

I. Introduction and review: It is vitally important to have an accurate view of God.

II. God is the giver of every good and perfect gift. v. 16-17

- A. An affectionate warning – do not be deceived. v. 16 I Co. 6:9 15:33 Gal. 6:7**
1. James could be warning us against the deceitfulness of our sinful desires. v. 14-15 Heb. 3:13
 2. James' primary concern is that we would not be deceived concerning the nature and goodness of God. v. 13 Ps. 73:2ff
 3. Satan would love to get you to question God's goodness. Ge. 3:5 Mal. 2:17 3:13-15
 4. If such a thought enters your mind, cast it out quickly. Phil. 4:8-9 John 6:66-68
 5. James speaks to us as beloved brethren.
- B. God is unfailingly generous. v. 17**
1. The source of every good gift is God (*from above*). 4:4 3:15,17 1:5 Jo. 3:3,7,31,16 II Pe. 1:3-4 Mt. 7:7
 2. God is good to everything and everyone, even His enemies. Mt. 5:45 6:26-30 Acts 14:17 Ps. 104:27-28 145:15-16
 3. His gifts are perfect (complete). 1:25 Deut. 32:4 Ps. 19:7
 4. He is the Father (Creator) of lights. Gen. 1:14ff Ps. 136:6-8 I Jo. 1:5 I Ti. 6:16
 5. He is immutably perfect in His goodness. v. 17d Mal. 3:6 I Jo. 1:5 Heb. 13:8 Ps. 18:30a 100:5 102:26-27 Is. 40:8
 6. Because God is unfailingly good, He does not entice you to sin. v. 13
- C. Application.**
1. When tempted, acknowledge God's goodness and give Him thanks. II Pe. 1:3-4 Pr. 18:22 19:14 I Thess. 5:18 I Tim. 4:4-5 Ps. 73:1,17ff 74:12ff 80:8ff Phil. 4:6
 2. God's best gifts are spiritual. 1:5 3:17 II Pe. 1:3-4 Col. 3:1-2 Mt. 7:11 Ro. 6:23 John 3:16 14:17 Ezek. 36:25-26 Ps. 19:7ff I Co. 10:13
 3. God's goodness is bestowed upon us through Jesus Christ Who is the Light Who has come down from above. John 1:3-5,8 3:16,31 8:12 9:5 Rom. 5:16 Mt. 4:16
 4. That which is not from God is no gift.
 5. Unbelievers reject God's light and fail to give thanks. Rom. 1:20-21 Jo. 3:19-20

III. The crowning proof of God's goodness is your new birth. v. 18

- A. In contrast to your evil desire which gives birth to death, God gives you a new birth unto everlasting life. v. 14-15,18**
- B. The sole source of your new birth is God. v. 18a**
1. Why did you need the new birth? You were as dead in your sin as Lazarus was in the grave – Total Depravity. Eph. 2:1-3 John 11:39
 - a. You were incapable of doing good or pleasing God. Rom. 8:7-8 3:10-20
 - b. You were incapable of understanding God's Word. I Co. 2:14 Rom. 3:11
 2. When did God determine to save you? He chose you before the foundation of the earth – Unconditional Election. Eph. 1:3-8,11 Rom. 8:29-30 9:15,18 Jer. 1:5 31:3
 3. What did God do to redeem you? God sent His Son to redeem those He chose – Limited Atonement. Eph. 1:4,7-8 5:25 Jo. 10:11,26-27 6:37 Rev. 5:9 Mark 10:45
 4. How did you gain spiritual life? God gave you new birth by the exercise of His will -- Irresistible Grace. Eph. 2:4-7 I Pe. 1:3 Jo. 3:3,7 6:44 11:43-44 Titus 3:5 Ezek. 36:25ff

- a. Your decision did not cause the new birth. Jo. 1:12-13 3:3,7-8 Eph. 1:11 2:4
 - b. You are born *from above*. v. 17 John 3:3,7-8
 - c. God's work of regeneration gives you spiritual illumination and life. I Co. 2:14
 - d. God's work of regeneration precedes your faith. I John 5:1
 - e. Your faith is a gift from God. Eph. 2:8-9 Phil. 1:29
5. How can you know that your faith will endure? Because salvation is God's work, you are secure in faith – Perseverance of the Saints. Eph. 1:13-14 Jo. 6:37 10:27-30
- C. The instrumentality of the new birth is God's Word. v. 18b I Pe. 1:23 Rom. 10:17
1. God typically uses means in accomplishing His purposes.
 2. The means God uses in giving the new birth is His Word of truth (the gospel). Eph. 1:13 Col. 1:5 John 17:17 II Co. 6:17 II Tim. 2:15
 3. You are not regenerated by means of physical descent, baptism, or through God's general revelation in creation. Ps. 19:1 Rom. 1:20,32 Gal. 3:7,29
 4. The Word, to be effective, must be accompanied by the Spirit. I Co. 1:18ff 2:14
 5. By God's grace you responded in faith to the Word of truth. Eph. 2:8-9 Rom. 5:1 Acts 16:30-31
 6. This is the pattern in Scripture -- as God's Word is proclaimed the Spirit gives life to whom He will. Acts 16:14 13:48 I Thess. 2:13 I Pe. 1:22-25 Jo. 3:8 Eph. 1:13
- D. The result is that we are God's firstfruits in His new creation. v. 18c
1. Firstfruits imply the promise of a greater coming harvest. Lev. 23:10 Pr. 3:9-10 Rom. 8:18-23 I Co. 15:20 16:15
 2. Firstfruits are consecrated to God – ownership. Ex. 4:22 22:29-30 23:19 13:11ff Lev. 27:26 Num. 18:8-12 Dt. 26:2,10 Jer. 2:3 Rev. 14:4 I Co. 6:20 I Pe. 1:18-19 II Co. 5:17 Co. 3:10 Eph. 4:22ff Rom. 6:1ff 12:1ff I Pe. 1:15-16
- E. Application:
1. In light of your new birth, can there be any question as to God's goodness?
 2. God's way of salvation completely excludes human merit. v. 18 I Co. 1:30-31
 3. How thankful we should be for God's work of saving us. Col. 2:7
 4. Pursue the holiness (consecration) to which God has called you. v. 12 Titus 2:13 I John 3:2 Eph. 5:26-27 I Pe. 1:14-16 Rom. 6:11ff
 5. Use the means God has given for evangelism – and expect Him to work. Ro. 10:17 9:3 Isa. 55:11 I Co. 1:18ff Heb. 4:12 Acts 18:10 II Co. 5:20 Ezek. 18:31 33:11
 6. The power in evangelism is not our ability or technique, but the gospel. Ro. 1:16f
 7. Pray that God would work powerfully through His Word.

IV. Concluding applications.

Discussion questions

1. In what ways are we tempted to doubt God's goodness?
2. Is there any good thing in anyone's life which is not a gift from God?
Then what should our attitude towards God be?
3. Should we also see our trials as God's good gifts? How can we do that?
4. In what ways is God good even to unbelievers?
5. What are God's best gifts?
6. How is verse 18 a contrast to verse 15?
7. Why did you need a new birth?
8. When did God decide to give you a new birth?
9. By what instrument does God give the new birth?
10. What was your role in your salvation?
11. What does it mean that we are first fruits?