

Letter of James

Inductive Bible Study Questions

By Dr. Ralph F. Wilson

These questions are intended for a group that seeks to draw all the meaning out of the text, rather than a teacher-led group. They are thought-provoking and designed to help the group members discover the full meaning of the passage. If you plan to teach on the passage intermixed with discussion, consider the discussion questions contained in *Letter of James: Discipleship Lessons on Practical Faith* (JesusWalk Publications, 2005, 2012), by Ralph F. Wilson

You are free to copy these questions for members of your group.

Lessons

1. Experiencing Joy in Trials (James 1:1-18)
2. Hearing and Practicing the Word (James 1:18-27)
3. Forsaking Favoritism for Love (James 2:1-13)
4. Energizing Your Faith by Works (James 2:14-26)
5. Attaining Tongue-Taming Wisdom (James 3:1-18)
6. Submitting Yourself to God (James 4:1-12)
7. Learning Patience in an Instant Age (James 4:13-5:12)
8. Praying the Prayer of Faith (James 5:13-20)

1. Experiencing Joy in Trials (James 1:1-18)

Learning to experience God's blessing in suffering.

Level 1: Observation Questions. What Does the Text Say?

1.1 Read the passage and list at least two good things that come out of trials and tribulations.

1.2 What words seem to be repeated again and again in this passage? Based on that, what does the theme of the passage seem to be?

Level 2: Interpretation Questions. What Does the Text Mean?

Comment: The word translated "perseverance" (NIV), "patience" (KJV), and "steadfastness" (RSV) is Greek *hupomonē*, "'patience, endurance, fortitude, steadfastness, perseverance,' especially as they are shown in the enduring of toil and suffering" (BAGD).

2.1 (1:2-4) If trials produce perseverance, what does perseverance produce? How is perseverance important to Christian faith?

2.2 (1:5) Verse 5 is a promise to be explored – especially in times of trial. What is the main offer of this promise? What does it mean that God "gives generously to all without finding fault"? When do we find ourselves giving with this spirit? When do we fall short of this spirit of giving?

2.3 (1:6-8) In what areas of life can we be of two minds? How does double-mindedness undermine the Christian faith? Why does double-mindedness undermine receiving from God?

2.4 (1:12) If we are saved by grace, not by works (Ephesians 2:8-9) – which we are – why is receiving the "crown of life" dependent upon persevering under trial? This verse talks about loving God – a strange concept to many people; how do we experience this love?

Comment: The words translated tempt/temptation in verses 13-14, are the same words translated "trial/testing" in verse 2-3.

2.5 (1:13) Does God test or try us? Does God allow evil in his world? Does God test or try us with evil? What is the difference between testing and tempting?

2.6 (1:14-15) What do "evil desires" have to do with double-mindedness? If the strength of temptations are rooted in our own evil desires, how do we conquer temptation?

2.7 *Extra Credit.* Jesus' temptation in the wilderness seems to be external, from Satan, not internal, that is, drawing strength from corrupt desires. In the light of James 1:13-14, was Jesus' temptation real? Support your answer.

2.8 (1:16-17) What deception about God are these verses designed to counter? What deception about God is verse 13 designed to counter? How are these truths along with verse 5 meant to be an encouragement in trial?

2.9 (1:2) After studying this passage, why should Christians be joyful when they are tested?

Level 3: Application Questions. What Does It Mean to Me?

3.1 Are your biggest struggles to endure the testings from God? Or to resist the temptations induced by wrong desires in your heart?

3:2 Which verse in this passage do you find the most encouraging? Why?

2. Hearing and Practicing the Word (James 1:18-27)

Translating God's lessons to practical Christian living

Level 1: Observation Questions. What Does the Text Say?

1.1 List the descriptive phrases in which "word" is used in this passage.

Level 2: Interpretation Questions. What Does the Text Mean?

2.1 (1:18) In what sense are we given spiritual birth by the "word of truth"?

