

**I. Introduction**

- A. Welcome to How to Be a Grown Up, part 3. We are pushing our way through this lovely book of James.
  1. James was the half brother of Jesus.
  2. After initial resistance against Jesus, he became a believer. And eventually became a highly respected leader in the early church. He was the senior pastor in the church of Jerusalem.
  3. James had a passion and an annoyance.
    - a) His passion was that believers in Jesus would grow to experience all the grace God had set before them.
    - b) His annoyance was that anybody would fall short of experiencing that grace.
      - (1) This book is James venting both his passion and his annoyance. Grow up in grace. Push away from the kiddie table, and take your place with the noble, mature, blood-bought saints of God.
- B. So, today is part three. And before we get into that, let's review our Bible memory verses from the first two weeks:
  1. *My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. (James 1:2, 3)*
  2. *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. (James 1:17)*
    - a) We will add another verse at the end of my talk today.
  3. Please think with me on the topic:
- C. SPIRITUAL INTEGRATION (James 1:19-27)
  1. Last week, we used king Solomon as an example. His inner world was not integrated. It was partitioned. He was the wisest man who ever lived... but he couldn't bring his hormones under control. Solomon had a thousand wives and concubines (mistresses). Those two things don't go together.
  2. We would not call that integrated.
  3. You could probably call it disintegrated. Fragmented. Stress-inducing and crazy-making.
  4. Imagine James sitting at a table. On the table are pieces of a puzzle. The only problem is that the pieces of two different puzzles have been all jumbled together.
  5. Before he even starts trying to assemble the puzzles, what does he have to do first?
  6. He has to sort them out.
  7. This piece goes here, that piece goes there, with that puzzle.
  8. That's what James is doing here.
  9. Because your soul is the table, and there is a jumble of pieces inside there.
  10. Some pieces belong to one puzzle, called your spirit, or your noble self. This is you at your best. This is the self God designed you to be.
  11. But other pieces belong to a different puzzle, called your flesh, or your inner mess, or your dark side. This is the leftover dysfunction from your pre-saved days. The flesh includes:
    - a) Ways of thinking.
    - b) Ways of acting.
    - c) Ways of reacting.
    - d) Instincts.
    - e) Feelings.
    - f) Broken psychology.
    - g) Dysfunction.
    - h) Lusts, temptations, and appetites toward evil.
  12. So, this is your flesh, and all those puzzle pieces are on the table, mixed in with all your noble puzzle pieces, and the first job is to sort them out....
  13. Because that is the only way to put together your inner world and your outer world in a healthy way where you're not trying to cram in things that shouldn't go together.
- D. What is SPIRITUAL INTEGRATION?
  1. #3. SPIRITUAL INTEGRATION  
I create a life in which my inner world is aligned with my outer world and both are aligned with God's Word.
  2. This is How to Be a Grown Up through and through. Not like Solomon, so together in certain areas, but so adolescently fractured in others. Or David, or Peter, or so many others in the Bible.
    - a) Inner world — emotions, habits, hurts, hangups, put together. Your flesh, still there, but basically deactivated.
    - b) Outer world — finances, relationships, church, priorities, put together.
      - (1) And all of it in harmony with the Bible, with God's truth, God's reality, God's ways, and God's heart... and also in harmony with your truest, most authentic self.
  3. So to move all this from one analogy to another... from puzzle pieces to music.
    - a) Solomon's music was fingernails on a chalkboard.
    - b) James is inviting you to smooth jazz.
  4. Let's dig in.
  5. Along the way, we will identify 5 Spiritual Breakdowns that stall God's work of spiritual integration in your soul.

**II. Exposition**

- A. *So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God. (James 1:19, 20)*
  1. What does this tell you?
  2. It tells you:
    - a) BREAKDOWN 1: Your INSTINCTS do not consistently reflect the truths and priorities of Scripture.
  3. Slow down. Be quiet. And don't jump from zero to outrage in five seconds flat.
    - a) Stop and think before you act.
    - b) Stop and think before you react.
    - c) Stop and think before you say anything or post anything. Be slow to speak.
      - (1) You might not have all the facts.
      - (2) And there is ALWAYS another side to the story.
        - (a) Be swift to hear and slow to speak.
  4. Why are your instincts not always right?

