

Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. James 5:8 (KJV).

The believer has a struggle. On one hand, he has been gloriously saved from Sin. On the other hand the tug of Sin is still there. As we leave the study of James we need to understand an important point. Living the Christian life involves struggle. James, on the other hand, introduces an element in the church – counterfeit Christians.

Here's what MacArthur says:

Counterfeiting is a major problem in our society. Forged money, credit cards, jewelry, works of art, and virtually everything else of value are passed off as genuine to deceive the unwary. Consequently, valuable commodities must be carefully examined to determine their genuineness.

That is also true of the most valuable commodity of all—saving faith. A right relationship to the living, holy God of the universe with the promise of eternal heaven is incomparably priceless. Those who think they have it should carefully examine and test it to determine its validity. To be deceived by counterfeit money or a counterfeit work of art results only in temporal loss; to be deceived by a counterfeit faith results in eternal tragedy. —MacArthur *The New Testament Commentary*.

Transparency in our faith is a good thing. The keystone of Christian Faith is the absolute assurance that Jesus Christ is one's Savior. So, on one hand, we need to examine our lives to be sure of our relationship but, on the other hand, once our relationship with Jesus Christ as

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Savior has been established we should place all our confidence in Him to save us – especially from our own ill-conceived ideas of the genuine Christian life. This is the challenge that James presents to us. The word **patient** is from makrothumeō – it means to be far from anger. Strange use of this word, perhaps at first glance, but think about it – how many times have we become impatient with ourselves because of the lack of progress in our spiritual lives only to become even more frustrated with our apparent lack of meeting the spiritual objectives we have set in our lives. But to become ensnared with a troubled conscience is at least debilitating – in it's worse case it robs the Christian of his joy and from there potentially leads to a life of defeat.

At the end of things James turns to the true believer and encourages him to be patient – that is to be far from anger with ourselves and to establish our faith. That, my friends, is the struggle that is before us.

The Struggle Within – Dealing with Sin.

O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? Romans 7:24 (KJV).

Paul the apostle certainly was a firebrand. Everything he did was with total enthusiasm. In the letter to Romans ([6:17](#)) he embraces total commitment to the Message of

Salvation. Yet in the next chapter he confesses that he has this tug of the Sin nature within him that sometimes scores victory. So if the great apostle Paul has this struggle where does that place us? In the same arena of the Christian fight! In another letter – to Corinth – Paul likens this struggle to that of the classic siege of olden times:

³ For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: ⁴ (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 (KJV).

In this fantastic scene the war is a slow inevitable war where the wall that Sin has put up as an obstruction to the victorious Christian life is formidable and one that requires total commitment. Here the battle is defined as one of ideas – the old, carnal ideas versus the ideas from the mind of the Lord (1 Cor 2:16). The fact is that we can know the mind of the Lord and that, my friends, brings us closer to the struggle that is set before us.

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The Importance of God's Word in Our Lives.

⁹ But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. ¹⁰ But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. 1 Corinthians 2:9-10 (KJV).

This is not the prideful “gnosis” of the Gnostic cult. No. It is the Lord's thinking and is an important facet of our facing the tug of Sin in our lives. We should not take pride in our knowledge of God's word, rather we should be humbled before it as we examine our lives in the light of it and use this new insight to become more and more like Him. Paul sums the gaining of God's knowledge in this way: **³ And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. ⁴ And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: ⁵ That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.** 1 Corinthians 2:3-5 (KJV). So, in order to exercise the power of God in our lives, we must know His word. To know His word results in humility and the power to live Christlike lives. It contrasts completely with the pride of the Gnostics of Paul and John's day.

The Importance of a Conscience That Has Been Cleared by the Lord.

I'm going to take us back to a previous lesson to bring this subject to light.¹

***“Understanding the conscience.** Before we can understand our conscience, we must understand other truths about the Lord and ourselves. Without the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit the conscience of sinful man runs amok with his own sinful nature. The conscience is that area of the heart of man where he knows right from wrong,*

¹ From [Dealing with a Guilty conscience – Waddayamean I'm forgiven.](#)

innocence and guilt is determined by the individual himself. Here are some points to remember when it comes to the conscience of both sinful man and the believer.

