

DOWNLOAD PDF THE HEART OF THE MATTER (PRAY FOR THE RIGHT REASON JAMES 4:1-4)

Chapter 1 : The Heart of the Matter - Wikipedia

The Heart of the matter. James For the past couple of months we have had a sort of strange schedule. We have been in and out of the book of James.

Certainly we live in a consumer-oriented, materialistic, hedonistic society bent on pleasing self. In comparison to some portions of the world, most of us are accustomed to very high levels of luxury by way of our comforts, pleasures, and security. With this has come the prominent idea that happiness comes in accomplishments, in recognition, in material possessions, comfort, and the like. We have come to believe the mistaken and Satan promoted notion that if we just acquire certain things, then we can be truly happy and even secure. As a result, people develop their own agendas by which they seek to climb the mountain of success or happiness. Of course, the chosen agendas are very much the product of the mindset of a Wall Street, Madison Avenue controlled society. As Christians, we may have rejected some or even a lot of these notions. Yet, the heart is deceitful and desperately wicked, and because we are all so easily influenced by the world around us, our hearts need guarding. Scripture clearly teaches us that the real issues of life are spiritual and are really matters of the heart, the inner man. As these numbers suggest, the heart is a prominent concept and one of the most commonly used words of the Bible. Most of these occurrences are used metaphorically of the inner man. When used metaphorically depending on the context heart refers to either the mind, the emotions, the will, to the sinful nature, inclusively to the total inner man, or simply to the person as a whole and is often translated as such. As a simple illustration of how various translations handle the word heart, compare the translation of the KJV in Exodus 9: Like the human heart, it is central and vital to our existence. It is here we find the greatest concentration of uses in this one section of the Bible. The Purpose and Goal Enlightenment: A second goal is to help us see afresh how important our inner world really is in terms of our ideas about God, ourselves, and others, and in terms of our motives, goals, and aspirations. Another goal is encouragement. We all need to be encouraged to seek God Himself and His resources as we struggle with the various pulls of our sinful natures in the ups and downs of life. These passages teach us that the Lord looks at and searches the heart, the inner person. Why is the heart so important? Because the issues of life—our actions, works, pursuits, etc. What we do in word and deed is first of all a product of what we are on the inside. In His Sermon on the Mount, the Lord Jesus spoke strongly against the mere external, performance-oriented hypocrisy of the religious Pharisees. He did this by the following statements: He was calling their attention to the moral precepts they had been taught by their religious leaders for years, precepts which had their source in the Old Testament Scriptures. This and only this is authentic Christianity. Biblical Christianity centers in an inward, intimate walk with God by faith. Anything else is nothing more than religious hypocrisy. For instance, Jesus teaches us that adultery and murder begin in the heart. You may not have literally committed adultery, but if you look at a woman or a man with that in view, you have already committed adultery. Our walk with God is always a matter of the heart. However, as one of the consequences of the fall, people look on the outward appearance. God, however, is always concerned with the heart, with the reality and condition of what is on the inside. Because if the inside of the cup is clean, so will be the outside. Open Heart Surgery Since the heart is so important to what we think, say, and do, we each need to regularly do open heart surgery with the scalpel of the Word under the guiding hand of the great physician, the Lord Jesus. We accomplish this through the teaching, guiding, convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit. Like a sharp two-edged sword, the Word divides the inner man asunder to reveal the true condition and needs of our hearts Heb. Most people today want to be successful according to their own idea of success. However, as you listen to the success propaganda of today, again and again the focus of attention is on one of two things. First, the vast majority of thinking, writing, and talk focuses on the outer self—on how smart I can appear, what kind of impression I make, how much applause I register on the applause meter, how much I make, how much I own, how fast I climb the ladder of success in my company, and on the list goes. Very little that you read places any emphasis on the inner man,

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on the heart, the wellspring of our thoughts, motives, ambitions, values, and decisions. And second, when what you read or hear does place an emphasis on the heart, it generally does so in a completely self-centered way, even in a lot of Christian literature. Against the present anthropocentric man-centered kind of spirituality so common today is the biblical theocentric God-centered spirituality which sees the glory of God and the advancement of the kingdom of God as the priority pursuit and reason for life. But we, with richness all around us, are afraid, because the desert is in our hearts. In our society today, the humanist ideal of happiness or interior well-being was incorporated into Christian faith without any drastic modification so that religion was given a decidedly anthropocentric orientation. It is generally acknowledged that much popular religion both conservative and liberal is narcissistic egocentric, focusing on inner feelings and on purely personal hopes and goals. God is deemed necessary to help his people attain the desires of their hearts or to find perfect happiness. Some even make the object of religion sound like capitalist consumerism—acquiring the goods of this life. But is prosperity an inevitable concomitant of true faith? So, when it comes to describing man and his needs, heart is one of the most commonly used terms of the Bible and, again, most of these occurrences are used metaphorically of the inner man, either of the mind, the emotions, the will, the sinful nature, or inclusively of the total inner person. Is it any wonder then, that Solomon challenges us: Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life. It is there that character is formed. It alone holds the secrets of true success. Its treasures are priceless—but they can be stolen. How well am I guarding keeping my heart? Is the condition of my heart my greatest concern? It should be because it is so determinative of every aspect of life. It ultimately determines our love for God and for others. It determines who we are and what we do.

Needs of the Heart

The Heart Needs Guarding

The heart needs guarding because of its natural bent as a part of our fallenness. And this is true even of those who have been regenerated by the Spirit of God through faith in Jesus Christ. While believers possess the new nature and the capacity to know God and discern spiritual things, and while they have received the enlightening and empowering ministry of the Holy Spirit, they still possess the old nature or the wretched capacity for evil and selfish pursuits by which they can independently strive to handle life on their own apart from God. To use biblical analogies or illustrations, we can be: To use the words of Isaiah, we can become filled with influences from the east, i. Obviously, then, as Proverbs Here are seven reasons the heart needs guarding: We are inherently ignorant of His mind and His ways. We desperately need the wisdom and direction of the Lord to know His ways and to know our own heart and its wicked ways. We want to live independently to control and direct our own affairs. We want to be in charge of our own destinies. Oh yes, some of us want to trust God with getting us into heaven, but we would too often prefer to direct our own affairs down here on earth partly because we are so committed to our own desires. To completely follow His directions means we may be called on to give up something that we think we must have in order to be secure or happy. Thus it is much safer to be in charge ourselves, so we think. Man is inherently rebellious by nature as a result of the fall. Then, in the place of self-trust, we need to learn to rely completely on the Lord regardless of how things appear. Rather than lean on our own understanding, we trust the Lord to direct our path Prov. But our heart, because of our fears and selfish concerns, deceives us through its vain rationalizations and we want to turn to our own solutions. The sinful nature cannot be eradicated, it cannot be improved, or changed for the better. So again, he who trusts his own heart is a fool! The pull of this old nature is always there to deceive us. Only God can reveal and lay bare our hearts to us Jer. It is hard to know our own motives and reasons 1 Cor. We are naturally skilled at deceiving ourselves. Because of this, we must guard it or we develop those of the world and this will always lead us astray. The means for guarding the heart will come as we study some of the other needs of the heart. But to balance out character, we need to do more than guard our hearts.

