

# James 1:7-8 Commentary

PREVIOUS

NEXT

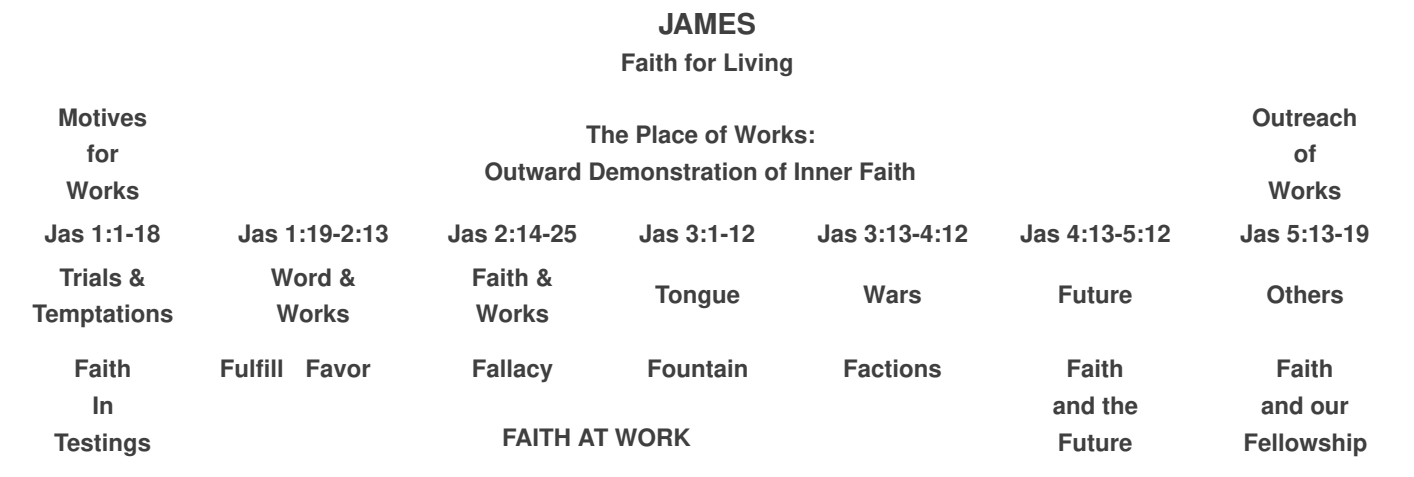
CLICK VERSE

To go directly to that verse

INDEX FOR ALL VERSES ON JAMES

- James 1:1 Commentary
- James 1:2 Commentary
- James 1:3 Commentary
- James 1:4 Commentary
- James 1:5 Commentary
- James 1:6 Commentary
- James 1:7 Commentary
- James 1:8 Commentary
- James 1:9 Commentary
- James 1:10 Commentary
- James 1:11 Commentary
- James 1:12 Commentary
- James 1:13 Commentary
- James 1:14 Commentary
- James 1:15 Commentary
- James 1:16 Commentary
- James 1:17 Commentary
- James 1:18 Commentary
- James 1:19 Commentary
- James 1:20 Commentary
- James 1:21 Commentary
- James 1:22 Commentary
- James 1:23 Commentary
- James 1:24 Commentary
- James 1:25 Commentary
- James 1:26 Commentary
- James 1:27 Commentary

Click chart to enlarge  
Chart from recommended resource [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission  
See also [Overview Chart](#) by Charles Swindoll



- I. The opening salutation (James 1:1)
  - A. The author

B. The readers

C. The greeting

## PART 1: The Theme: The Testings of Personal Faith

### I. The trials of the believer (James 1:2-12)

#### A. The proper attitude toward trials (James 1:2-4)

1. The attitude commanded (James 1:2)
2. The reason indicated (James 1:3)
3. The outcome to be realized (James 1:4)

#### B. The use of prayer amid trials (James 1:5-8)

1. The need for wisdom (James 1:5a)
2. The request for wisdom (James 1:5b)
3. The bestowal of wisdom (James 1:5c-8)
  - a. The divine response (James 1:5c)
  - b. The human obligation (James 1:6-8)
    1. The necessary attitude (James 1:6a)
    2. The rejected character (James 1:6b-8)

#### C. The correct attitude toward life by the tried (James 1:9-11)

1. The attitude of the lowly brother (James 1:9)
2. The attitude of the rich (James 1:10-11)
  - a. The reason for the attitude (James 1:10a)
  - b. The illustration from the flower (James 1:11a)
  - c. The application to the rich (James 1:11b)

#### D. The result of enduring trials (James 1:12)

1. The blessedness of endurance (James 1:12a)
2. The reward of endurance (James 1:12b)

### II. The nature of human temptation (James 1:13-16)

#### A. The source of human temptation (James 1:13-14)

1. The repudiation of a divine source (James 1:13)
  - a. The rejection stated (James 1:15a)
  - b. The rejection vindicated (James 1:13b)
2. The reality of the human source (James 1:14)