5. Because your instincts are polluted by the devil's acid spit and sin. We talked about this last time.
  6. So you have to check your instincts toward negative emotion.
  7. Because if your instinct is an outburst of anger... James is warning you:
    - a) Your wrath —
      - (1) you losing your temper,
      - (2) you taking revenge,
      - (3) you venting,
      - (4) you throwing a temper tantrum,
      - (5) you unleashing your inner brat, inner thug, inner bully, inner drama queen,
      - (6) you cussing somebody out
    - (a) — that will never produce the righteousness of God.
  8. It just doesn't line up with your new spiritual DNA, your new birth, and your new nature. It is your nasty old flesh leading the parade. So you create dissonance instead of harmony, friction instead of smoothing the way. A temper tantrum fuels internal contradictions your inner world can't bear.
  9. And, it creates dissonance in your outer world too.
  10. Whatever God had in mind when he saved you, whatever life he envisioned for you, whatever ways he foresaw you lifting up those around you and bringing life and grace into the pain machine — those things do not come to pass by you venting your anger.
  11. Your temper tantrum, and your shouting and your violence, is emotionally dysfunctional (RFHC 1), morally sinful (RFHC 2), and spiritually disintegrated (RFHC 3).
  12. So what should you do?
- B. *Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. (James 1:21)*
1. When I memorized this verse as a kid, I had no idea what it meant. That's because I learned it in the old KJV Bible:
    - a) *Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. (James 1:21, KJV).*
  2. Superfluity of naughtiness. There's a pair of words you don't hear up and down your radio dial.
  3. *Therefore lay aside...*
    - a) James has put the cart before the horse. He tells you what to do in verse 20 and then how to do it in verse 21. The picture here is like you're wearing a coat, and you take it off, and lay it aside.
    - b) Also notice that word "implanted." There is a kind of farming (agricultural) metaphor.
    - c) What do you lay aside?
  4. *All filthiness...*
    - a) The devil's acid spit. Crossing moral boundaries in your mind and in your choices.
    - b) Lay said all manner of moral corruption.
      - (1) The fastest way to make your heart grow cold toward God is this: to make excuses for immoral thinking and immoral words and immoral choices.
        - (a) Lay it aside.
      - (2) Clear the rocks before your plant your garden.
  5. *And overflow of wickedness...*
    - a) Overflow is translated "leftovers" (Mark 8:8) and that's the sense of it here. When God saved you, he made you a new person. But he didn't erase your mind, emotions, habits, and will. You were pretty much the same person you were the day after you were saved as the day before you were saved. BUT there was a huge difference in your standing and status with God. You are joined to Christ and one with him in your position.
    - b) And now, for the rest of your life you grow mature and holy in your practice.
    - c) The thing that makes this difficult is the leftovers. The unredeemed ways of thinking inside your mind. The philosophies of the corrupt world system. The addictions, hurts, habits, hangups of a morally bankrupt culture.
    - d) If you want to be a grown up, and if you want to experience the inner harmony of SPIRITUAL INTEGRATION, you have to clear the soil of rocks and sticks... so that something can grow there.
  6. *And receive with meekness...*
    - a) Up in verse 20, you have wrath. Here in v. 21, you have meekness. Meekness is the opposite of wrath.
    - b) In this context it simply means a teachable spirit. This doesn't mean to be gullible. It doesn't mean to be wimpy in what you believe.
    - c) It simply means that if you want to get all the parts of you singing the same tune you have to understand another life-lesson:
      - (1) BREAKDOWN 2: Your DEEP ROOTED PSYCHOLOGY is not fully renewed by grace and truth.
    - d) The new operating system isn't fully uploaded.
    - e) Your soul is a garden. What if it is full of weeds? And what if you've looked at the weeds for so long, you actually find them pretty? That's the essence of dysfunction. You normalize deviancy, normalize brokenness, normalize pain, and normalize low expectations. "That's awesome," you say, while up in heaven God says, "That's sad."
    - f) But you argue back... it's not sad, it's not sick, it's not evil, it's beautiful.
      - (1) Receive with meekness...
    - g) So you need to have a teachable, humble mindset and...
  7. *receive with meekness the implanted Word...*
    - a) The whole Bible. Back up in verse 18 James mentioned "the word of truth" which is the gospel message.
    - b) Here in v. 21 it is the whole Bible and all its teachings. God is planting seeds into your soul. These seeds have life. These seeds have their own power. These seeds have the potential to repair corrupted files, and defragment your soul.
    - c) What are we talking about?
      - (1) How to be a grown up.
      - (2) Here at Neighborhood, this is how we outline your life as a Christian.
        - (a) God saves you, God blesses you, God grows you, God uses you.
          - i) God Saves You: the Gospel of God's Word
          - ii) God Blesses You: the Riches of God's Word
          - iii) God Grows You: the Teachings of God's Word
          - iv) God Uses You: the Commandments of God's Word
      - (3) What cuts across everything here? God's Word.