Comment: The word translated "firstfruits" is Greek *aparchē*, a "sacrificial technical term, 'first-fruits' of any kind (including animals, both domesticated and wild), which were holy to the divinity and were consecrated before the rest could be put to secular use" (BAGD 81). For examples, see Exodus 22:29; Leviticus 2:12-16; Numbers 18:12; Deuteronomy 18:4; 2 Chronicles 31:5; Nehemiah 10:35-39.

2.2 (1:18b) *Extra Credit.* In what sense are we Christians "firstfruits" of creation?

2.3 (1:18-19) In what way do the ideas of "listen," "speak," and "anger" in verse 19 relate to the phrase "word of truth" in verse 18?

2.4 (1:20) Why doesn't our anger accomplish God's justice and righteousness? How does our anger relate to hearing the word and practicing it?

2.5 (1:21) In what way are moral filth and God's Word opposites? How does God's "implanted word" rescue us? Who "implants" the Word?

2.6 (1:22) Why are we so easily fooled that listening to Bible teaching means that we are living out righteous lives? What is the nature of the self-deception?

2.7 (1:23-25) What is the point of comparison between looking into a mirror and remembering what you look like, and looking into the "perfect law"?

2.8 (1:25) How can the "perfect law" give freedom and liberty? Isn't that a contradiction in terms? An oxymoron?

Comment: Verses 26-27 use a general word for religion, both an adjective and a noun. The noun is Greek *thrēskeia*, "'the worship of God, religion,' especially as it expresses itself in 'religious service' or 'cult.'" The adjective is *thrēskos*, "religious" (BAGD 363).

2.9 (1:26-27) *Extra Credit.* Is the word "religion/religious" in these verses used in a positive or negative sense?

2.10 (1:26) Why is tongue control so essential to practical Christianity? How does this relate to the phrase "word of truth" in verse 18?

2.11 (1:27a) What is there about helping widows and orphans that is such a keen barometer of our Christian maturity?

2:12 (1:27b) How does the concept of being polluted by the world (verse 27) relate to the phrase “word of truth” (verse 18) and “moral filth” (verse 21)? Why are Christians so susceptible to this kind of pollution?

Level 3: Application Questions. What Does It Mean to Me?

3.1 Give an example from your experience of how a person with poor “tongue control” considered himself or herself an outstanding Christian. How could this person be so utterly deceived?

3.2 What is the biggest area you struggle with when it comes to living out God’s Word? Have you ever been self-deceived in this area? How did you recover from the deception?

3. Forsaking Favoritism for Love (James 2:1-13)

Recognizing and repudiating partiality toward others.

Level 1: Observation Questions. What Does the Text Say?

Comment: (2:1) The word translated “respect of persons” (KJV), “favoritism” (NIV, NASB), or “partiality” (RSV) is Greek *prospōlēmpsia* – “partiality” (BAGD 720). It translates “a Hebrew idiom for *panim nasa*, ‘to lift up the face on a person,’ to be favorable and so partial to him.”

1.1 Look up in an English dictionary the words: “partial,” “bias,” “favoritism.” Look up where this concept is used in the NT of God: Acts 10:34; Romans 2:11; Ephesians 6:9; Colossians 3:25. How is favoritism is contrary to God’s nature?

1.2 Share a time when you were the object of prejudice on the basis of race, religion, social standing, physical appearance, intelligence, etc. How did it make you feel?

Level 2: Interpretation Questions. What Does the Text Mean?

2.1 (2:2-4) What motivation do people have for showing favor to the rich?

2.2 (2:2-4) What is the underlying motivation for ignoring or insulting the poor?

2.3 (2:4) In what way does favoritism make one a judge? How does favoritism make one a judge with “evil thoughts”?

2.4 Read James 2:5-7; 1:9-11; 5:1-6. Do you think James is prejudiced against the rich? Why does he come back to this theme several times, do you think?

2.5 (2:5; 1:9) Why does James remind the poor of their own position?

2.6 (2:9) How does favoritism break the Mosaic law? (Hint: read Exodus 12:49; Leviticus 24:22; Numbers 15:29.)