#### B. The consequences of yielding to temptation (James 1:15)

#### C. The warning against being deceived (James 1:16)

### III. The activity of God in human affairs (James 1:17-18)

#### A. The Giver of all good gifts (James 1:17)

#### B. The Author of the believer's regeneration (James 1:18)

## PART 2: The Test Marks of a living Faith

### I. Faith tested by its response to the Word of God (James 1:19-27)

#### A. The reactions to the Word (James 1:19-20)

1. The knowledge possessed (James 1:19a)
2. The reaction demanded (James 1:19b)
3. The reason stated (James 1:20)

#### B. The reception of the Word (James 1:21)

1. The stripping off of sins (James 1:21a)
2. The appropriation of the Word (James 1:21b)

#### C. The obedience to the Word (James 1:22-27)

1. The demand for active obedience (James 1:22-25)
  - a. The statement of the requirement (James 1:22)
  - b. The illustration of the requirement (James 1:23-25)
    1. The negative portrayal (James 1:23-24)
    2. The positive portrayal (James 1:25)
2. The nature of acceptable obedience (James 1:26-27)
  - a. The futility of activity without inner control (James 1:26)
  - b. Acceptable service with inner control (James 1:27) (Hiebert - James Commentary)

James 1:7 For that **man ought** not **to expect** that he will **receive anything** from the **Lord**, ([NASB: Lockman](#))

**Greek:** [me gar oiestho \(3SPMM\)](#) [o anthropos ekeinos hoti lempsetai \(3SFMI\)](#) [ti para tou kuriou.](#)

**Amplified:** For truly, let not such a person imagine that he will receive anything [he asks for] from the Lord, ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**KJV:** For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

**NLT:** People like that should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Phillips:** That sort of man cannot hope to receive anything from God, ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** for let not that individual be supposing that he shall receive anything from the presence of the Lord,

**Young's Literal:** for let not that man suppose that he shall receive anything from the Lord--

**FOR THAT MAN OUGHT NOT TO EXPECT THAT HE WILL RECEIVE ANYTHING FROM THE LORD: [me gar oiestho \(3SPMM\)](#) [o anthropos ekeinos hoti lempsetai \(3SFMI\)](#) [ti para tou kuriou:](#)**

- Jas 4:3; Pr 15:8; 21:27; Isa 1:15; Isa 58:3,4
- [James 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### For - term of explanation

**James** alludes to another reason God does not give in answer to prayer - wicked motives - which is separate from the asking in James 1:7, although in both the root cause is an absence of faith (eg, see Ro 14:23)

James 4:3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.

**Do you have the experience that God answers your prayers? Or is the converse your experience?** Either way, [Torrey's topic](#) below provides an excellent Scriptural overview of "**Answers to Prayer**." This topic would make an excellent small group Bible study - print out a selection of Scriptures under each subtopic (without Torrey's analysis) and simply observe what the text says, recording your observations which will lead to interpretation which should lead to personal application. This simple study will significantly impact the prayer life of your group. Paul says the impact is not just in this present passing life but in eternity future! Redeem the time! "Discipline yourself (in your prayer life) for the purpose of godliness for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for **the present life** and also for the **life to come**." (see notes 1Ti 4:7; 4:8)

**For** ([1063](#)) (**gar**) means on account of this or that or for this reason. **Gar** is a conjunction that serves as a marker showing the cause or reason for something. As noted above, James uses this conjunction to introduce a second reason the reader must ask in faith without any doubting.

**That man** (**ekeinos**) - The one who is doubting.

**Sinclair Ferguson** writes that...

To doubt is to be uncertain about God and to feel isolated from Him; to suffer (Ed: as one often does when trial come into our life) is to experience pain and to feel isolated from others. Giant Despair thus appears and imprisons us in what Bunyan aptly called "Doubting Castle." (Read about the destruction of "Doubting Castle" in [The Seventh Stage of Pilgrim's Progress](#)) There, alone in the darkness, we begin to hear and believe the voices that say "there is no help for him in God" (Ps. 3:2). But it is not true that there is no help for us in God! Hear the testimony of others: "Because the Sovereign Lord helps me, I will not be disgraced" (Isa. 50:7); "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble... God will help ... at break of day" (Ps. 46:1, 5).

The problem for the doubting sufferer, however, is that "break of day" has not yet come. It is still dark. When doubt is at its height and attacks most fiercely we ask, "Is there no light to help me through the night?" Indeed there is; but the prescribed antidote tends to work slowly. It is important for us, therefore, to complete the course.

Scripture's account of genuine spiritual experience speaks to your situation. It describes your symptoms and illustrates the way of recovery. You are not unique. There is no test of faith that seizes us "except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear" (1Co 10:13-note). Great saints of God have been where you are now.

Think of Elijah, suffering from total exhaustion; he doubted God's future purpose for his life and lay down to die. "I have had enough, Lord," he said (1 Kings 19:4). Here is Jeremiah, bravely facing being beaten and put in the stocks; he is a different man in private when the suffering catches up with him and he cries out, "O Lord, you deceived me, and I was deceived" (Jer. 20:7). There is John the Baptist, fearless in denouncing Herod's immoral behavior yet he receives an unwelcome visit from doubt as he languishes in prison and anxiously sends to know whether Jesus really is the Messiah after all (Luke 7:19). (If you would like more information on this important topic of **doubt** from the perspective of some of the finest Christian minds of modern times I would strongly recommend procuring the book edited by R C Sproul borrow [Doubt & assurance](#) page 33)

**Man** (444) (**anthropos**) means man referring not to the male of the species but to humanity in general, male and female.