The Heart Needs Giving

To balance out your character you need to do more than guard your heart. It is the flip side that makes you authentic — you also need to give your heart. To resist releasing yourself for fear of getting burned may seem safe, but in the long run it is lethal. It means having to give up something — sometimes a lot. It can even mean having your heart broken and wrung like a towel. But to fail to give it means to lock it up safely in the casket of selfishness. And like a body laid to rest in a casket, the

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heart will change; though safe, dark, and motionless, it will rot and become a bag of bones. But if it actually starts interfering with my personal life, forget it. Accountability is to the Great Commission what tracks are to a train. It is the means of quality control, facilitates leadership, protects the congregation, makes ministry a joy, helps people keep their commitments. Involvement with God, involvement with family, involvement with other Christians, and involvement with non-Christians.

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Chapter 2 : What Does the Bible Say About Heart?

1 The Heart of the Matter: Lesson 1: Why Do We Do the Things We Do? 1. The Free Moral Agency of Man That which sets man apart from animals is the ability to reason and decide.

Most people do not realize the true hardness of the human heart. King James Bible Study Help, Lord; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men. Yet when He gave the law to the nation of Israel, the God Who created the family and Who hates divorce nevertheless included provision for divorce Deuteronomy When the Pharisees questioned this seeming contradiction, the Lord Jesus Christ explained the reason for the supposed discrepancy: Sadly, hardheartedness is a self-induced condition. No one not even Pharaoh was born with a hard heart. According to the Bible, the hardening of the human heart is a process, and it certainly behooves those of us who are saved to recognize the steps in this process and avoid hardheartedness. The Hardening Process The first step in the hardening of the heart is unbelief: Unbelief is a heart problem Hebrews 3: Before she ate of the forbidden fruit, Eve made a conscious decision to disbelieve what God had told her husband Genesis 3: The second step in the hardening of the heart results from unbelief: The Bible warns, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" Hebrews 3: Sin in the lives of Saul and Solomon hardened their hearts and caused both to depart from the Lord 1 Samuel The third step in the hardening of the heart is a refusal to repent of sin. Again, the Bible warns, "But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God: As their murder of Stephen showed, the religious leaders of Acts 7 refused to repent of their sins and believe on their Messiah. God described their heart condition and the heart condition of all impenitent sinners in Zechariah 7: Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the LORD of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets: Like the religious leaders of Acts 7, Saul and Solomon also refused to repent of their sins; as a result, their sins destroyed them. The final step in the hardening of the heart is destructive pride. Like unbelief, pride is a heart problem Jeremiah Pride resides in the heart Psalm As we see in the testimonies of Lucifer Isaiah The Cure for a Hardened Heart Just as the human heart hardens in steps, so too it softens in steps. Because the first step in the hardening of the heart is not believing the word of God, the first step in curing hardheartedness is letting the word of God break the heart: The human heart is like clay. But once it hardens, it can no longer be molded—it can only be broken. Because sin hardens the heart, the second step in the cure of a hardened heart is repentance of the sin that caused the hardening. Whereas emotionalism might move the heart to sorrow and tears, the word of God breaks the heart and moves it to repentance. The fact that it can be circumcised shows that the repentant heart is no longer as hard as an adamant stone. Because destructive pride is the final step in the hardening of the heart, true humbleness is the final step in the cure of the hardened heart. Hardheartedness is spiritual rigor mortis—and only humbleness will allow God to revive a dead heart. Although pride prevents a sinner from turning to God for help Psalm When God revives a human heart, He makes it soft instead of hard: God maketh my heart soft Once God has broken a hardened heart, revived it, and then softened it, it is ready and able to serve Him. The Lord has promised that after people humbly repent of their hard deeds, "I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you: That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: But as for them whose heart walketh after the heart of their detestable things and their abominations, I will recompense their way upon their own heads, saith the Lord GOD" Ezekiel A synonym for "soft" is "tender. Despite his new heart, Saul sinned grievously in the matter of the Amalekites. When the prophet Samuel reproved him of his sin and gave him the words of God, Saul hardened his heart and refused to repent. Instead, he lied; he blamed others for his sin; he even assaulted Samuel. Indeed, God said later that David "followed me with all his heart, to do that only which was right in my eyes" 1 Kings Despite his tender heart, David also sinned grievously against God

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2 Samuel When the prophet Nathan reproved him of his sin, David accepted the words of God 2 Samuel Those words broke his heart and he repented of his sin, asking God to "Create in me a new heart" Psalm Is your heart repentant, soft, and serving like that of David, or is it impenitent and hard like that of Saul?

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Chapter 3 : Lesson The Source of Conflicts (James) | calendrierdelascience.com

The Heart of the Matter () is a novel by English author Graham calendrierdelascience.com book details a life-changing moral crisis for Henry Scobie. Greene, a British intelligence officer in Freetown, Sierra Leone, drew on his experience there.

