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Structural Analysis of James via Outline

- I. INTRODUCTION 1:1
 - A. Bondservant of God and Jesus Christ
 - B. To the twelve tribes, scattered abroad (dispersion/diaspora)

While written with a Hebrew address, the early church was primarily Jewish in make-up. James is still applicable to both Jew and Gentile alike.
- II. TRIALS 1:2-15
 - A. Count it all joy when you fall into various trials
 - 1. Knowing the testing of faith produces patience
 - 2. Perfect work of patience makes perfect and complete/lacking nothing

What seems like the opposite of what one would expect, James points out the outcome of perseverance through trials, the effectual working out of faith and endurance.
- III. GOD PROVIDES – NO ROOM FOR PRIDE 1:16-20
 - A. Those who lack should ask God
 - 1. Lacking wisdom – ask God
 - 2. When asking do not doubt
 - i. Doubtters do not receive, are double-minded, unstable in ways
 - B. Lowly brothers glory in their exultation
 - C. Rich in his humiliation
 - 1. Wealth is fleeting, as the flowers of the field, he too will pass away (temporary beauty)
 - D. Temptation is rooted by own evil desires, bless are those who endure
 - 1. Blessed are those who endure temptation 1:12
 - 2. God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He tempt
 - 3. Each one is tempted by his own desires 1:13-15
 - i. Enticed, desire gives birth to sin, sin grows into death
 - E. Do not be deceived – every good and perfect gift is from above 1:16-17
 - 1. (not from man's work, all good things are distributed by God)
 - F. We are a kind of firstfruits of His creatures 1:18-19
 - 1. So then, we are to be:
 - i. Quick to listen
 - ii. Slow to speak
 - iii. Slow to wrath/anger
 - G. Instead receive with meekness (humility) the implanted word, able to save your souls 1:20-21
 - 1. Lay aside filthiness and wickedness

I believe this entire section can be encapsulated in a statement against the pride of man. If man is lacking, he should ask God – who is the ultimate Provider. It is not through man's efforts that things exist. Again, true wisdom comes from God, trying to attain it apart from Him is foolishness. The "lowly" brother are to consider how they have been exalted by God, and the rich consider their humiliation. The lowly place their faith in God for their sustenance. The rich place their faith in their wealth and their possessions, so the state of the first is better than that of the later. As it relates to trials, James puts man in his rightful place, not able to blame God, but pointing out that man's own evil desires are to blame. He then reminds the reader that man is one of God's creations, albeit a first-fruit of creation. All this is then summarized by saying we are to be quick to listen (to others – denying ourselves), slow to speak (our opinion is not the most important), and slow to wrath/anger (often due to our bruised pride). Instead, called to be meek (the antithesis of pride).

- IV. BE DOERS OF THE WORD 1:21-27
- A. Not hearers only
1. Like a man who looks upon his natural face then walks away forgetting what kind Of man he is (sinful)
- B. He who looks into the perfect law of liberty, and continues in it
1. Not forgetting, but a doer of the work, will be blessed in what he does 1:24
- The simple call and charge by James here is to do what the Word of God says, not just to read it and think knowledge without action is enough in our Christian walks. We were created to serve Him and to do good works, not for salvation, but because we are saved. The statement about viewing one's self in the mirror could be understood (since it references natural face) to mean looking and seeing yourself in your natural (sinful) state, and then walking away and forgetting that you are that sinner in need of God's grace, and having pride and looking down upon others. This would then be forgetting that you need God's grace just as much as the person you are judging, or simply forgetting your own need of God's grace and becoming swelled up again in your own pride.

- V. JUSTIFIED BY GOD, NOT LAW 2:1-13
- A. Show no partiality
- B. Following part of the law means you have failed to meet all of its requirements
- This section following the mirror example helps to solidify the thought about the prior section being about pride. The old Jewish custom and way of doing things was to try and earn your way through works and obedience to the Law. This statement shares that if that were the goal, and you failed at even one part of the Law, you would have failed completely. The Law required all parts to be fulfilled, not just some. It also identifies partiality as sin, having wicked thoughts and treating some better than others based on human ideals of value versus using God's idea of value (He values men based on their hearts, not their wallets).