**Expect** (3633) (**hoioma**) means to consider something to be true but with a component of tentativeness. It means to regard something as presumably true, but without particular certainty—to suppose, to expect, to presume, to assume, to imagine, to believe, to think, to mean, to intend. Note this is not a suggestion or a conclusion but is issued as a command (present imperative)

**Hiebert** explains that **hoioma** implies "a subjective judgment which has feeling rather than thought for its ground." It carries the collateral notion of an unwarranted judgment: "let not that man suppose." The negative **me** with the **present imperative** demands that he must stop entertaining any thought of receiving an answer to his prayer. ([D Edmond Hiebert - James. Moody](#))

There are 3 uses of **hoioma** in the NT, once in James, and in

John 21:25 And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, **lsuppose** (present tense = continually) that even the world itself would not contain the books which were written

Philippians 1:17 the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, rather than from pure motives, **thinking** (present tense = continually) to cause me distress in my imprisonment.

There are 14 uses of **hoioma** in the **Septuagint (LXX)** -

Ge 37:7; 40:16; 41:1, 17; Esther 8:12; 9:12; Job 11:2; 34:12; 37:23; 38:2; 40:8; 42:3; Isa 57:8; Da 2:11

**Will receive** (2983) (**lambano**) means to take hold of, to grasp, to seize. Lambano can indicate either benevolent and hostile actions, and have as object either people or things; e.g. take a wife, collect taxes, accept a verdict, take a road, and figuratively take courage. It is used with a material subject, as when, for example, fear or terror seizes men.

**Anything** (1565) (**ekeinos**) according to BDAG "pertains to an entity mentioned or understood and viewed as relatively remote in the discourse - setting, that person, that thing." "Not... anything" refers to the things he or she has asked for in this context.

As someone has well said "**Faith** unlocks the divine storehouse, but **unbelief** bars its doors."

**Para** (3844) (**para**) conveys the root meaning of beside, near, nearby expressing the idea of immediate vicinity or proximity. From the side of is the idea.

**Lord** (2962) (**kurios**) signifies God's sovereign power and absolute authority. He is the One Who has absolute ownership and uncontested power.

## Torrey's Topic Answers to Prayer

- God gives -Psalm 99:6; 118:5; 138:3
- Christ gives -John 4:10,14; 14:14
- Christ received -John 11:42; Hebrews 5:7

### GRANTED

- Through grace of God -Is 30:19 (esp refers to the **Millennium**, but principle applicable to all believers)
- Sometimes immediately -Is 65:24; Da 9:21,23; 10:12
- Sometimes after delay -Lk 18:7
- Sometimes differently from our desire -2Co 12:8,9
- Beyond expectation -Jeremiah 33:3; Ep 3:20
- Promised -Isa 58:9; Je 29:12; Mt 7:7

- Promised especially in times of trouble -Ps 50:15; 91:15

## RECEIVED BY THOSE WHO

- Seek God -Psalms 34:4
- Seek God with all the heart -Je 29:12,13
- Wait upon God -Psalms 40:1
- Return to God -2 Chronicles 7:14; Job 22:23,27
- Ask in faith -Matthew 21:21; Jas 5:15
- Ask in the name of Christ -Jn 14:13
- Ask according to God's will -1Jn 5:14
- Abide in Christ -John 15:7
- Call upon God in truth -Ps 145:18
- Fear God -Psalms 145:19
- Set their love upon God -Ps 91:14,15
- Keep God's commandments -1Jn 3:22
- Call upon God under oppression -Is 19:20
- Call upon God under affliction -Ps 18:6; 106:44; Is 30:19,20
- Humble themselves -2Chr 7:14; Ps 9:12
- Are righteous -Psalms 34:15; Jas 5:16
- Are poor and needy -Is 41:17

## SAINTS

- Are assured of -1Jn 5:15
- Love God for -Ps 116:1
- Bless God for -Ps 66:20
- Praise God for -Ps 116:17; 118:21
- A motive for continued prayer -Ps 116:2

## DENIED TO THOSE WHO

- Ask amiss -Jas 4:3
- Regard iniquity in the heart -Ps 66:18
- Live in sin -Isaiah 59:2; -Jn 9:31
- Offer unworthy service to God -Mal 1:7, 8, 9
- Forsake God -Jeremiah 14:10,12
- Reject the call of God -Pr 1:24,25,28
- Hear not the law -Proverbs 28:9; Zech 7:11, 12, 13
- Are deaf to the cry of the poor -Pr 21:13
- Are blood shedders -Isaiah 1:15; 59:3
- Are idolaters -Jeremiah 11:11-14; Ezek 8:15-18
- Are wavering -James 1:6,7
- Are hypocrites -Job 27:8,9
- Are proud -Job 35:12,13
- Are self-righteous -Luke 18:11,12,14
- Are the enemies of saints Ps 18:40,41
- Cruelly oppress saints -Mic 3:2, 3, 4

## Exemplified

- Abraham -Ge 17:20
- Lot -Ge 19:19-21
- Abraham's servant -Ge 24:15-27
- Jacob -Ge 32:24-30
- Israelites -Ex 2:23,24
- Moses -Ex 17:4-6,11-13; 32:11, 12, 13, 14