What is a Church? Part 4 - What the Bible Says! New Testament churches met in the homes of those in the church: They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts Here we see that in the very beginning they gathered in each others homes and the temple courts. The Temple Courts, as a public gathering place, were used for mass gatherings for teaching, evangelism, prayer etc and were utilized for what one might term as multi-church gatherings. Breaking of bread refers to eating meals and is what the phrase means as used in the New Testament. From this point the temple gatherings fade from view completely as the church spread outside of Jerusalem and eventually to the Gentiles. Going from house to house, he dragged off men and women and put them in prison. We here see that each church Saul later to become Paul the Apostle destroyed was found in a house. The explanation sometimes given that the New Testament churches met in houses because of persecution is quite without biblical merit. They risked their lives for me. Not only I but all the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them. Greet also the church that meets at their house. Aquila and Priscilla greet you warmly in the Lord, and so does the church that meets at their house. Philemon - Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother. To Philemon our dear friend and fellow-worker, to Apphia our sister, to Archippus our fellow-soldier and to the church that meets in your home. Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in shabby clothes also comes in. James is quite clearly referring here to when they met as a church, and what he says only makes sense if they were doing so in a home as opposed to a public building. What is at a premium here is space, or otherwise why would the poor brother be required either to sit on the floor or to stand? He could have just been shuffled out of the way to a seat somewhere in the back row! James, if only because of the issue being lack of space, is clearly using it in its original meaning of a gathering of people rather than an actual Synagogue building. Any such verses, as any biblical scholar will tell you - and we will see them doing just that in the next section - are completely absent from the text of the New Testament. No-one who knows their biblical stuff would challenge the simple fact that the apostles established churches to meet in the homes of those believers who were part of them, and that there is not one word or hint in the New Testament that it was in any way envisaged that this would ever change. New Testament church gatherings were completely open and participatory with no one leading from the front: This is not something that any Bible commentator would challenge and is self-evidently the case. He is particularly concerned, in the light of their obsession with the verbal gifts of the Spirit such as tongues and prophecy, that they understand the rules he had previously given them concerning their use. Further, he couches his teaching in terms of each person in the church being a different part of a body, and that the key to a healthy body is that each part functions properly and according to its design. The key point here is that when they meet as a church each one ought to have their personal manifestation and gift of the Spirit to bring in order that all present might be benefited. But if an unbeliever or someone who does not understand comes in while everyone is prophesying, he will be convinced by all that he is a sinner and will be judged by all, and the secrets of his heart will be laid bare. And of course the thing to grasp here is that he encourages everyone to prophecy. So there you have it again; all present were free to take part! When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. What is the push here, then? That everyone should take part, and quite spontaneously as well! And if a revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, the first speaker should stop. For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged. They make perfect sense, however, when understood as instructions for everyone in the church to adhere to and implement. Just imagine, Paul here tells them that someone already sharing something is to give way to another who indicates they now have something to bring.

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All are free to contribute and take part for the corporate good and spiritual well-being of each person present. Nothing is further from his mind in his writings than the notion that someone might be leading the church gathering. These were sordid affairs, to put it mildly, with priestesses doubling for prostitutes, and the whole thing was basically a drunken orgy. Further, he addresses the fact that not only were believers in the Corinthian church failing to maintain proper relationships with each other, and then eating the church love-feast without first putting such behavior right with those they had sinned against, but some were even getting drunk and eating all the food before the poorer brothers and sisters had even arrived. The Greek word translated supper here in this Corinthian letter is *deipnon*, and it exclusively denotes the main meal of the day eaten towards evening. And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf. Using the terminology of the food and drink at the Passover, itself a full meal, Paul indicates that the food and drink represents, among other things, the unity we have because of what Jesus accomplished for us in His death. Hence we have such associated words as communication, *communique* and communion. This is his warning to those who are coming to the church love feast whilst still attending those held at the pagan temple. And of course the love feasts at the pagan temple, as with those the Christian churches practiced, were proper meals. One remains hungry, another gets drunk. Jude 12 - These men false teachers are blemishes at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm Well, any Bible scholar will tell you that the churches in the New Testament did indeed have love feasts when they met. So when does your church have its love feast then? The New Testament churches met on the first day of the week: Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight. This verse is interesting for various reasons, and not least of all because the phrasing here in the Greek tells us that the coming together on the first day of the week was their normative and habitual practice, and not just some one-off event here with the church in Troas. However, there are two other things of great interest here: The phrase is one of the ways that the Jews back then referred to eating a meal, and here it is clearly the church love feast that is in view. And it is further fascinating to note that the Greek at this point also indicates that this breaking of bread, i. It was, in fact, the very heart and purpose of their gathering together as a church, and was the thing around which everything else revolved. It is actually where the English word *dialogue* comes from, and far from indicating a monologue sermon with just one person speaking, it rather denotes a two way verbal intercourse that is mutual, participatory and interactive. What he did do, however, was to talk with the people who comprised that church and to share interactively with them; including, of course, eating the love feast with them. Each church practiced non-hierarchical, plural, male leadership that had arisen from the people within the church. These men were known as elders, pastors or shepherds and bishops or overseers, these being synonymous terms in the New Testament: We shall be back to this with various other things we have touched on so far in later articles, but for the time being we will see what the New Testament shows us about it without making too much comment. Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers or bishops. Be shepherds or pastors of the church of God which He bought with His own blood. He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave - just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and give His life as a ransom for many. I repeat; this is not merely what I say, it is what the Bible says! Still not sure about it all though? Well, I can understand that right enough! It is, after all, pretty radical stuff. So let me entice you to the next article where you can see for yourself what universally recognized and acclaimed evangelical biblical scholars, experts and historians have to say about it.

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Chapter 4 : Acts You have no part or share in our ministry, because your heart is not right before God.

The Holy Spirit has used all of this and more to give me "a heart for the heart of the heart" as God places me in the midst of other broken hearts to minister to. Like all surgery performed on the physical body, the work of the Spirit in our hearts hurts, but it also heals.