- (a) Receive with a teachable spirit, the implanted Word.
- d) It's implanted. It's not just scattered on the surface... it's implanted so that it grows roots and becomes part of you.
- e) Receive with a teachable spirit the implanted Word... because why?
- 8. Which is able to save your souls.
  - a) In the Bible, salvation happens in three phases:
    - (1) Phase one: Saved from the Penalty Sin (the day of your eternal salvation)
    - (2) Phase two: Saved from the Power of Sin (ongoing, called sanctification, the Grace Pathway)
    - (3) Phase three: Saved from the Presence of Sin (ultimate salvation in heaven, total perfection achieved)
  - b) James is all about Phase 2. He talked about Phase 1 just a little bit in v. 17, 18, but that's it. Now, it's all phase 2.
  - c) See the word "soul" there? It's the Greek word psyche. Your soul is the home of your personality and your psychology.
  - d) And that is what James is driving at:
    - (1) Receive with meekness the implanted word which has the power to save your psychology.
      - (a) Feel crazy lately? Turn to the Word.
      - (b) Feel depressed? Turn to the Word. (That's what I'm doing).
      - (c) Feel tempted, hostile, angry, hormonal? Turn to the Word.
      - (d) Feel like you're cracking up, falling apart, giving up?
    - (2) The Word of God has the power to repair a disintegrated inner world and put together the broken places in your soul.
  - e) I can teach it, but YOU have to receive it. That's the next verse:
- C. But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. (James 1:22)
  - 1. You know you can deceive yourself, right? Your flesh has its own logic. It's irrational logic, but it works for you.
  - 2. What is the essence of self-deception?
  - 3. Living in unreality.
    - a) What is truth? Truth is reality.
    - b) What is truth? Truth is reality as God experiences it, defines it, and reveals it.
    - c) Where do we find truth? In God's Word.
    - d) If you want to base your life on reality, you have to base it on God's Word.
  - 4. What is a doer of God's Word?
    - a) We tend to take "doing" in a very activist sense. Performance, obedience, compliance. This is how I grew up in the church. Here is a teaching from the Bible, now go out and do it. Act on it. Obey it.
    - b) Obedience was huge.
    - c) But I here I am — I'm 10, 12, 15 year old. I'm trying to obey everything: love people all the time, tame your tongue, be holy. Obey, perform, do.
      - (1) Grace in salvation had shoved legalism out the front door, but no grace in sanctification let legalism sneak in the back door.
    - d) Being a doer of God's Word isn't about performance.
    - e) It's more about process. Processing truth through and through.
- D. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does. (James 1:23-25)
  - 1. The Bible is a mirror. It shows you YOURSELF. No hiding.
  - 2. Fix what's messed up. That's the idea.