- Samson -Jdg 15:18,19
- Hannah -1 Samuel 1:27
- Samuel -1 Samuel 7:9
- Solomon -1 Kings 3:9,12
- Man of God -1 Kings 13:6
- Elijah -1Ki 18:36-38; Jas 5:17,18
- Elisha -2Ki 4:33-35
- Jehoahaz -2 Kings 13:4
- Hezekiah -2 Kings 19:20
- Jabez -1 Chronicles 4:10
- Asa -2 Chronicles 14:11,12
- Jehoshaphat -2 Chronicles 20:6-17
- Manasseh -2 Chronicles 33:13,19
- Ezra -Ezra 8:21-23
- Nehemiah -Nehemiah 4:9,15
- Job -Job 42:10
- David -Psalms 18:6
- Jeremiah -Lamentations 3:55,56
- Daniel -Daniel 9:20-23
- Jonah -Jonah 2:2,10
- Zacharias -Luke 1:13
- Blind man -Luke 18:38,41, 42, 43
- Thief on the cross -Luke 23:42,43
- Apostles -Acts 4:29-31
- Cornelius -Acts 10:4,31
- The Christians -Acts 12:5,7
- Paul and Silas -Acts 16:25,26
- Paul -Acts 28:8

#### Refusal of, exemplified

- Saul -1 Samuel 28:15
- Elders of Israel -Ezekiel 20:3
- Pharisees -Matthew 23:14

**James 1:8** *being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.* ([NASB: Lockman](#))

**Greek:** [aner dipsuchos, akatastatos en pasais tais hodois autou.](#)

**Amplified:** [For being as he is] a man of two minds (hesitating, dubious, irresolute), [he is] unstable and unreliable and uncertain about everything [he thinks, feels, decides]. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**KJV:** A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.

**NLT:** They can't make up their minds. They waver back and forth in everything they do. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Phillips:** and the life of a man of divided loyalty will reveal instability at every turn. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** a dubious, undecided man, vacillating in all his ways.

**Young's Literal:** a two-souled man is unstable in all his ways.

**BEING A DOUBLE-MINDED MAN, UNSTABLE IN ALL HIS WAYS:** [aner dipsuchos, akatastatos en pasais tais hodois autou](#)

- Jas 4:8; 1Ki 18:21; 2Ki 17:33,41; Is 29:13; Ho 7:8, 9, 10, 11; 10:2; Mt 6:22,24; 2Pe 2:14; 3:16

## A DOUBLE MINDED

## MAN

**Being** - No verb is present, so that "being" is added by the NAS translators for continuity.

**Man** (435) (**aner**) is the Greek word for man in contrast to woman, but as he has just used the more general word anthropos in v7, it is not likely that he intends to make this gender specific.

**Double minded** - "Two souled" as if two distinct souls were effecting this man's attitudes and actions! One of the souls is oriented as it were toward God and trusts in God, while the other is oriented toward the natural world and disbelieves God. As one writer has put it James is describing a man who is "a walking civil war in which trust and distrust of God wage a continual battle against each other." John Bunyan in Pilgrims Progress ([The Seventh Stage](#)) gives a similar picture in his description of **Mr. Facing-both-ways**!

**Double-minded** (1374) (**dipsuchos** from **dís** = twice + **psuche** = soul, mind) is an adjective which literally describes one who has two minds or one who is two-spirited and has been called one of the most picturesque words in the entire epistle. **Dipsuchos** is the one who hesitates or vacillates between two or more opinions, This person in a sense has a divided loyalty and is manifest by indecision and doubting. Some might see such a person as "fickle" (marked by lack of steadfastness, constancy, or stability -- given to erratic changeableness). This is the man or woman who is uncertain about the truth of something, in this case the truth of the sovereign, omnipotent power of God.

The only other use of **dipsuchos** is also by James...

**James 4:8**-note **Draw near** to God and He will draw near to you. **Cleanse** your hands, you sinners; and **purify** your hearts, you **double-minded**. (All verbs in red = aorist imperative)

Synonyms for double minded - vacillating, halting, hesitant, hesitating, indecisive, irresolute, tentative, uncertain, indecisive, wavering. Idioms of two minds

**The field mouse who illustrated James "Double-minded man"** - Driving in country at night when headlights showed up a field mouse dead ahead. He first started toward the left, then right, then left, and finally stood still as the car passed over him.

A similar thought is described in the OT passages which describe a person with a **divided (versus a whole) heart** (1Ki 8:61, 11:4, 15:3,14, 2Ki20:3, 1Ch12:38, 28:9, 29:19, 2Ch15:17, 16:9, 19:9, 25:2). Same idea in Ps 12:2 = double heart. Opposite of "undivided heart" = 1Chr 12:33. Cp "hesitate between two opinions" (1Ki 18:21). Dipsuchos is the opposite of Dt 4:29 = "with all your heart and all your soul".

James helps define **double-minded** as one who is unstable. This is the person who lacks integrity, who claims one thing and lives another. This is the hypocrite in the assembly of believers.

### O HAPPY DAY THAT FIXED MY CHOICE

by Philip Doddridge

[Play this hymn](#)

Now rest, my long divided heart,  
Fixed on this blissful center, rest.  
Here have I found a nobler part;  
Here heavenly pleasures fill my breast.