- *When illuminated by the truth of the Lord, a man's conscience declares himself to be guilty - accurately (see [John 8:9](#)).*
- *The conscience can be defiled by unbelief ([Titus 1:15](#)).*
- *The conscience can be seared through speaking lies in hypocrisy ([1 Timothy 4:2](#)).*
- *The conscience can be "cluttered" with dead works and needs to be purged ([Hebrews 9:14](#)). Here is the key passage to understanding the believers' difficulty when dealing with past, forgiven sins. See also [Hebrews 10:2](#).*

This is where knowledge of God's word is so important. We need to understand the forgiveness of the Lord – that His forgiveness is complete but that we need to also understand that we cannot "pull the wool" over His eyes when it comes to the struggle we may have with our conscience and the power of a forgiven life that the Lord gives to us.

Indeed, we must understand His forgiveness or we will never become effective in our spiritual struggle.

Indeed, we must understand His forgiveness or we will never become effective in our spiritual struggle. Here's some more from our previous lesson:

"Understanding Forgiveness. *First, let's take a look at the definition of the English word forgiveness:*

Etymology: Middle English, from Old English forgifan, from for- + gifan to give transitive senses

1 a : to give up resentment of or claim to requital for <forgive an insult> b : to grant relief from payment of <forgive a debt>

2 : to cease to feel resentment against (an offender) : PARDON <forgive one's enemies>.²

Please note that forgiveness has a note of generosity on the part of the person doing the forgiving. Herein lies the "rub" as it were. Sinful man is not naturally generous in attitude – God is. If we derive our concept of forgiveness from the thinking of man we will always have strings attached – I'll forgive you if you will do this or that, for example. God seeks no such strings from the sinner. God seeks the sinner, his enemy, in order to forgive him ([Romans 5:10](#)). The objective of forgiveness is restoration – not vengeance.

²¹Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. ²²But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without

² From Merriam-Webster online dictionary.

blemish and free from accusation. Colossians 1:21, 22. NIV.³

The idea of forgiveness is restoration and wholeness of soul – not a continuation of condemnation. There are various images that the Bible uses to depict divine forgiveness but the most remarkable is found in Psalm 103:12:

as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. NIV.

Why not the North from the South? We have heard this explanation many times but it is worth repeating – there is no limitation when going around the equator of earth – we never hit a terminator and ending of heading East or West but let me remind us all the meaning of the original for our word “removed.”⁴ It graphically describes a new status for the object of forgiveness. The sin is literally removed from the sinner – dismissed – sent away. How far? An infinite distance – that’s the true nature of forgiveness from the Lord.

Illustration, Jesus forgives the unfaithful woman.

¹⁰When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? ¹¹She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more. ¹²Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. KJV,

I have taught on this before – the suggestion here is that not only was the woman forgiven by the Lord – but the condemnation was removed by her former judges and perhaps even her husband – so complete was this forgiveness that she had another chance to redeem herself before society and her husband.

So we enter into an area that at one time or another is soul-wrenching for all believer – dealing with a guilty conscience. Be certain of this: I am not talking about a believer who is, in his personal sins, are ignoring the conviction of the Holy Spirit. Rather, this believer has acknowledged his sin and is still plagued with feelings of guilt.”

Next time we will continue with this subject and cover a thrilling biblical “idea” of how the struggle of a condemning conscience is assuaged by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The KJV Old Testament Hebrew Lexicon

Strong's Number:	07368	Browse Lexicon	KJV Verse Count
Original Word	רָחַק	Word Origin	Genesis 2
		a primitive root	Exodus 3
Transliterated Word	רחק	TDNT Entry	Deuteronomy 2
Rachaq		TWOT - 2151	Joshua 2
Phonetic Spelling	raw-khak' ◀	Parts of Speech	Judges 1
Definition			Job 8
	v		Psalms 11
			Proverbs 6
		1. to be or become far, be or become distant, be removed, go far away	Ecclesiastes 2
		a. (Qal) to be far, be distant	Isaiah 8
		b. (Piel) to send far away, extend	Jeremiah 2
		c. (Hiphil)	Lamentations 1
		1. to make or exhibit distance, be gone far	Ezekiel 5
		2. to remove, put far away	Joel 2
		2. (Niphal) loose v inf (as adv)	Micah 1
		3. at a distance	
			Total 56

³ Scripture taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved.

⁴ From Bible Study tools <http://crosswalk.com/>