand, when a talented person is grace oriented, is motivated by grace to contribute a biblically thorough presentation, and requires no public recognition for his efforts, then he has produced divine good and the audience has received a grace blessing.
6. Presently, the most popular and in many churches required talent is in the field of music. Choirs, orchestras, soloists, instrumentalists, and directors now dominate the time allotted to worship services.
7. Principle: The entertainment of the congregation is not the duty of the church. Music is to teach or review doctrine, primarily about God, not to God.
8. When music is an accessory to the communication of biblical truth, then it is advantageous but its presentation must be motivated by service, not for aggrandizement.

9. Being a servant of the Lord is the proper motivation and those who have certain physical endowments contribute these talents with the desire to magnify God, Jesus, and the Word.

III. Grace Orientation Excludes Human Assets

1. Personal appearance is the result of the gene pool crapsheet and the individual has nothing to do with the outcome.
2. A man may appear handsome or frightening but the real person is determined by the content of his soul. An attractive person may have a cesspool for a soul while the unattractive one reflects the glory of God.
3. Same for women. Some are drop-dead gorgeous while others are occasionally referred to in the South by the compassionate idiom, "Bless her heart." Yet the real person is reflected by the soul.
4. The point is that one cannot help or change what volition did not physically create, but it can reflect what doctrine produces in the soul.
5. Chemicals and clothing can do wonders for many, but nothing can cover up a soul ruled by the cosmic systems.
6. Some are blessed with stentorian voices that attract and maintain attention, but the content of the message reflects the integrity of the soul or lack of it.
7. In most of the Hollywood-esque pulpits of bread-and-circus churches, men and often women, dressed in Oxford suits and Neiman Marcus dresses, prance around the rostrum, emitting their false doctrines while peddling their colportage to thousands of captivated customers.
8. Some of these people have the gift of pastor-teacher, but have bought into a false message while sounding convincing in the process. Others are slick-tongued charlatans preaching a counterfeit doctrine while swindling the easily impressed and spiritually ignorant.