Happy day, happy day, when Jesus washed my sins away!  
He taught me how to watch and pray, and live rejoicing every day  
Happy day, happy day, when Jesus washed my sins away.

The **Puritan** writer **Thomas Manton** says that...

The word signifies a person who has two souls, and so it may imply:

(1) A hypocrite, since the same word is used with that meaning in Jas 4:8 : "Purify your hearts, you double-minded." As he speaks to open sinners to cleanse their hands, so he speaks to secret hypocrites (whom he calls double-minded since they pretend one thing but mean another) to purify their hearts—that is, to grow more inwardly sincere. This word is similar to the Hebrew word for "deceive." "Their flattering lips speak with deception" (Psalm 12:2); in the Hebrew this is "with a heart and a heart," which is their way of expressing something that is double or deceitful (deceitful weights are "a weight and a weight" in the Hebrew of Pr 20:23). As Theophrastus says of the partridges of Paphlagonia that they had two hearts, so every hypocrite has two hearts or two souls.

(2) It implies a person who is distracted and divided in his thoughts, floating between two different opinions, as if he had two minds or two souls. In the apostle's time there were some Judaizing brethren who sometimes sided with the Jews, sometimes with the Christians. They were not settled in the truth. See also 2Kings 17:33 , "They worshiped the Lord , but they also served their own gods"; they were divided between God and idols. The prophet says this shows a double or divided heart: "Their heart is deceitful, and now they must bear their guilt" (Hosea 10:2). Thus Athanasius applied this description to the Eusebians, who sometimes held one thing and then another.

(3) In the context of James this may refer to those whose minds were tossed to and fro with various ideas: now lifted up with a wave of presumption, then cast down in a gulf of despair, being torn between hopes and fears concerning their acceptance with God. I prefer this latter sense, as it conveys the apostle's purpose best. (Manton, T. Exposition of James)

**The Shepherd of Hermas** (Apostolic Fathers) expounds on **double mindedness** in Mandate #9...

He said to me, "Rid yourself of double-mindedness (dipsuchos - used in Greek text in all the occurrences of double-mindedness in this mandate), and do not be at all double-minded about asking God for something, saying to yourself, for example, 'How can I ask for something from God and receive it, when I have sinned so often against him?'

(2) Do not reason in this way, but turn to the Lord with all your heart and ask of him unhesitatingly, and you will know his extraordinary compassion, because he will never abandon you, but will fulfill your soul's request.

(3) For God is not like men, who bear grudges; no, he is without malice and has compassion on his creation.

(4) Do, therefore, cleanse your heart of all the vanities of this life, and of all the things mentioned to you above, and ask of the Lord, and you will receive everything, and will not fail to receive all of your requests, if you ask unhesitatingly.

(5) But if you hesitate in your heart, you will certainly not receive any of your requests. For those who hesitate in their relation to God are the double-minded, and they never obtain any of their requests.

(6) But those who are perfect in faith make all their requests trusting in the Lord, and they receive them, because they ask unhesitatingly, without any double-mindedness. For every double-minded man, unless he repents, will scarcely be saved.

(7) So cleanse your heart of double-mindedness and put on faith, because it is strong, and trust God that you will receive all the requests you make. And whenever you ask for something from the Lord and you receive your request rather slowly, do not become double-minded just because you did not receive your soul's request quickly, for assuredly it is because of some temptation or some transgression, of which you are ignorant, that you are receiving your request rather slowly.

(8) Do not, therefore, stop making your soul's request, and you will receive it. But if you become weary and double-minded as you ask, blame yourself and not the One who gives to you.

(9) Beware of this double-mindedness, for it is evil and senseless, and has uprooted many from the faith, even those who are very faithful and strong. For this double-mindedness is indeed a daughter of the devil, and does much evil to God's servants.

(10) So despise double-mindedness and gain mastery over it in everything by clothing yourself with faith that is strong and powerful. For faith promises all things, perfects all things; but double-mindedness, not having any confidence in itself, fails in all the works it tries to do.

(11) So you see," he said, "that faith is from above, from the Lord, and has great power, but double-mindedness is an earthly spirit from the devil that has no power.

(12) So serve faith, which has power, and have nothing to do with double-mindedness, which has no power, and you will live to God; indeed, all who are so minded will live to God." (The Apostolic Fathers : Greek texts and English translations. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books)

**If you wrestle with a double-mindedness, a great prayer to utter is Psalm 86:11...**

Teach me Thy way, O LORD; I will walk in Thy truth;  
Unite my heart to fear Thy name.

**Spurgeon comments on this prayer** - Having taught me one way, give me one heart to walk therein, for too often I feel a heart and a heart, two natures contending, two principles struggling for sovereignty. Our minds are apt to be divided between a variety of objects, like trickling streamlets which waste their force in a hundred runnels; our great desire should be to have all our life

floods poured into one channel and to have that channel directed towards the Lord alone. A man of divided heart is weak, the man of one object is the man. God who created the bands of our nature can draw them together, tighten, strengthen, and fasten them, and so braced and inwardly knit by his uniting grace, we shall be powerful for good, but not otherwise. To fear God is both the beginning, the growth, and the maturity of wisdom, therefore should we be undividedly given up to it, heart, and soul.