His wife Louise, an unhappy, solitary woman who loves literature and poetry, cannot make friends. Scobie feels responsible for her misery, but does not love her. Their only child, Catherine, died in England several years before. Louise is a devout Catholic. Scobie, a convert, is also devout. Scobie is passed over for promotion to Commissioner, which upsets Louise both for her personal ambition and her hope that the local British community will begin to accept her. Louise asks Scobie if she can go and live in South Africa to escape the life she hates. At the same time, a new inspector, named Wilson, arrives in the town. He is priggish and socially inept, and hides his passion for poetry for fear of ostracism by his colleagues. He and Louise strike up a friendship, which Wilson mistakes for love. Wilson rooms with another colleague named Harris, who has created a sport for himself of killing the cockroaches that appear in the apartment each night. He invites Wilson to join him, but in the first match, they end up quarrelling over the rules of engagement. Scobie finds it, and because it is addressed to someone in Germany, he must confiscate it in case it should contain secret codes or other clandestine information. Scobie declines the bribe and takes the letter, but having opened and read it through thus breaking the rules and finding it innocuous, he decides not to submit it to the authorities, and burns it. Scobie suspects the involvement of the local agent of a Syrian man named Yusef, a local black marketeer. Yusef offers to lend Scobie the money at four per cent per annum. Scobie initially declines, but after an incident where he mistakenly thinks Louise is contemplating suicide, he accepts the loan and sends Louise to South Africa. Wilson meets them at the pier and tries to interfere with their parting. Shortly afterwards, the survivors of a shipwreck begin to arrive after forty days at sea in lifeboats. One young girl dies as Scobie tries to comfort her by pretending to be her father, who was killed in the wreck. A year-old woman named Helen Rolt also arrives malnourished and dehydrated, clutching an album of postage stamps. She was married before the ship left its original port and is now a widow, and her wedding ring is too big for her finger. Scobie feels drawn to her, as much to the cherished album of stamps as to her physical presence, even though she is not beautiful. She reminds him of his daughter. He soon starts a passionate affair with her, all the time being aware that he is committing a grave sin of adultery. After Louise unexpectedly returns, Scobie struggles to keep her ignorant of his love affair. But he is unable to renounce Helen, even in the confessional, where the priest instructs him to think it over and postpones absolution. Still, to placate his wife, Scobie attends Mass with her and receives communion in his state of mortal sin—a sacrilege according to Catholic teaching. Scobie visits Yusef to confront him about the gift but more so to unburden his suspicion that Ali, whom he had trusted for all of their 15 years together, is disloyal. Yusef says he will take care of the matter, which within a few hours ends up in Ali being killed by local teenagers known as "wharf rats". The reader is led to believe that Yusef arranged the killing; however, Scobie blames himself. Having gone this far down the path of ruin and seeing no way out, the proud Scobie decides to free everyone from himself—including God—and plots his death by faking a heart ailment and getting a prescription for sleeping pills. Knowing full well that suicide is the ultimate damnation according to Church doctrine, he proceeds in the end to commit suicide with the pills. The act, however, yields ambiguous results. Helen continues her dreary existence. The concluding chapter consists of a short encounter between Louise and the confessional priest. Major Henry Scobie — Longtime police deputy commissioner and protagonist of the novel. Catherine Scobie — Deceased daughter of Henry and Louise. Edward Wilson — New inspector who secretly spies on the actions of Major Scobie, and is in love with Louise. Yusef — Syrian local black marketeer who blackmails Scobie after finding a letter in which he expresses his love for Helen. Tallit — Catholic Syrian who is the main competitor to Yusef. Father Rank — Local Catholic priest. Father Clay —

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Catholic priest at Bamba who reads about saints. This section needs additional citations for verification. Please help improve this article by adding citations to reliable sources. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed. April Learn how and when to remove this template message Graham Greene saw *The Heart of the Matter* as dealing with the issue of pity. He illustrates this theme by describing Scobie, the main character of the book, as "a weak man with good intentions doomed by his big sense of pity". He further says in the preface, "I had meant the story of Scobie to enlarge a theme which I had touched on in *The Ministry of Fear*, the disastrous effect on human beings of pity as distinct from compassion. I had written in *The Ministry of Fear*: In the preface of the novel he notes that the story originally came from a desire on his part to write a detective story where the principal character, the villain, is ignorant of who the detective is. Each character in the novel, be it Scobie or Wilson, fails in their ultimate goals by the end of the book. Other instances of failure, both subtler and more obvious, can be seen throughout the work, lending it a muted, dark feeling. *The Heart of the Matter* is not just about failure, but about the price we all pay for our individualism and the impossibility of truly understanding another person. Each of the characters in the novel operates at tangential purposes which they often think are clear to others, or think are hidden from others, but are in fact not. Scobie throughout the book constantly puts his fears in the voice and context of religion. After his wife returns he has a pathological fear of taking communion while suffering the stain of mortal sin and later agonises over the choice of suicide in terms of its theological damnation. The conflict is particularly interesting because it is not a conflict of faith, but rather a dispute set in legalistic terms: This argument is not simply one of whether Scobie is damned to hell, a question Greene himself tired of, but rather of whether what he did was worth anything in the world of the present. In , the novel was chosen by TIME magazine as one of the one hundred best English-language novels from to the present. Retrieved 3 July Retrieved 21 October A Study in Greene, p.

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Chapter 5 : James 1 Commentary - Matthew Henry Commentary on the Whole Bible (Complete)

the root of the matter and set forth the reason for the lack of peace and salvation of which some complain. May the sacred Spirit help us to point out the fatal failure which keeps the soul from rest.