  - 3. The church has taken this idea and applied it almost exclusively to what is messed up on the outside, to the radical neglect of what's on the inside.
  - 4. Most of the DOING of the Word is invisible. That's because it happens inside you.
    - a) The Word corrects the LIES you believe about God, about yourself, about your world.
    - b) The Word tears off the old LABELS you've accepted about yourself: you're horrible, ugly, stupid, worthless, useless. And the Word applies new labels in permanent glue: you're beautiful, fearfully and wonderfully made, competent, able to do all things.
    - c) The Word heals your LEGALISM and sets you in an environment of a grace that takes your breath away.
  - 5. Lies, labels, legalism. All of these things are you being a doer of the Word, yet all of them are invisible.
  - 6. Ninety percent of you being a doer of the Word happens on the inside, because that sets you up for you doing the ten percent that happens on the outside.
    - a) Or as Paul says... *be transformed (on the outside) by the renewing of your mind (on the inside) (Romans 12:2)*. This is how you live the blessing experientially this is yours positionally.
      - (1) BREAKDOWN 3: Your BIBLICAL LEARNING remains behavioral and superficial and hasn't changed your soul.
  - 7. You look in a mirror and see mud on your face. What do you do? Clean it up. That's the idea.
  - 8. This section contains one of my favorite titles for the Bible here: the perfect law of liberty.
  - 9. If you want to be mature and you want to be truly free and you want to rule your own spirit, then here's the way: the Word of God.
- E. If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless. (James 1:26)
  - 1. Here is another internal contradiction. You think you are religious but you're not. You're not doing it right. How can you tell?
  - 2. Your speech.
  - 3. Your speech about God. Your speech about others. Your speech about yourself.
  - 4. Jesus taught there is a direct pipeline from your heart to your tongue, meaning from your deep psychology to your speech. Those two things are connected.
  - 5. And your speech reveals your heart which is your psychological state.
  - 6. So if you have to pick which one indicates your spiritual maturity better: a) your speech, or b) your religious practices, it's the way you speak.
  - 7. And you can be doing all the religious stuff in the world, but it simply doesn't change the fact that your deepest heart is out of sync with God and his Word, and this is proven by the stuff you say and the stuff you mutter, especially in times of stress.
    - a) BREAKDOWN 4: Your UNBRIDLED TONGUE dismantles your pretense of Christian maturity.
  - 8. One ancient Roman said, "Speech is the index of the mind" (Seneca). Jesus said, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks (Matt 12:34). Later on, James will say the tongue is "a fire, a world of iniquity, and a deadly poison" (James 3:8).
    - a) A Lying Tongue (Prov 25:18)
    - b) A Flattering Tongue (Ps 5:9)
    - c) A Proud Tongue (Ps 12:3,4)