**Example of a divided heart** - This is a divided heart—like the heart of the girl to which a young man once proposed. He said, “Darling, I want you to know that I love you more than anything else in the world. I want you to marry me. I’m not rich. I don’t have a yacht or a Rolls Royce like Johnny Brown, but I do love you with all my heart.” She thought for a minute and then replied, “I love you with all my heart, too, but tell me more about Johnny Brown.”

**Vine's** Outline of "The Heart" in James...

I. The divided heart (Jas 1:8; 4:8, lit.).

II. The deceived heart (Jas 1:26).

III. The contentious heart (Jas 3:14).

IV. The selfish heart (Jas 5:5).

V. The purified heart (Jas 4:8).

VI. The established heart (Jas 5:8).

The **psalmist** writes...

I hate those who are double-minded, but I love Thy law. (Ps 119:113)

The result of a double minded man is that he is unsteady, changeable, erratic, mercurial, volatile, unsettled, etc.

**Unstable** (182) (**akatastatos** from **a** = not + **kathistemi** = to settle from **kata** = down + **histemi** = to stand) an adjective that describes one who is unsettled, unsteady, unstable, staggering, restless, reeling like a drunken man. Vacillating in all one's activity and conduct, because he or she lacks a solid foundation which predisposes to unsteadiness and wobbling. It describes a person who is often changing his mind about something.

Compare derivative noun **akatastasia** (181) = unsettlement, restlessness, disturbance, instability, disorder, commotion, confusion, tumult. Sometimes had political associations and had the meaning "anarchy" (Lk 21:9) - Jas 3:16 = disorder caused by those who with their "false wisdom" trouble the group of believers by demanding their own rights and exercising a party spirit., Lk 21:9, 2Co 6:5 = personal unrest, 2Co 12:20, 1Co 14:33 = confusion as opposed to eirene = peace.

**James** has the only other NT use in his description of our speech noting sadly...

Jas 3:8 But no one can tame the tongue; it is **arestless** (akatastatos cp "the restless sea" = continuously moving! Uncontrollable! Not subject to control) evil and full of deadly poison.

There is one use in the **Septuagint**...

Isaiah 54:11 "O afflicted one, storm-tossed, and not comforted, Behold, I will set your stones in antimony, And your foundations I will lay in sapphires.

**Manton** writes that "An unstable man has no constancy of soul. He is sometimes ready to depart from God and sometimes to be close to him; he is not settled in his religious profession." (Ibid)

**All (pas)** means all in an all inclusive sense. In **all** his conduct or behavior is the idea.

**Ways** (3598) (**hodos**) literally refers to a way along which one travels, such a road, street, highway or path and then speaks of a trip or journey (Mt 10:10, Mk 6:8, Lk 9:3). Figuratively, as used in the present passage, **hodos** speaks of one's course of behavior or way of life. In other words, life itself is compared to a way or a road one travels.

**Hiebert** adds that "**in all his ways**," is a Hebraism depicting his personal conduct (Ps 91:11; 145:17; Pr 3:6; Je 16:17). The plural "**all his ways**" encompasses all the varied aspects of his life. His fickle and vacillating attitude in the realm of faith projects itself into all the areas of his life making him unreliable in all of his dealings. "The man who does not trust God cannot be trusted by men." There is a close connection between the way a man prays and the way he lives. "Since the resting place of our will is the will of God found in prayer, a division at the centre destroys unity and force of character, and this produces instability in the whole range of conduct." (Ibid)

A double souled man cannot decide what he believes and therefore how he is going to live. He gets caught up in every wind of change that blows through society. A person without priorities will constantly find his heart captured by and worrying about every thing that might be.

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**Double Minded Man Pictured by Story of How to Catch a Fly** - From the often austere letters column of the scientific journal Nature comes advice on the best way to swat a fly: "A piece of tissue paper is taken in each hand and the fly approached from the left and right, keeping the hands equidistant from the fly and moving to and fro slightly. Then both hands simultaneously pounce." The advice is soundly grounded in "fly-neuroscience." Dr. Edward Gray of England's University College, London, wrote: "The fly cannot cope with this situation, since its central-nervous-system circuitry is geared to avoid approaching movement in only one part of its visual field at a time. Two simultaneously approaching threats render the fly immobile, for its central nervous system now cannot compute at which angle to take off." Boston Globe

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What God wants from us is singleness of heart in devotion and purpose. Only when Jesus is Lord of the heart is there control! How we need to pray those words of Paul Gerhardt:

O, knit my thankful heart to Thee,  
And reign without a rival there ...