Related Media A Canadian pastor told a true story of how a new denomination got started in that country. It all started the night that a Mr. Horner was enthusiastically preaching when his tie became wrapped around his hand. He concluded that the devil was trying to bind him in his preaching. So he tore off his tie, threw it on the ground, stomped on it, and said that ties were from the devil. From then on he taught that Christians ought never to wear ties, because they bound them in their Christian lives. Others disagreed, which led to quarrels, which led to division. Sometimes, when serious doctrinal issues are at stake, division among professing Christians is demanded. If we compromise the gospel, we are no longer Christian in any meaningful sense of the word. But, sadly, all too often our divisions and quarrels are over petty matters, not essentials. What is true among churches is also true in our homes. Many Christian homes are wracked by conflict rather than permeated with the sweet aroma of the peace of Christ. I just read of a man who is serving the Lord in Africa. When he called his parents to wish them a happy thirtieth anniversary, he learned that they were getting a divorce. He had to overcome a lot of bitterness in his own life to be able to follow and serve Christ. Sometimes we idealize the early church. It was so dynamic and powerful. They had such sweet fellowship! Many if not all! The Corinthian church had divided into factions. The Galatian believers were biting and devouring one another Gal. Paul began the practical section of Ephesians with an appeal to unity, tolerance, and love between the members Eph. On a personal level, even Paul and Barnabas had a serious disagreement that led to a parting of ways Acts So it was not a unique situation when James addressed the problem of quarrels and conflicts among the believers to whom he wrote. The section here runs through 4: For sake of time, we can only deal with verses today, but here is the flow of the entire section. The overall idea may be summed up: To resolve conflicts, repent of your sinful selfishness and humble yourself before God. There are four sections: To resolve conflicts, judge your selfish motives 4: To resolve conflicts, turn away from the world, give total allegiance to God, and humbly seek His grace 4: Today, we can only look at the first section, where James says, To resolve conflicts, judge your selfish motives. If it seems that I am stomping on your toes, it is only because James stomps on all of our toes! He is not a nice, polite man who beats around the bush in a mealy-mouthed manner! He is a doctor of the soul who speaks the truth plainly, even when it hurts. But you should prefer a doctor who speaks the truth over one who is nice, but never tells you what is wrong. We can track his thinking with four points: Self versus self is at the heart of all relational conflicts. This has proved true in world history. In , a soldier serving in the army of the city of Bologna, Italy, deserted to Modena and took with him an old oaken bucket used as a water trough for army horses. Bologna waived her rights to the fugitive, but demanded the return of the bucket. Although the underlying causes of World War I were much more complex, the immediate cause was the assassination of Archduke Francis Ferdinand on June 28, Eventually 32 nations joined that war and about 30 million lives were lost. James answers his own question as to the source of wars and fights 4: You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. The source is selfishness! Two selfish people dig in their heels and accuse each other as being the cause of the problems. Often, others take sides, until an all-out war results. But James takes it back to the root cause: Let me explain what my wife [husband, etc. James is saying that you will not resolve conflict until you correctly identify the source of it. If you blame the other person, you have not yet correctly identified the source. You must look within and see that your own selfishness is at fault. As a pastoral counselor, I have never seen a conflict that is percent one-sided. Even if one party is only 10 percent responsible and the other side 90 percent, the 10 percent side needs to face his or her responsibility and stop blaming the other side. Let God convict and deal with your partner. You deal with your own selfish sin. The story is told of two monks who had lived in harmony for years. If the stone is thine, keep it. The first

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step toward resolving conflict is to acknowledge your own selfishness. The enemy dwells within us and is engaged in mortal combat. The main enemy is your own sinful, selfish flesh. If you do not defeat it, it will destroy you! The enemy dwells within your heart. There are some who teach that because we are new creatures in Christ 2 Cor. I find this confusing at best; at worst, they end up minimizing the power of the enemy within. Minimizing or underestimating the power of an enemy is a sure path toward defeat! We will not be completely free from indwelling sin until we receive our new resurrection bodies at the return of Jesus Christ. Of course, at death our spirits are freed from the power of sin there could not be any sin in heaven! Until that time, there is within each of us a powerful inclination toward sin. Human nature is indeed in the grip of an overwhelming army of occupation. You will never defeat such a powerful enemy if you shrug it off as no big deal. The enemy poses as a friendly ally, but never delivers on his promises. We get the word hedonism from this Greek word. It implies that the enemy poses as a friendly ally, someone who will help you enjoy life better. They deliver on their promise. At first, you feel high and your problems seem to be gone. But even though they are destroying themselves, they keep using it because of the immediate high it gives them. All sin is like that—it gives immediate pleasure, but long term pain. James emphasizes four times in these three verses that yielding to your sinful pleasures does not get you what you thought it would. You ask and do not receive. But over the long haul, you come up empty and frustrated, if not totally destroyed. The objective in war is either to destroy or to totally dominate your enemy. Scholars differ over what James means when he accuses his readers of committing murder. Did he mean this literally? But we should not miss the implication that murder usually begins with unchecked anger. But if you continually erupt in anger toward them, it may happen! You must confront the enemy within, because he does not want to stop short of destroying you and others through you. And, you cannot grow in your Christian life and you will not bear fruit for God if you engage in unchecked anger and conflict at home or in the church. So James says that self versus self is at the heart of all relational conflicts. Also, there is an enemy within each of us, engaged in mortal combat. He poses as a friend promising pleasure, but his end is death. Your prayer life or lack thereof reveals the focus of your heart. You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures. If you do not pray, it shows that your focus is not properly toward God. The focus of the person who does not pray is toward self, not toward God. If you pray selfishly, it shows that you are trying to use God for your purposes, rather than seeking His purposes. Prayer is not so that we can use God; it is so that God can use us.

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Chapter 6 : The Heart Of The Matter Sermon by Thomas Bowen, James - calendrierdelascience.com

Maybe one reason that we fail to pray is that it's hard to pray for someone and be angry at them at the same time. Since we justify our anger ("I have a right to be angry") and we want to use our anger to make the other person pay, we don't want to let it go.

Praying for People in Authority I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. You could even say that 1 Timothy 2: Yes, the prayers that Christians pray for those in authority matter; they are essential to the advancement of the Kingdom. We cannot afford to leave them up to others. Prayer for leaders must become one of the features of our lives as intercessors. Many other Scriptures help us understand how to pray for people who are in positions of authority. Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same; for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil. For because of this you also pay taxes, for rulers are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing. Render to all what is due them: Why should we pray for those who are in authority? I see two reasons in 1 Timothy 2: He "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. If you bypass prayer, you will not have power to carry them out. Our power-source is prayer, and we are enjoined in the Bible to pray in particular for "kings and all in authority," for good government and wise leadership. Whom Should You Pray For? Of course, from a United States government perspective, you should pray for the sixteen individuals who make most of the key governmental decisions in the United States: Each of us has an obligation to pray for these men and women, by name, on a regular basis. But you can apply these same principles to your prayers for spiritual leaders on all levels – from your local pastor and church staff members to regional leaders, national leaders, and anyone who oversees an aspect of spiritual life in the Church. And you can also pray for marketplace leaders, for the "elders" who "sit at the gates" of your city, for those who drive the commerce where you live. In ancient Middle Eastern cities, this was literally the case. A city would have more than one gate, and they were connected by broad walls which you could compare to the "walls of salvation". At least three offices would be represented or contained at the gateways of a city: Commercial, judicial, and prophetic. Actual real estate transactions were handled at the gateway; deeds were transferred, signatures were collected. Court cases and judicial hearings were held right in the gate and decisions would be announced right there. In addition, prophetic words, the word of the Lord, would be delivered to the priests in the gate see Proverbs 1: So there at the gate, a person would find commerce moving, the justice system operating, and spiritual dynamics taking place. When you pray for "those in authority," you are selecting, by name if possible, people who oversee certain spheres and assignments. You have to keep in mind the fact that the spheres of authority are different from each other. But those prayers will have little to do with the policies in your local school system – which are decided by school officials. If you want to pray for your local schools, pray for the authorities over the school system. Stick with the right "fields" and pray with the level of faith that God has granted to you see Romans Also, our participation in the voting process is an adjunct to our prayers in a very real way. Voting can be our "works" that are supposed to match our faith. The book of James tells us that faith without works is dead. Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. What Should You Pray For? We learn from many Scriptures that God exalts rulers and people in authority if they exercise their authority with righteousness. Proverbs expresses it best: So one of the first things we should pray for is that the authority figure we are praying for will become righteous and will express righteousness, wisdom, and justice

