

# The Book Of James: Keeping It Real

## James 1:16-18

Last week we learned from our text in The Book of James that there were two kinds of relationships we could have with God—one based on *blessing* and one based on *blame*. The Christian who lives in denial and refuses holy correction resorts to projecting blame on God and others. You may be asking—is that person really saved then? The answer to that question leads us into today's teaching—*don't be deceived about who God is!*

### **1John 1:5-10**

*This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.*

A relationship with God typified by blame is one bearing unrighteous fruit:

### **Galatians 5:19-21**

*Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*

Fruit is obvious. You can see it. You can taste it. For better or for worse. But James tells us—along with the persecuted, scattered, and suffering Christian Jews—in no uncertain terms DON'T BE DECEIVED ABOUT WHO GOD IS:

### **James 1:16**

**(KJV)** *Do not err, my beloved brethren.*

**(NIV)** *Don't be deceived, my dear brothers and sisters.*

And let me add this: DON'T BE DECEIVED ABOUT WHO ARE HIS!

God's redeemed children—through His righteous Son Jesus—bear righteous fruit:

### **Galatians 5:22-24**

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.*

God's children have discerning—not selective—ears to hear. They hear with Christ's humility. They are teachable. They are trustworthy. They are holy as He is holy:

**1Peter 1:15-16**

*But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.*

Not perfect. Not perfected. But degree to degree, glory to glory—His children are bearing righteous fruit for God:

**John 15:8**

*Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.*

They are becoming more like Jesus as they look to Him (Hebrews 12:2; 2 Corinthians 3:18), they follow Him (Matthew 4:18-22), and they obey Him (John 14:15).

And they love. Oh, they love. They love well!

**John 13:34-35**

*A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*

Maybe this global pandemic has hardened your heart, isolated you from the ones you used to share sweet fellowship with. Maybe you have become a divisive voice online instead of lifting up holy hands in prayer with your co-labourers in Christ (1 Timothy 2:8). If you are distanced right now from God's own—and harbouring hate in your heart—you are distanced from God Himself!

James says, *do not err*. Don't be deceived. *This is Who God is:*

**James 1:17**

**(KJV)** *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*

**(NIV)** *Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.*

He is set apart as holy in heaven (Matthew 6:9). He is only good (1 Chronicles 16:34). He only gives good gifts (James 1:17). He lives in unapproachable light (1 Timothy 6:16). He is unchanging, trustworthy, and faithful (James 1:17). He is love (1 John 4:8).

That's who God is.

And here's what God does:

**James 1:18**

**(KJV)** *Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.*

**(NIV)** *He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.*

We could embark on a thorough theological breakdown of this verse, but instead let me conclude with this beautiful truth:

***John 3:16***

*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

That *whosoever* is you, beloved.

~ Reverend Darren McClelland