2.7 (2:10-11) Why do you think James presses the point that one stumble makes you a lawbreaker?

2.8 (2:8) Why does James refer to the Great Commandment as the “Royal Law”? How is it any more “royal” than the Mosaic law?

2.9 (2:8) Specifically, how does showing favoritism toward a rich person break the “Royal Law” towards that rich person? How does it break the “Royal Law” in regard to a poor person?

2.10 (2:12) In 1:25 and 2:12 we read about “the law that gives freedom” (NIV) or “the law of liberty” (KJV, NASB, RSV). Just whom does this law liberate, do you think?

2.11 (2:13a) In what way is showing regard towards the wealthy (verses 2-3) a denial of mercy?

Comment: (2:13b) The word translated “triumph over” (NIV, RSV, NASB) or “rejoice against” (KJV) is Greek *katakauchaomai*, “boast against, exult over, boast, brag, triumph over” (BAGD 411).

2.12 *Extra Credit.* (2:13b) Read Hosea 6:6; Matthew 5:7; and 9:13. In what way does mercy “triumph over” (NIV, RSV, NASB) or “rejoice against” (KJV) judgment? What does this mean?

Level 3: Application Questions. What Does It Mean to Me?

3.1 How is God helping you to love a group of people that you were once prejudiced against? What has been the most difficult barrier for you?

3.2 How has God been teaching you to be merciful?

4. Energizing Your Faith by Works (James 2:14-26)

Connecting your faith with everyday living.

Level 1: Observation Questions. What Does the Text Say?

Comment: The word translated “deeds” (NIV) or “works” (KJV, NASB, RSV) is Greek *ergon*, “deed, action, work” (BAGD 307-308) from which we get our word “ergonomics.”

1.1 What seems to be the theme of this passage? What keywords are repeated the most?

Level 2: Interpretation Questions. What Does the Text Mean?

2.1 James seems to be carrying on a controversy with an unnamed opponent (see verses 18, 20). Briefly stated, what is the opponent’s position? What is James’ position? What kinds of people believe the position of James’ opponent these days?

2.2 (2:15-16) What does feeding and clothing a needy Christian brother or sister have to do with saving faith? (See Matthew 25:31-46). Can you think of times you or your church have wished the needy well, but did not help them?

2.3 (2:17, 26) The Apostle Paul insisted that we are saved by grace, not works in Ephesians 2:8-10. Are Paul and James in disagreement about this matter?

2.4 (2:17, 26) *Extra Credit.* Can there be such a thing as pure, ideal faith standing on its own? Or must faith *by definition* be connected to actions? What do you think?

2.5 (2:17, 26) *Extra Credit.* Martin Luther considered the Letter of James “a right strawy Epistle” in that it didn’t emphasize the gospel of grace as much as some other NT books. Luther insisted on *sola fide*, “only faith,” being necessary for salvation. What in Luther’s day were considered righteous “works” necessary to gain salvation? Is Luther’s view in actual conflict with James’ view here.

2.6 (2:19) What is the difference between the demons’ belief in God and a true Christian’s belief in God? What is the difference between intellectual assent to a fact and true faith?

2.7 (2:20-24) Would Abraham’s faith have been credited to him as righteousness (Genesis 15:6) if he hadn’t performed “works” of faith? Why do you think Abraham was called God’s friend? (2 Chronicles 20:7 and Isaiah 41:8)

2.8 (2:25) Why would James, who is very concerned about keeping himself from the pollution of the world (1:27), use a prostitute as an example of faith? If Rahab had NOT helped the spies (Joshua 2), would she have had genuine faith in Israel’s God?

Level 3: Application Questions. What Does It Mean to Me?

3.1 Which common business, academic, or social practices that you confront continually, tempt you and others the most to disconnect your Christian's beliefs from the open practice of your faith?

3.2 Can a person have genuine saving faith in Christ if he or she does not witness verbally to that faith to the people he or she associates with regularly? (No knee-jerk answers here. Let's be thoughtful; there may be exceptions, perhaps.)