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in all that he or she does. Often, I use Scripture passages as the basis for my prayers, something like this: Turn it where You wish" based on Proverbs The following points will give you some basic understanding on what to pray. When a country is rebellious, it has many rulers, but a man of understanding and knowledge maintains order. See also Isaiah Because of your raging against Me, and because your arrogance has come up to My ears, therefore I will put My hook in your nose, and My bridle in your lips, and I will turn you back by the way which you came. Pray that He will hedge in such leaders with limits and boundaries. Effective Prayers for Those in Authority While we each have special prayer assignments, we are all called to pray for people who are in authority review 1 Timothy 2: Father, in accordance with Your Word we pause and pray for kings and for those in authority. We bring before You the one who is the President of the United States at this time. We ask You to provide wisdom like that of Solomon, as well as purity, protection, and safety. We also pray for our governors and for our members of congress on the national and state levels. We pray for those in authority in the judicial system, especially the nine Supreme Court Justices of the United States. We bless them in the name of the Lord of Hosts. We pray that all of those in authority would realize and recognize their personal inadequacy to fulfill their role and that You would release to them a revelation of dependency upon God. We pray that You would reverse the trends of socialism and humanism in this nation, all trends that deify man rather than God. Lord, as this nation and different nations go into critical times, we call forth those who are truly appointed by You. Let them rise to the top with favor, as cream rises to the top of the milk. Give them a voice that will be heard. Release favor to righteous men and women and to those who are humble, to those who are wise and have revelatory activity upon their lives " release them into positions of influence, and impact, and authority. We pray for priorities to be released, revelation to come of the honor of being a public servant. We pray that there would be a reliance upon the Word of God, the will of God, and the ways of God as the source of daily strength and wisdom and courage. We pray that there would be a restoration of dignity and honor, trustworthiness and righteousness in the land. We pray for our spiritual leaders. We pray for our pastors, our apostles, our prophets, our evangelists, our pastors, and our teachers. We pray blessings and protection over them. We pray for purity. We pray for the quality of life in their families. We bless those in authority this day and we declare that this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior who desires all men and women to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. Blessings to each of you!

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Chapter 7 : Verse of the Day Inspirational Image

The Bible indicates that our heart is central: "The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks" (Luke NIV).

Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. Prayer is a fascinating subject. I have spent a lot of time studying prayer over the past 9 months working on a book that is close to the publishing point. As I was going through cancer maintenance I came across the notes and decided it was time. Some of you might remember me blogging a good portion of the book on this blog earlier this year. I learned a lot about prayer doing this study, but will spare you the whole book here to concentrate on the point Jesus is making in this portion of the Sermon. Once again He mainly addresses pride, as He does many times throughout these passages. It always amazes me how much the Bible talks about the evils of pride and yet the church still goes on in its prideful way. I know I did for years, something I have shared over and over again on these pages. When will we begin to understand the heart of God is humility? In this portion, Jesus is specifically discussing how we should pray. The Pharisees were well known for standing on the street corners in their ornate robes and praying very fancy prayers so that all could see them and hear them. Their prayers also included praise to God. They often sang these prayers, or recited them in lyrical form. They could be very beautiful. You can still here these types of prayers sung and chanted in both Israel and in many Arab nations. The sound of praying fills the air in many places. The problem here is not the prayers. God loves prayer, and He loves it when we come to Him with our requests Proverbs He loves it when we express our praise and our need for Him in our lives. He wants nothing more than to bless us and give us the desires of our heart Psalm The problem here is not that they are praying, but the reason they are praying. Jesus says they are praying so that men might see them. In other words, their prayers were meant to draw not only the attention of God but the attention of men as well. They desired to be noticed because of their fancy, elaborate prayers. This is one of the reasons they stood on the street corners "not to cry out to God, but to be noticed by men. This act of drawing attention to themselves is pride. The attention of men is their reward. Jesus tells us to go into our closet to pray. Our prayer should not be an open show. It should be a quiet conversation with God about the needs of others around us and our own needs. The closet is a place of solitude. God wants us to get alone with Him when we pray. He wants us to give Him our full attention and not try to draw the attention of men. Prayer is a solemn time when we come before the creator of all things and present our requests. It should not be taken lightly. At the same time, it should be like a casual conversation between us and God. We do not need fancy words to pray. We just need to talk to God. The other thing I draw out of this scripture is that we should not go around telling others that our prayers were answered. If we are doing that to draw attention to the fact that we prayed and it was answered, that is pride and only builds us up, not God. If we are glorifying God about His answer to prayer, that is OK. People need to know prayers have been answered. We just make sure they know for the right reason. Jesus tells us to let our light shine so people can see our good works and glorify the Father Matthew 5: He does not say so people could hear about our good works. Keep your prayer life to yourself unless you speak of it to bring glory to God. Then the wonderful statement comes in that God knows what we have need of before we ask. I believe the answer is simple. Do you recall the story of Blind Bartimaeus? He was a blind beggar who sat on the street every day looking for alms. Finally Jesus heard him from the back of the crowd and asked that he be brought forward. Jesus then asked Bartimaeus what he wanted. It was quite obvious that he was blind! Why did Jesus ask the question? I am convinced that Bartimaeus could have asked for anything he wanted and Jesus would have granted it for him that day. He asked for his sight and his eyes were opened. The question is never if God knows what we need. He always knows what we need for any situation we find ourselves in. If we are sick, we want healing. But God may know we need faith more. If we are in financial difficulty, we want finances, but God may know that we need patience more. He knows what