- VI. FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS DEAD 2:14-26
- A. What point is having faith if no good work follows it?
- James is not stating that salvation is earned through works. He takes great pains to explain it clearly. He shares that as the body without the spirit is dead, so too faith without works is dead. He clearly identifies in that example that the "body" – the main thing itself is faith. The thing that is inside of it, the "spirit" or works, if missing would be like an empty vessel. It could literally be understood to have an empty faith. A dead faith. As beings created by God with a purpose, to skirt on our responsibility in those purposes, is to have a truly empty existence.

- VII. TEACHING AND WISDOM 3:1-18
- I propose that all of chapter three concerns teaching and wisdom.
- A. Let not many of you become teachers 3:1-8
1. Teachers receive a stricter judgement
 2. Because we all stumble in many things
 3. Because the tongue cannot be tamed by man, it is full of deadly poison
- B. With the tongue we bless God and curse men 3:9-10
1. This should not be so.
- C. Who is wise (after all)? 3:13
1. Then let him show it by the way he lives
 - i. In humility, in meekness

This is a great response to a multitude of those wanting to teach – teach through your actions, not all teachers need a pulpit, but can do so through the way they live their lives. Actions speak far louder than words. It also serves as a way to weed out those who should not be teachers (those who cannot live out what they teach).

D. Types of Wisdom

1. Evil and Demonic Wisdom

- i. Bitterness, envy, self-seeking in your hearts

These are the true colors of those desiring to teach for the wrong reasons

2. Wisdom from God

- i. Pure, peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits 3:17-18
without partiality, without hypocrisy

- ii. The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace 3:18

VIII. WORDLY FOCUS AND PRIDE 4:1-5:6

A. War and conflict arise from prideful lusts and desires

- 1. This is a worldly focus

B. You lust and do not have, so you take.

C. You do not ask God for things so do not receive

D. You ask and do not receive

- 1. Because you ask with evil motives and intent

- i. God will not bless or enable your evil desires

E. Friends of the world are enemies of God 4:4

F. The solution – God’s Grace 4:6-7

- 1. God gives Grace

- 2. Submit to God

- 3. Resist the devil, he will flee from you

- 4. Draw near to God, He will draw near to you 4:8

- 5. Humble yourself and He will lift you up 4:10

G. God is the judge

- 1. Do not judge 4:11

- 2. There is one judge, God 4:12

H. God is in control

- 1. Do not assume you have control of your life 4:13-14

- 2. All such boasting is evil 4:16

- 3. If it is the Lord’s will, you shall... 4:15

- 4. To him who knows to do good and does not do it, it is sin 4:17

(Not doing what God has called, is sin, failing to serve)

I. Do not place faith in wealth as it cannot save 4:18-5:6

- 1. All stored up wealth cannot save, it corrodes, is moth-eaten

- 2. It was obtained through evil-means

- i. Fraud, withholding wages, murder

- 3. Instead, place your faith in the Lord

IX. PATIENCE AND PRAYER 5:7-18

A. As the farmer is patient for the rains and fruit, be patience 5:7-8

B. Do not grumble against each other while waiting

C. Look at the prophets of old as examples of patience

D. Speak plainly - “yes” meaning “yes,” “no” meaning “no”, without deceit 5:12

E. Pray

- 1. In suffering 5:13

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| 2. In Illness | 5:14 |
| 3. For one another | 5:14-15 |
| 4. Effective and fervent prayer of the righteous avails much | 5:16-17 |
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| X. CONCLUSION | 5:19-20 |
| A. Turning back a stumbling brother will cover a multitude of sins | |

This conclusion is unique among many of the epistles as it does not have a farewell sign off, and simply ends almost as if it could have kept on going. Other epistles end with a charge or encouragement or a final greeting to specific persons, James ends with this statement of bringing back a stumbling brother.