

A FAITH THAT WORKS

(A Study of the Book of James)

God’s Psychoanalytical Prescription

TEXT: James 1:21

INTRODUCTION: I am not generally prone to outrageous sermon titles, but I may be guilty of creating one this time. But I tell you, I just could not resist. Because when I was studying the text, I said to myself, “Self, do you know what this verse is?” And self replied, “Sure I do. This is God’s psychoanalytical prescription for all of us believers.” So I decided on the title.

Now, aren’t you eager to hear the Scripture?

Let’s read it.

James 1:21 Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

Do you see it? Not yet? Let me help.

Look at the last word – souls

Soul = Psuche = Psyche

The inner part of man, which is the center of thought, emotion, motivation, and choice.

And see what the purpose is of the sentence that makes up this verse of Scripture. It says that this is able to **save your soul**; this is able to **rescue your psyche**.

So, you see, it really is a prescription for the psyche, for the soul. It says, “Here is the way to rescue your soul.”

And this prescription is indeed from God. The Holy Spirit is the One inspiring James to write these words. So this is a psychoanalytical prescription, but not from Sigmund Freud or Carl Jung, but from the One who made the psyche, from the One who made the soul of man.

Before we look at the prescription itself, may I ask you to think with me **who is the prescription for?**

- **For those who have trusted Christ**
- **For those who have fallen into sin**

We might also briefly ask, why is the prescription offered? Because when the Christian falls back into a pattern of sin, that **sin can wreck havoc** upon the person’s life.

- It can **injure or destroy relationships**, like with a spouse or children or parents.
- It can **cause debilitating stress** in a person.
- It can **ruin job performance** or even cause one to lose a job.
- It can **bring on physical maladies**.
- It can **ruin one’s reputation and testimony** and therefore greatly hinder or destroy a person’s spiritual influence.

Lest we get lost in the abstract discussion of it, let’s personalize it a bit by remembering a person most of us know who had this happen.

- He was **definitely a believer** and will be in heaven to greet us when we die.
- But he **fell into sin**.
- The **sin wrecked his life**.

You have guessed who I am talking about haven’t you. That’s right – David, King David And friend, be sure, **sin wrecked havoc in David’s life**.

- **His infant son died**.
- **So stressed he could not eat or sleep**.
- **King so confused the servants could not figure out what was happening**.
- **David said his strength dried up**.
- **How could he lead a nation when he couldn’t lead his own life?**

But God gave David a prescription for his soul,

- a prescription to save his soul
- not to save him spiritually or eternally, he was already saved
- but to rescue his confused mind
- to restore his motivation and decision making
- to give balance to his emotions
- to save his soul

But how did David get this prescription from the Book of James, it wasn’t even written yet, James wasn’t born yet?

The prescription from God is not just in the Book of James. You can find it in many places in the Bible, given to many different men and women. And the benefit of that for us is we can see the evidence that it works.

It will save the struggling, broken soul of the believer who has fallen into sin if they will just do what the prescription says. Let’s read again what it says.

James 1:21 Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

There are only two parts. Even a Baptist preacher cannot make it into three parts of his sermon. There’s only two.

lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness means simply

I. REPENT

Turn away from the sin!

Go the opposite direction!

Lay the filthy sin aside.

Don’t keep picking it up.

Don’t keep playing with it.

Quit excusing it.

Quit trying to do the sin in moderation.

STOP!

That is what David did. Listen to David when he decided to repent of his sin and turn to walk again with God.

Psalm 51:1–17

1 Have mercy upon me, O God, According to Your lovingkindness; According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, Blot out my transgressions.

2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin.

3 For I acknowledge my transgressions, And my sin is always before me.

4 Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done this evil in Your sight— That You may be found just when You speak, And blameless when You judge.

5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me.

6 Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, And in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom.

7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

8 Make me hear joy and gladness, That the bones You have broken may rejoice.

9 Hide Your face from my sins, And blot out all my iniquities.

10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me.

11 Do not cast me away from Your presence, And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.

12 Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And uphold me by Your generous Spirit.

13 Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, And sinners shall be converted to You.

14 Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, The God of my salvation, And my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness.

15 O Lord, open my lips, And my mouth shall show forth Your praise.

16 For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering.

17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart— These, O God, You will not despise.

God forgave David and even allowed him to continue to be king. And it did not happen again. The rest of his life, David did not even look at another man’s wife. He could have, because he was king. On a human level, he could have gotten away with it. But David did not even try.

He got victory over the sin the rest of his life. How?

He did the second part of the prescription.

James 1:21 Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

David laid aside the filthiness and wickedness.

David received with meekness the implanted word.

II. IMPLANT THE WORD OF GOD IN YOUR LIFE.

David did. Listen to some of the things David wrote about the Word of God that he discovered after implanting it in his life.

Psalm 19:7–14

7 The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;

8 The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes;

9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.

10 More to be desired are they than gold, Yea, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

11 Moreover by them Your servant is warned, And in keeping them there is great reward.

12 Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret faults.

13 Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins; Let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless, And I shall be innocent of great transgression.

14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer.

CONCLUSION: You say, “That’s it? Is it really that simple?” The answer is yes.

Sin and the consequences of it were wrecking the life of David.

- He laid aside the wickedness – he repented.
- He began to fill his life with the Word of God.
 - Which meant reading it
 - Learning it – hiding it in his heart
 - And doing it – practicing what the Word of God said
- David was forgiven.
- He gained victory over his sin.

And so can you.

But you have to do it.

- You have to **repent of your sin and abandon it.**

- You have to **implant the Word of the God in your life**
 - **By reading it**
 - **Learning it – hiding it in your heart**
 - **And doing it – practicing what the Word of God says**

If you go to the doctor and get a prescription

- You have to have it filled
- You have to take the medicine, faithfully

If you don’t do it, the prescription will not help.

God’s prescription will work in your life. But you have to put it to work.