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we need the most. That is why it is so important that we come to him asking for wisdom so we know what each trial is meant to teach us in this life. The same is true for those we pray for. They may be having big difficulties in their marriage, and we may pray that God will bring them closer together again. God knows exactly what they must go through in order to come out the other side. Our prayer should be that God will strengthen them until He decides to bring the solution. God may want a totally different lesson to be learned before that battle is over. God is looking at the long term benefit while we look at what our heart desires for the moment. After all, Jesus healed everyone that came to Him and He is our example. Of course we should, and we should expect God to heal. But we also must expect God to heal in His time and in His way. He may perform a miracle and heal instantly. Or He may heal over a period of time because there are other lessons we can learn in the midst of that trial. Some are healed only in dying, where they will have no more pain or sorrow. God has the final answer and we must do our best to pray that His will be done, not our own. God could have healed me instantly, but He had much greater things in store. Over 1, poems and songs, studies in Psalms, James and other books that built my faith. A book is being published to build the body of Christ. All because God healed me slowly, not right away. Watch your prayer life carefully. See if you are praying to get noticed. Observe how you are praying for others and if you are boasting about answered prayer. Be sure you are glorifying God and not yourself when prayers get answered. When we pray in the closet and keep those prayers to ourselves, God gets the glory.

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Chapter 8 : When You Pray “ God's Maintenance Man

(The Temple Courts, as a public gathering place, were used for mass gatherings for teaching, evangelism, prayer etc and were utilized for what one might term as multi-church gatherings.) Breaking of bread refers to eating meals and is what the phrase means as used in the New Testament.

This feast of the heart for running the good race 2 Timothy 4: There is lots and lots of chaos going on in the world today. And it all boils down to one main thing: The heart of the matter is a matter of the heart. And yes, even in the majority of churches which rarely drill down to the deeper realms of reality. Unless any human being [or couple, community, society, culture, or civilization of human beings] begins afresh like God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit of the Bible has offered us 1 spiritually, 2 emotionally, 3 psychologically, and 4 physically, we WILL approach any challenge in life on an incredibly and foolishly simplistic or reductionistic [reducing a very complex problem to one or two solutions] level. Ergo, the problems of life will not just stay unresolved, but will [axiomatically] get far, far worse! God intends to use the deconstruction of our hearts caused by suffering [and chaos] as the first phase in His deconstructing and reconstructing the renovation of our hearts. Imagine yourself as a living house. God comes in to rebuild that house. At first, perhaps, you can understand what He is doing. He is getting the drains right and stopping the leaks in the roof and so on; you knew that those jobs needed doing and so you are not surprised. But presently He starts knocking the house about in a way that hurts abominably and does not seem to make any sense. What on earth is He up to? The explanation is that He is building quite a different house from the one you thought of “ throwing out a new wing here, putting on an extra floor there, running up towers, making courtyards. You thought you were being made into a decent little cottage: He intends to come and live in it Himself. Lewis, Mere Christianity The degree of deconstruction is usually proportional to the intensity of our suffering and the level of denial we might live in at the time. We cannot insist on maintaining the compartmentalization of our hearts if we want to mature in our faith relationship with God. It is impossible to keep the compartments of our hearts intact while, on the other hand, having a desire to become more like Jesus Christ. In times of deep fear and pain like the one I experienced with the suicide of my dad, the first sensation of a frightening freefall marks our sudden heartbreak. We remain sinfully focused on two things: Why do I say pride? If we were to release our hearts completely to the saving lordship of Jesus Christ, we could no longer look down on other people in their differences and vulnerabilities. Pride keeps us from seeing our sin and depending on the one who saved us from it. Why do I say maintaining control? Instead, we would relinquish it to Christ and thrive in the freedom of obedience to Him. But this is exactly what the Bible commands. We must die to self in order to fully live for Christ Galatians 2: A Basic Necessity of Warfare: Know Your Enemy Even for the born-again, supernaturally changed Christian, the devil seeks to tempt us into sin. Sin is the enemy of the heart. There was a time about fifteen years ago when I prayed ardently that our Lord would grow me in His way, in His truth, and His life. I prayed that He would give me the gift of His wisdom and obedience so that I could love and serve him more fully. Ironically enough, within one week I received the answer: I spent nearly six months in the study of Romans 1: Two essential lessons from that study were a basic definition of what sin really is and the way it manifests itself in human hearts. Let me personalize that definition from verse My sin suppresses the truth of who God is. In pride, I demand the right to control my life in every way. At the end of the day, in the very heart of my heart, I hate God. That truth was not easy to take, but it was the medicine for my heart for which I had prayed. That is what I do. Inherited Sin, and habitual, everyday sinning, makes the heart thoroughly depraved. We live in a culture of misguided self-centeredness. The world seeks to improve itself by intensifying the focus on education, improving social engineering, and emphasizing family values, all through conservative and liberal approaches alike. All these avoid getting to the heart of the matter and are, at best, half-measures. At worst, they bury the root cause of our problems until we become unrecognizable to ourselves. Praise God! Praise God I saw both extremes of my true existence: God did answer my prayer, but

