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TEXT

SCRIPTURE


- ▶ My dear brothers, take **note** of this: Everyone should be quick to **listen**, slow to **speak** and slow to **become angry**, for **man's anger** does not bring about the **righteous life** that God desires. (James 1:19-20 NIV)
- ▶ Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and **humbly accept the word** planted in you, which can save you. (James 1:21 NIV)
- ▶ Do not merely listen to the **word**, and so deceive yourselves. **Do what it says**. (James 1:22 NIV)

3

TEXT

SCRIPTURE

- ▶ Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the **Father of the heavenly lights**, who does not change like shifting shadows. (James 1:17 NIV)
- ▶ He chose to give us **birth** through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of **firstfruits** of all he created. (James 1:18 NIV)



2

TEXT

SCRIPTURE

- ▶ Anyone who listens to the **word** but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his **face** in a **mirror** and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. (James 1:23-24 NIV)
- ▶ But the man who looks intently into the **perfect law** that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but **doing it** – he will be blessed in what he does. (James 1:25 NIV)

4

TEXT

SCRIPTURE

- ▶ *If anyone considers himself **religious** and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his **religion** is worthless. (James 1:26 NIV)*
- ▶ ***Religion** that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world. (James 1:27 NIV)*

5

TEXT

INTRODUCTION

- ▶ Most of us remember learning to drive a car as an **challenging process** involving taking a written test and nervously navigating the road with a state trooper or driving instructor tracking our every move.
- ▶ Eventually, all of that practice and instruction was rewarded with a **driver's license** and its accompanying sense of freedom.
- ▶ But what if you could **skip** all that hassle and just **"YouTube it"** instead?

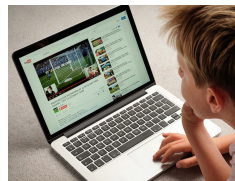


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TEXT

INTRODUCTION

- ▶ That's what an **8-year-old boy** in Ohio did on one recent Sunday night.
- ▶ Our young innovator had a problem: mom and dad had fallen asleep early, and the boy and his 4-year-old sister were hungry for some McDonald's.
- ▶ The golden arches were **a mile and a half away** – too far for a walk in the dark. So the boy did what any self-respecting Gen-Z kid would do when confronted with a problem.
- ▶ He looked up **"How to drive a car"** on YouTube, emptied his piggy bank, then bundled his sister into the car and headed out for a **cheeseburger**.



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TEXT



8

INTRODUCTION

- ▶ **Police** said later that the boy obeyed all the traffic laws, didn't hit a single thing, and drove "effortlessly" through town as though he had been **driving for years** – all because he watched a few minutes of video instruction and then did precisely what it said to do.
- ▶ Our **pint-sized adventurer** seems to have grasped early on what many of us grasped much later in life.
- ▶ That on the **internet**, someone somewhere has created a video to show you how to do what you want to do or fix.



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INTRODUCTION



- ▶ Whether it's a repair for your home or your car, how to put on makeup, learning self-defense or making dinner, all you need to do is look it up on the world's most popular video site and soon you'll be an **expert** yourself.
- ▶ There are **millions** of these tutorial videos, most produced by average people who have learned a skill and simply want to share it.

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INTRODUCTION

- ▶ It's the **crowd sourcing of expertise** that makes it possible for the most **mechanically inept person** to fix a faucet, or a **maker of microwave mac and cheese** to become a gourmet chef.
- ▶ Of course, all this instruction depends on the **viewer's willingness to experiment** and put the information into practice.
- ▶ Without that, it's just another **waste of time**.

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HOW DO WE STAY FAITHFUL

- ▶ People in the **ancient world** obviously didn't have YouTube.
- ▶ Most of their learning was accomplished by **watching** someone model the activity in question face to face or by receiving a letter from a distant instructor.
- ▶ So Apostle James wrote this letter to Jewish Christians who were caught up in the **social tensions** of the mid-first century, where outbreaks of violence and insurrection were taking place in Jerusalem – a conflict that would culminate in the Jewish revolt of A.D. 66-70

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HOW DO WE STAY FAITHFUL

- ▶ In fact, the whole **Roman world** was dealing with unrest, including economic problems, food shortages, and the rapid turnover of Roman emperors that led to an **erratic government policy** toward Christians, Jews and others.
- ▶ The problem before the church in this time of uncertainty can be summed up something like this: **“How do we remain a faithful Christian community in the midst of this time of trial and temptation?”**
- ▶ James wrote to encourage his brothers and sisters and to give them some **instruction** on how to navigate in difficult times.

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HOW TO #1 – FAITHFULNESS MUST BE PRACTICED

- ▶ The **epistle of James** reads like a series of random tutorial videos on the Christian life, but in this section James made clear that no amount of **instruction** matters unless it is put into practice.
- ▶ James wanted the church to become **experts** not only in hearing the instruction, but doing the instruction as well.
- ▶ As James says, ***Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.*** (James 1:12 NIV)
- ▶ James saw the **current situation** as a time of testing for the Christian community, but also an opportunity to demonstrate **faithfulness**.

