

The New Testament in Four Groups

<u>(James)</u>	<u>(Peter)</u>	<u>(Paul)</u>	<u>(John)</u>
Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
		Acts	1 John
James	1 Peter		2 John
	2 Peter	Romans	3 John
		1 Corinthians	Revelation
	Jude	2 Corinthians	
		Galatians	
		Ephesians	
		Philippians	
		Colossians	
		1 Thessalonians	
		2 Thessalonians	
		1 Timothy	
		2 Timothy	
		Titus	
		Philemon	
		Hebrews	

The Book of James

Topic: Christian conduct

Purpose: “so that you may be mature and complete” (1:4)

Key Text: (1:2-4)

[2] Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, [3] knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. [4] And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

Themes:

Genuine vs. Counterfeit

- Genuine vs. Counterfeit Religion (1:26-27)
- Genuine vs. Counterfeit Faith (2:14-26)
- Genuine vs. Counterfeit Wisdom (3:13-18)

Being Double-Minded

- (1:6-8) “A double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.”
- (2:1)
- (3:8-12)
- (4:4)
- (4:8) “Purify your hearts, you double-minded.”

Outline of the Book of James

- I. The Promise (1:1-25)
- II. The Goal (1:26-4:6)
 - A. Visiting Orphans and Widows–Love (2:1-26)
 - B. Bridling the Tongue (3:1-12)
 - C. Keeping Unstained by the World (3:13-4:6)
- III. The Solution: Humility before God (4:7-10)
- IV. Humility before God Illustrated (4:11-5:20)
 - A. Avoid Slandering Your Brother (4:11-12)
 - B. Avoid Presumptuous Planning (4:13-17)
 - C. Be Patient When Oppressed (5:1-11)
 - D. Speak the Truth (5:12)
 - E. Confess Sins to One Another and Pray (5:13-20)

Two Questions about James 5:13-20:

1. What is the oil for? The prayer of faith? The healing?
2. What does the command to “confess your sins to one another” (v.16) obligate us to do?

The Sin unto Death

(1 Corinthians 11:27-32; James 5:13-20; 1 John 5:13-17)

-Only for a Believer

(1 Corinthians 11:32)

-Not Punishment, but Discipline

(1 Corinthians 11:32)

-Rare, Unusual?

(1 John 5:13-18)

-A Sickness May Be for the Same Purpose

(1 Corinthians 11:30)

LUTHER ON PRIVATE CONFESSION

“I will let no one take away private confession and would not exchange it for all the wealth of the world, for I know what strength and comfort it has given me.”

“We keep this method that a penitent relates certain sins that bother him the most. Even if thousands and thousands of worlds belonged to me, I would lose everything rather than give up the smallest part of confession in the church. Yes, rather would I accept the Papal tyranny on Fasts, Celebrations, Vestments, Cities, Plates, and Hats and whatever I could bear without destruction of the faith than that confession should be taken from the Christians.”

“Of private confession, which is now observed, I am heartily in favor, **even though it cannot be proved from the Scriptures**; it is useful and necessary, nor would I have it abolished; nay, I rejoice that it exists in the Church of Christ, for it is a cure without equal for distressed consciences.”

[The words in bold letters above illustrate a difference between the Lutheran church on the one hand, and the Reformed (Calvinists) and Anabaptists on the other hand. Lutherans and Luther himself tended to retain the church traditions which were not forbidden by Scripture, while the Reformed and especially Anabaptists tended to reject whatever church traditions could not be supported from Scripture.]

“I know the devil well. If you had known him as well as I, you would not have thrown private confession so quickly to the wind.”

[Luther directed these words toward Andreas Carlstadt, who in Luther's absence led the Reformation in Wittenberg in a more radical direction than Luther wanted and abolished private confession.]