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not at all in the way I could have or would have expected. I had the amazing benefit of having a heart re-made by the Word of God. That night with Dad crushed my heart, but it opened it still further to God in amazing and miraculous ways. Like all surgery performed on the physical body, the work of the Spirit in our hearts hurts, but it also heals. Praise the Spirit, He is a supernatural heart surgeon beyond compare! You can trust him completely, with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength. The answer must be some-one, not just something. It is either rebellion or weeping. It is a question put to the Father, not a question asked in a vacuum. The hurt child needs not so much explanations as reassurances. And that is what we get: The answer is not just a word but The Word; not an idea but a person. If you would like to go deeper in your study of the fallen human heart and the ways in which our emotions serve as a key indicator concerning the state of the heart, I recommend these five resources to help you along: The Book of Psalms. At no other place in the Bible does God speak more clearly to the intensity and range of human emotions than here. Psalms expresses the gamut of our affections, thereby freeing our anger, sadness, surprise, perplexity, disillusionment, outrage, and delight by standing unashamed and adopted before God who loves us. Praying the Psalms opens our hearts to our heavenly Father for His help and healing. Further, the Psalms encourage us to work through our emotions with honesty and persistence. The Book of Psalms denies no emotion from us, or from God himself. The psalmists open their hearts fully to God so that we might open our own hearts to God in the same way. The Cry Of The Soul: Allender and Longman take us into new country. Colbert, a medical doctor, shows the connection between the truths to which our hearts cling, and how our emotions, our spirituality, and our mental and physical selves are inextricably intertwined. He outlines these connections in ways that are scientifically verifiable, deeply convicting, and also commonsensical. Colbert asserts that we begin to heal only when we see, accept, and reconnect the dots in ways that lead to truth and hope. Like the Bible, Colbert proposes that only the love of God experienced through an authentic relationship with Jesus Christ can holistically heal deadly emotions, making it possible for us to replace the idols and falsehoods of our hearts. When I say manage emotions, I only mean the really distressing, incapacitating emotions. Knowing and feeling your emotions is what makes life rich. Goleman has proposed that the four broad dimensions of Emotional Intelligence are self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and social-skills. These four categories are interdependent and, to some degree, hierarchical. The Book of Proverbs. The following verses from Proverbs offer some amazing examples of the mind-boggling complexity as well as the depth and breadth emotions one can experience. Several of them also suggest keys for mitigating conditions that often beset and bewilder the human heart. Anxiety and worry are heavy burdens to bear; love and encouragement can bear any burden. The discerning heart seeks knowledge, but the mouth of a fool feeds on folly. God is a God who knows all and intervenes to help us discern our true intentions. Get to Know the Heart! Your Heart: The heart-spirit-life connection is indeed complicated yet oh so amazing and well-worth a decision based upon repentance and a life-long commitment to discipleship and serving others in Jesus name! To pursue, Beloved of God! So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

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Chapter 9 : 1 John - Asking According to God's Will

I pray for those in authority (by name) that they will have God's heart. Often, I use Scripture passages as the basis for my prayers, something like this: "Lord, make the President's heart like a channel of water in Your hand.

Hamilton The Establishment Clause: Hamilton An accurate recounting of history is necessary to appreciate the need for disestablishment and a separation between church and state. The religiosity of the generation that framed the Constitution and the Bill of Rights of which the First Amendment is the first as a result of historical accident, not the preference for religious liberty over any other right has been overstated. In reality, many of the Framers and the most influential men of that generation rarely attended church, were often Deist rather than Christian, and had a healthy understanding of the potential for religious tyranny. This latter concern is to be expected as European history was awash with executions of religious heretics: Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, and Muslim. Three of the most influential men in the Framing era provide valuable insights into the mindset at the time: Franklin saw a pattern: If we look back into history for the character of the present sects in Christianity, we shall find few that have not in their turns been persecutors, and complainers of persecution. The primitive Christians thought persecution extremely wrong in the Pagans, but practiced it on one another. The first Protestants of the Church of England blamed persecution in the Romish Church, but practiced it upon the Puritans. These found it wrong in the Bishops, but fell into the same practice themselves both here [England] and in New England. The father of the Constitution and primary drafter of the First Amendment, James Madison, in his most important document on the topic, Memorial and Remonstrance against Religious Assessments , stated: During almost fifteen centuries has the legal establishment of Christianity been on trial. What have been its fruits? More or less in all places, pride and indolence in the Clergy, ignorance and servility in the laity, in both, superstition, bigotry and persecution. What influence, in fact, have ecclesiastical establishments had on society? In some instances they have been seen to erect a spiritual tyranny on the ruins of the Civil authority; in many instances they have been seen upholding the thrones of political tyranny; in no instance have they been the guardians of the liberties of the people. Two years later, John Adams described the states as having been derived from reason, not religious belief: It will never be pretended that any persons employed in that service had any interviews with the gods, or were in any degree under the influence of Heaven, any more than those at work upon ships or houses, or laboring in merchandise or agriculture; it will forever be acknowledged that these governments were contrived merely by the use of reason and the senses. Thirteen governments [of the original states] thus founded on the natural authority of the people alone, without a pretence of miracle or mystery, which are destined to spread over the northern part of that whole quarter of the globe, are a great point gained in favor of the rights of mankind. Massachusetts and Pennsylvania are examples of early discord. In Massachusetts, the Congregationalist establishment enforced taxation on all believers and expelled or even put to death dissenters. Baptist clergy became the first in the United States to advocate for a separation of church and state and an absolute right to believe what one chooses. Baptist pastor John Leland was an eloquent and forceful proponent of the freedom of conscience and the separation of church and state. Even so, the Quakers set in motion a principle that became a mainstay in religious liberty jurisprudence: Read the full discussion here. The reason for this proliferation of distinct doctrines is that the Establishment Clause is rooted in a concept of separating the power of church and state. These are the two most authoritative forces of human existence, and drawing a boundary line between them is not easy. The further complication is that the exercise of power is fluid, which leads both state and church to alter their positions to gain power either one over the other or as a union in opposition to the general public or particular minorities. The following are some of the most important principles. A Massachusetts law delegated authority to churches and schools to determine who could receive a liquor license within feet of their buildings. The Supreme Court struck down the law, because it delegated to churches zoning power, which belongs to state and local government, not private entities. According to the

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Court: The challenged statute thus enmeshes churches in the processes of government and creates the danger of [p]olitical fragmentation and divisiveness along religious lines. Grumet , the state of New York designated the neighborhood boundaries of Satmar Hasidim Orthodox Jews in Kiryas Joel Village as a public school district to itself. Thus, the boundary was determined solely by religious identity, in part because the community did not want their children to be exposed to children outside the faith. The Court invalidated the school district because political boundaries identified solely by reference to religion violate the Establishment Clause. The phrase, however, is misleading. The Supreme Court has never interpreted the First Amendment to confer on religious organizations a right to autonomy from the law. In fact, in the case in which they have most recently demanded such a right, arguing religious ministers should be exempt from laws prohibiting employment discrimination, the Court majority did not embrace the theory, not even using the term once. Therefore, if the dispute brought to a court can only be resolved by a judge or jury settling an intra-church, ecclesiastical dispute, the dispute is beyond judicial consideration. This is a corollary to the absolute right to believe what one chooses; it is not a right to be above the laws that apply to everyone else. For the Court and basic common sense, these are arguments for placing religion above the law, and in violation of the Establishment Clause. They are also fundamentally at odds with the common sense of the Framing generation that understood so well the evils of religious tyranny. Hamilton Senior Fellow, Robert A. Cardozo School of Law.