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HOW TO #2 – FAITHFULNESS WILL OFTEN BE CHALLENGED OR TESTED

- ▶ For James, **times of testing** was not something that was arbitrary or strange, but an opportunity for us to use our **faith**, so that it can grow.
- ▶ As the Apostle James says, *Consider it **pure joy**, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops **perseverance**.* (James 1:2-3 NIV)
- ▶ **Perseverance** *must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.* (James 1:4 NIV)

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HOW TO #3 – DISCIPLINE IS NOT FUN BUT YIELDS MUCH FRUIT

- ▶ But as many of us know **discipline** or having to **face trials** is not fun. In fact, it can be **very stressful**.
- ▶ The writer of Hebrews agrees, ***No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful.*** (Hebrews 12:11 NIV)
- ▶ Nevertheless, every **Christian** goes through discipline (trials).
- ▶ If fact, again, according to Hebrews 12, if you are not disciplined, then you are **illegitimate children** and not true sons.

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THE CHALLENGES OF DISCIPLINE

- ▶ The **purpose of discipline** is not to make us sad or unhappy but to make us completely dependent on God where we perfect our walk with the Lord and grow spiritually.
- ▶ As it says in Hebrews 12 . . .
 - ▶ *God disciplines us **for our good**, that we may share in his holiness. (v. 10)*
 - ▶ *Later on . . . it produces a **harvest of righteousness** and **peace** for those who have been trained by it. (v. 11)*

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THE CHALLENGES OF DISCIPLINE

- ▶ Again the purpose of God's discipline is not to make us sad, but to help us **exercise our faith** so that it can grow through use.
- ▶ Again as James says, *Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.* (James 1:4 NIV)
- ▶ You see when our **faith** is strong and we're not lacking anything, we're equipped to become a **witness** of what God can do through those who trust him.
- ▶ In other words, we can start uploading YouTube videos on how to live the Christian life that can help many.

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LIVING VIDEOS OF FAITH

- ▶ The **world** and **younger Christians** need a **witness** of what God can do through those who trust him.
- ▶ While words are helpful, they need a lot of **life examples** to watch for themselves.
- ▶ We can supply these to them, if we ourselves persevere through trials ourselves by **practicing the faith**.
- ▶ As the scriptures say, ***Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial**.* (James 1:12 NIV)

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FRUSTRATION AND ANGER

- ▶ However, as we all know, a lot of **people** get frustrated when they go through trials.
- ▶ In fact, they get more than frustrated, they get **angry** and for some reason or the other, look for someone to blame.
- ▶ According to James, we are to ***accept the word planted in us***, and **turn from wrath and do good**.
- ▶ Why? because . . . ***man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires**.* (James 1:20 NIV)

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TEXT

CONCLUSION

- ▶ So then, when you're going through **trials** and you don't know what to do and your emotions are getting the best of you, what should you do?
- ▶ Like watching self-help videos on YouTube, **examine** the lives of your brother and sisters in Christ you respect and follow their example.
- ▶ Chances are the **wisdom** they have was learned by watching the right people in their lives.
- ▶ Together we can both be a **source of grace** that not only strengthens each other but the entire body of Christ.

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TEXT

CONCLUSION

- ▶ If an 8-year old boy can learn to drive a car to get a happy meal, so we can as **"babes" in Christ**, learn to deal with trials by watching those who are mature in the Lord.
- ▶ Remember this, when we react to trials in **godly ways**, we grow spiritually and so does our faith.
- ▶ In fact, we become a **living epistle** (letter) read or viewed by others.
- ▶ We become a source of grace that can help people have the **peace of God** on their lives.

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TEXT

CONCLUSION

- ▶ This **world of ours** is a very frustrating place in which to live.
- ▶ Never before in my life have I seen more **moral confusion** than in this day and hour in which we now live.
- ▶ That is why we all need to step up and **accept the word that has been implanted in us** and respond to the trials around us with wisdom that is from above.
- ▶ What kinds of **wisdom** come from heaven?
- ▶ *[It] is first of all **pure**; then **peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.** (James 3:17 NIV)*

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TEXT

CONCLUSION

- ▶ We therefore have an **obligation**. It is not an obligation to the wisdom that is from below and is of the devil, but to the wisdom that is from above.
- ▶ In other words, all of us have an opportunity to become a **living video**—an "how to" in Christ, on how to apply **God's wisdom** in a world that is full of trials.
- ▶ We owe it to each other and we owe it to our children and grandchildren, if not to the whole world.
- ▶ So then, let us be a **witness** of what God can do through those who trust him with all their heart, soul, strength, and mind. AMEN

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