5. Attaining Tongue-Taming Wisdom (James 3:1-18)

Learning to control the tongue as part of personal piety.

James has been discussing practical Christianity, stripped from all its hypocrisy. In chapter 3 he turns to the tongue, expanding on 1:26 “If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein (*chalinagōgeō*, “to bridle”) on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless.”

James seems to be more humble when discussing sins of the tongue, than some of the other sins he has touched on so far. Perhaps this is the sin he struggled with the most.

Level 1: Observation Questions. What Does the Text Say?

1.1 James is particularly rich in examples of the tongue’s errant ways in this chapter. List the examples he uses.

1.2 (3:17-18) Try to match this list of virtues with those in Galatians 5:23. Which elements find a fairly close match? Which don’t seem to quite match?

Level 2: Interpretation Questions. What Does the Text Mean?

2.1 (3:1) Why does James discourage people from aspiring to be teachers of the Word? Why is greater strictness appropriate?

Comment: 3:2a describes how we all fail. The word used is difficult to translate in English: “We all stumble in many ways” (NIV, NASB), “In many things we offend all” (KJV), and “We all make many mistakes” (RSV). The Greek word is *ptaio*, Literally, “stumble, trip,” figuratively, “to make a mistake, go astray, sin” (BAGD 727). The word indicates a trip, rather than a complete fall, as Romans 11:11 indicates.

Comment: James uses the analogy of bits and bridles. Whereas we differentiate between these two pieces of tack, the Greek term treats them as a single item: *chalinōs*, “bit, bridle” (BAGD 874) is used in 3:3. *chalinagōgeō*, “‘guide with a bit and bridle, hold in check.’ Figuratively, ‘bridle, hold in check’” (BAGD 874). The verb is used in 1:26 and 3:2.

2.2 (3:2-4) According to James, what do bits and bridles have in common with rudders?

2.3 (3:5-6) How is the tongue like a spark? How is it like a fire?

2.4 (3:7-8) Read Matthew 12:34 and 15:18. In light of these verses, why is the tongue untamable? What has to happen before it can be tamed?

2.5 (3:9-12) James seems utterly frustrated in these verses. Why is he frustrated? Does he conclude that praise and cursing *can* or *cannot* come out of the same mouth?

Comment: (3:14) The Greek word *eritheia* in verse 14 is translated as “selfish ambition” (NIV, RSV, NASB) and “strife” (KJV). BAGD (p. 309) says that before NT times the word is found only rarely, “where it denotes a self-seeking pursuit of political office by unfair means.” BAGD concludes that “for Paul and his followers ... the meaning ‘strife, contentiousness’ [as if the word were derived from *eris*, “strife, discord, contention”] cannot be excluded. But ‘selfishness, selfish ambition’ in all cases gives a sense that is just as good, and perhaps better.”

2.6 (3:13-14) In what ways are “bitter envy” and “selfish ambition” (verse 14) direct opposites of “humility” (verse 13)?

2.7 *Extra Credit.* “If it weren’t for ambitious people, the world wouldn’t see any progress.” Do you agree or disagree? Why? Is ambition always selfish? How can we judge whether our own ambition is selfish or not?

2.8 (3:14) Why does James warn people both not to deny and not to boast about the envy and self-ambition that might be in their hearts. How does denial prevent healing? How does boasting about one’s bitterness prevent healing?

2.9 (3:14-16) *Why* are people with bitter envy and selfish ambition in their hearts unable to discern a wise course of life? How is their mouth affected?

2.10 (3:18) With what tool do peacemakers sow peace? Why does this produce a ripening crop of righteousness? In whom does this crop grow?

Level 3: Application Questions. What Does It Mean to Me?

3.1 A heart that is wounded or in pain can’t help but utter words that cannot be easily bridled. Is this an adequate excuse? What is the cure? What have you found in your own life that helps?

3.2 In what context, or circumstance, or with what individual do you find the most trouble controlling your tongue? What do you think is in your heart that causes your tongue-trouble in this situation? What can you or should you do about it?