- d) A Backbiting Tongue (Prov 25:23)
  - e) A Cursing Tongue (Rom 3:13,14)
  - f) A Talebearing Tongue (Prov 18:8, Lev 19:16)
  - g) A Swift Tongue (unconsidered speech, Prov 18:13, Jas 1:19)
  - h) A Piercing Tongue (vicious but quiet, Prov 12:18)
  - i) A Perverted Tongue (Prov 10:31)
  - j) A Foolish Tongue (Prov 15:2)
9. This person's religious activities are in vain, James says. This isn't saying the person isn't saved.
  10. It is simply say that the person who indulges sins of the tongue has all these internal contradictions going on. You are fragmented inside. And your words both reveal that brokenness and make it worse. Both.
  11. James isn't simply saying you should put a lid on your tongue. Have you tried that lately? How did that work out for you?
  12. He is saying that a little.
  13. But his deeper message is to grow up. In chapter 3 he will say that anyone who can genuinely tame the tongue is a living example of a truly mature child of God (3:2).
  14. His deeper message is this:
    - a) You should so engage God and his Word that the simmering mess inside gives way to a wholesome, ordered, mature inner world that can be reflected in your words, thoughts, and actions.
  15. Because that is the way to repair all these breakdowns of your soul.
- F. *Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world [kosmos]. (James 1:27)*
1. So when James describes this last way a mature Christian puts spiritual integration on display, he discusses two deeply rooted mental habits.
    - a) How you treat vulnerable people.
    - b) How you engage the world's moral pollution.
  2. He says the way to treat vulnerable people is to "visit them in their affliction" which means to have a heart to help them. They did not bring this on themselves. God has a special place in his heart for widows and orphans, and James is saying that when our heart is in tune with his heart, we will too.
  3. And he is saying that if this is not the case, then all the religious stuff you do is basically fake.
  4. And then he goes right into the world's moral pollution. He didn't even use the word "and" in the middle. It's like there's a big operating system in your heart, and it's all one.
  5. To guard yourself to be unspotted from the world.
  6. We have studied this word, WORLD, before. It means the philosophies and worldview of a society without God. The world has a way of thinking. It propagates this way of thinking through every institution: arts, media, entertainment, religious, education, government, philosophy, music... This way of thinking goes in a thousand directions except one. The one thing the world-system will never say is that God has revealed himself in the Lord Jesus Christ, and has offered salvation through his shed blood, and that real life, now and forever, awaits the person who will find and follow him.
  7. The reason our culture is so messed up is simple. It is infiltrated by the devil.
    - a) We know that we are of God, and the whole world [kosmos] lies under the sway of the Wicked One. (1 John 5:19)
  8. Jesus called Satan "the ruler of this world" (John 12:31).
  9. The great Bible teacher and founder of Dallas Theological Seminary was named Lewis Sperry Chafer. He wrote this chilling description of the world:
    - a) Satan's dominant purpose is not, as the popular impression supposes, one of attempting to be unlike God. Satan has explicitly asserted concerning himself, as recorded in Isaiah 14:14, that his transcendent objective is to be like the Most High.
    - b) The unregenerate masses of humanity are said to be deceived by Satan. Their delusion is both tragic and pitiable. They are imposed upon by Satan's subterfuge, treachery, and fraud. There is no abiding substance in any objective upon which they set their hopes.
    - c) Next to the lie itself, the greatest delusion Satan imposes--is the supposition that only such things as society considers evil could originate with the devil--if, indeed, there be any devil to originate anything. It is not the reason of man, but the revelation of God, which points out that governments, morals, education, art, commercialism, vast enterprises and organizations, and much of religious activity are included in the cosmos diabolicus.
    - d) [Chafer, Systematic Theology, vol. 2. (Dallas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1947) pp 99-102]
  10. So along comes James who says that if you're going sit at the grown up table of God, you can't keep sipping the Kool Aid of the devil's world system.
  11. Keep yourself... preserve, protect, and guard yourself.
  12. Unspotted by the world.
  13. God is trying to integrate your personality, the devil is working feverishly to disintegrate your personality.
    - a) BREAKDOWN 5: Your SELF-ABSORPTION and WORLDLINESS reveal a heart more in tune with prevailing philosophies than with God's truth and grace.

### III. Conclusion

#### A. #3. SPIRITUAL INTEGRATION

- I create a life in which my inner world is aligned with my outer world and both are aligned with God's Word.
- Until this happens, you have some growing to do.
- And it's the kind of growing you actually WANT to do. Remember when you were little and you said, "I can't wait to be a grown up!"?
- Yeah, well that's where were all at today.
- There is a higher plane of living. Higher ground. Victorious living. It is the birthright of every child of God. It is your potential. God's gift of grace.
- And God will lift you to this higher ground if only you will grow in grace and grow in faith.
- And that is my prayer for us all. Because when we reach this place, the angels applaud, the demons flee, and heaven smiles because the onlooking world sees a window into the only grace that save and satisfy forever through our Lord Jesus Christ.

### IV. Memory Verses

1. *My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. (James 1:2, 3)*
2. *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. (James 1:17)*
3. *So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God. (James 1:19, 20)*