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**Spurgeon's sermon - [A Divided Heart](#)** - a sermon on Hosea 10:2KJV -

Observe, then, that our text describes a Fearful Disease. Their heart is divided. I have called it a fearful disease, and this will very readily appear if you observe, first of all, the seat of it. It affects a vital part, it is not merely a disease of the hand, that reformation might cure; it is not merely a disease of the foot, that restraint might sometimes mollify; it is not merely a disease of the eye which hath but to be couched to let the light stream in upon it. It is a disease of a vital region — of the heart; a disease in a part so vital that it affects the whole man. The utmost extremity of the frame suffers when once the heart becomes affected, and especially so affected as to be divided. There is no power, no passion, there is no motive, no principle, which does not become vitiated, when once the heart is diseased. Hence it is that Satan, who is always crafty, endeavors to strike at the heart. He will give you the hand if you please; you may be honest. He will give you the eye if you please; you shall be outwardly chaste. He will give you the foot, if you please; you shall appear to run in the way of righteousness Only let him keep the heart, only let him rule in the citadel, and he will be well content to give up all the rest. John Bunyan describes this as being one of the terms which old Diabolus was said to make with King Shaddai, — "Oh!" said he, "I will give up all the city of Mansoul, if thou wilt but permit me to live in the citadel of the heart." Surely there was but little in his terms and conditions. Ay but give up everything else; if thou retainest the heart, thou retainest all, O, fiend! for out of the heart are the issues of life.

Thus the disease of our text is one that toucheth a vital part, a part which if once affected, tends to vitiate the whole frame. But you will observe, the disease here described, not only deals with a vital part, but toucheth it after a most serious fashion. It does not simply say the heart palpitates; it doth not declare that the life-floods that issue from it have become more shallow and less rapid, but it declares something worse than all these, namely, that the heart was cleft in twain and utterly divided. A stony heart may be turned to flesh but turn a divided heart into whatsoever you please, so long as it is divided, all is ill. Nothing can go right when that which should be one organ becomes two; when the one motive power begins to send forth its life-floods into two diverse channels, and so creates intestine strife and war. A united heart is life to a man, but if the heart be cut in twain, in the highest, deepest, and most spiritual sense, he dies. It is a disease which is not only affecting a vital part, but affecting it after the most deadly fashion.

But we must observe again of this divided heart, that it is a division in itself peculiarly loathsome. Men who are possessed of it do not feel themselves to be unclean; in fact they will visit all society, they will venture into the church, they will propose to receive her communion, and to be numbered with her members, and they will afterwards go and mingle with the world; and they do not feel that they have become dishonest. They think themselves fit to mingle with honest worldlings, and with sincere Christians too. If a man had spots upon his countenance or some disease that stared everyone else in the face as often as he was beheld surely he would retire from society and endeavor to keep himself a recluse. But not so the man with a divided heart. He goes everywhere, utterly unconscious that his disease is of the most loathsome character. Shall I show you how it is so? Take the glass and look at the man's heart, and you will discern that it is loathsome, because Satan and sin reigns there. Although the man goes about and has sufficient of what is right and what is wrong, to be uneasy in his sin, yet has he such an intense love of all manner of iniquity, that he allows the loathsome demons to come and dwell in his heart. But his loathsomeness is worse than this, because all the while that he is really living in sin, he is a loathsome hypocrite, pretending that he is a child of God. Of all the things in the world that stink in the nostrils of a honest man, hypocrisy is the worst. If thou be a worldling, be a worldling. If thou serve Satan, serve him. If Baal be god, serve him, but mask not thy service of self and sin by a pretended service of God. Appear to be what thou art, tear off thy masks. The church was never meant to be a masquerade. Stand out in thy true colors. If thou preferest Satan's shrine say so, and let men

know it, but if thou wilt serve God, serve him, and do it heartily, as knowing him who is a jealous God and searcheth the hearts and trieth the reins of the children of men. It is a terribly loathsome disease this of a divided heart. If the man were but known, his disease is so loathsome, that the most wicked men in the world would have nothing to do with him. I have known sometimes instances of this. A man who pretended to be religious and regularly attended his place of worship is seen on one occasion entering into a ball-room of the very lowest class. He begins at once to plunge into its gaieties, with the most evil intentions. He is at once observed. The right senses even of the wicked themselves are awakened. "Kick that man down stairs," is the unanimous verdict, and he receives it and he deserved it right well. When a man has a divided heart — tries to do right and to do wrong, to serve God and to serve Satan at the same time; I say his disease is of so loathsome and degraded a character, that the very worldling, whose leprosy is on his brow, despises, hates him, and avoids him.

And yet again, not merely is the disease loathsome, but I must observe it is one always difficult to cure, because it is chronic. It is not an acute disease, which brings pain, and suffering, and sorrow with it, but it is chronic, it has got into the very nature of the man. A divided heart, how are you to get at that? If it were a disease in any other part, the lancet might find it out, or some medicine might heal it. But what physician can join together a divided heart? What skillful surgeon can set together the disrupted members of a soul that has been divided between God and mammon? This is a disease which enters into the very nature, and will lie in the blood, though the most powerful medicines search it out. This is a disease, in fact, which nothing but Omnipotent grace can ever overcome. But he has no grace whose heart is divided between God and mammon. He is an enemy to God, he is an injury to the church, he is a despiser of God's Word, he is a sheaf ripening for the harvest of eternal fire. His disease is deeply rooted within him, and if left alone it will come to a most dreadful end — its end is sure destruction.

I must observe once more, and then I will leave this point of the disease, that, according to the Hebrew of my text, this disease is a very difficult one to deal with, from the fact that it is a flattering disease. The text might be rendered — "Their heart flatters them; now are they found faulty." There are many cunning flatterers in the world, but the most cunning is man's own heart. A man's own heart will flatter him even about his sins. A man is a grasping miser — his heart flatters him that he is only exercising proper business habits. A man on the other hand is extravagant and spends the good gifts of God upon his own evil passions; then his heart tells him that he is a liberal soul. The heart turns "sweet into bitter and bitter into sweet." It is so "deceitful above all things," and so "desperately wicked," that it has the impudence to "put darkness for light and light for darkness." Now when a man has a divided heart, he generally flatters himself. "Well," says he, "it is true I drink too much, but then there is never a time that I refuse a guinea towards a charity. It is true," says he "I am not certainly what I should be in my moral character, but still, see how regularly I keep to my church or chapel. It is true," says he, "I don't now and then mind a trick or two in my trade, but I am always ready to help the poor." And so he imagines that he blots out an evil trait in his character with a good one and thus flatters his heart. And see how self-contented and satisfied he is. The poor child of God is trying his own heart with the deepest possible anxiety; this man knows of no such thing. He is always fully assured that he is right. The true believer is sitting down and turning over his accounts day by day to see whether he be really on the road to heaven or whether he has mistaken his evidence and has been deceived. But this man, self-satisfied, bandages his own eyes and walks deliberately on, singing at every step, straight to his own destruction. I know of some such now. It will not suffice for me simply to state what their character is unless God the Holy Spirit open their eyes. They will be sure not to know their own likeness, even though I should paint it to the very life, and put in every touch and stroke, yet they will say, "Ah he could not refer to me. I am so good and so godly, there could have been no reference to me in anything that he said." Do you know a class of people that pull the most tremendously long faces, that always look so serious, that talk the English language with a kind of unctuous twang, that give a savoury pronunciation to every word they utter? Beware of them. When a man wears all his religion in his face, he has generally but a very small stock in his heart. Those tradesmen that put such a great display in their windows, frequently have very little behind. So with these professors; no one would know they were religious, so they label themselves that you may not make a mistake. You would think they were worldlings, if it were not for their sanctimonious appearance. But by putting that on, they think to glide through the world with credit. I hope they are not imagining that they shall stand accepted before the bar of God and deceive the Omniscient. Alas for them! Their heart is divided. This is no uncommon disease, despite its loathsomeness and its terrible fatality. Rife is it in this day; tens of thousands of Englishmen who are reckoned good and honorable are afflicted with it. Their whole head is sick, and their whole heart faint from the fact that their heart is divided. They lack the courage to be thorough-going sinners, and they have not sincerity enough to be truly-devoted people of God...

This brings us to the third point, the sad effect, of a divided heart. When a man's heart is divided, he is at once everything that is bad. With regard to himself he is an unhappy man. Who can be happy while he has rival powers within his own breast. The soul must find a nest for itself, or else it cannot find rest. The bird that would seek to rest upon two twigs would never have peace, and the soul that endeavors to find two resting places, first, the world, and then the Savior, will never have any joy or comfort. A united heart is a happy heart; hence David says, "Unite my heart to fear thy name." They that give themselves wholly to God are a blessed people, for they find that the ways of religion are "ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." Men who are neither this nor that, neither one thing nor another, are always uneasy and miserable. The fear of discovery, and the consciousness of being wrong, conspire together to agitate the soul and make it full of unease, disease, and restlessness of spirit. Such a man is unhappy in himself. (See the entire sermon [A Divided Heart](#))

## THE DIVIDED HEART

F B Meyer (Our Daily Walk)

"Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light."-- Mt 6:21, 22-note

"A double minded man is unstable in all his ways."-- Jas. 1:8.

THE CLOSING paragraphs of Matthew 6 are full of instances of **adivided heart**. The Greek word for care means that which divides.

Some are divided by anxiety. The anxious soul cannot take a strong straight course, any more than a man can sleep who is wondering whether he has bolted the front door or wound up his watch. Some are divided by contrariness--a most difficult and complicated disposition of soul. We would like to be pleasant, helpful, agreeable, and amiable, but are conscious of cross-currents that restrain and make us awkward and disagreeable, and we find ourselves rent between two strong influences, the one to be Christlike and gracious, the other to be distant and angular. Others are divided by fitful and passionate impulses. Happy are they who can hold them well in check. Even St. Paul tells us that he was conscious of these two wills--the better self which longed to do the will of God, and the lower, selfish, passionate self, which brought him into subjection. St. Augustine tells us that, though the prayers of Monica, his mother, greatly affected him, he was constantly swept back from his ideal by an outbreak of passion.

Bunyan also illustrates the same condition, saying that two selves were at war within him. The Devil came and said, "Sell Him!" But he resisted, even to blood, saying, "I won't!" But, as the Tempter continued urging, "Sell Him!" Bunyan finally yielded, and suffered an agony of remorse, as, on the one hand, he accepted Christ as his only Hope, and on the other, was prepared to barter Him away.

A divided heart lacks the first element of strength--it is unstable. The men who leave their mark on the world are those who can say: "This one thing I do." But we need more than concentration, we need consecration. We must not only be united in ourselves, we must be united in God. Let us make the prayer of Psalm 86:11, our own: "O knit my heart unto Thee, that I may fear Thy name." Yield yourself to God that He may disunite you from the world, and weave you into His own life.

PRAYER - O Faithful Lord, grant to us, we pray Thee, faithful hearts devoted to Thee, and to the service of all men for Thy sake. AMEN.