6. Submitting Yourself to God (James 4:1-12)

Surrendering heart, will, and desires to God

We can be so arrogant and independent towards God! In this lesson James warns us about flirting with the world while at the same time pretending we are being faithful to God. The theme is, "Humble yourself before the Lord, and he will lift you up" (4:10).

Incidentally, there are a lot of questions this week. Just do what you can if you don't finish completely.

Level 1: Observation Questions. What Does the Text Say?

1.1 James picks up a theme in this chapter that he has touched on previously. Read James 1:14-15; 3:14-16. What is this theme?

Level 2: Interpretation Questions. What Does the Text Mean?

2.1 According to 4:1-3, fighting and quarrelling result from several causes. What are these causes?

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.

Comment: (4:1-3) The words translated "desires," "lusts," "passions," or "pleasures" in verses 1 and 3 are Greek *hedonē*, from which we get the English word "hedonism." It means "pleasure, enjoyment, pleasantness," usually in a bad sense: "(evil) pleasure, lust" (BAGD 344).

2.2 (4:1-3) Is God against pleasure? What is the problem here?

2.3 (4:4) Read Isaiah 54:5; Hosea 2:19-20; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:25, 32; Revelation 19:7; 21:9; 22:17. In these verses, what is the believer's relationship to Christ? In what way can a pleasure-loving, hedonistic lifestyle be thought of as "adulterous"?

Comment: (4:4) The word translated "friendship" is Greek *philia*, "friendship, love" (BAGD 859). "Friend" is Greek *philos*, as an adjective means "beloved, dear, loving, kindly disposed, devoted," as a substantive [noun] it means "friend" (BAGD 861). Though the verse begins with the idea of an adulterous relationship, *philos* does not carry the idea of "lover" but of one who is "dear to, close to, friendly with." Compare

this with the Abraham, who is referred to as “God’s friend” (2:23; 2 Chronicles 20:7; Isaiah 41:8). What a contrast!

2.4 (4:4) James seems pretty strong: “Friendship with the world is hatred towards God” (4:4). What kind of friendship is James talking about? How is the expression “the world” used in this context? How does this compare with Jesus’ statement in Matthew 6:24?

Comment: James 4:5 is difficult, since we don’t know which OT scriptures James is recalling. (See the exposition later this week.) In any case, James is highlighting man’s independence towards God, rather than an attitude of submission and dependence upon God.

2.4 (4:6-7) In what ways can coveting, desiring, hedonism, and independence from God be regarded as pride? How would one “humble” oneself? How would one “submit” oneself to God?

2.5 *Extra Credit.* (4:7) What part of temptation can be attributed to our corrupt desires (1:14), and what part to “the devil” (4:7)?

2.6 (4:7-8) How can we get the devil to “flee” from us? What is the source of our power over the devil here? What is necessary to get him to flee?

2.7 (4:8-10) This sounds like a revival meeting! Why is grief, mourning, and wailing appropriate here? How could a philosophy of positive thinking stand in the way of repentance? Is this repentance active or passive?

Comment: The word translated “slander” (NIV) “speak evil of” (KJV) is Greek *katalaleō*, “speak against, speak evil of, defame, slander someone” (BAGD 412). In English the legal definition of “slander” is very specific. But this word could include such things as gossiping about and criticizing. Oops!

2.8 (4:11-12) In what way is a judgmental attitude toward a Christian brother or sister like putting yourself in God’s place? How is it arrogant towards your brother? Towards God?

2.9 (4:13-16) In what way is can our planning for the future be arrogant and proud? How is saying “God willing” a sign of humility? *Extra Credit:* How can saying “God willing” be a cop-out?

2.10 (4:17) One Biblical definition of sin is breaking God’s law. James’ definition here is much broader. Which definition is essentially negative? Which is essentially positive? Which definition best fits with Jesus’ statement of the great commandment: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself”?

Level 3: Application Questions. What Does It Mean to Me?

3.1 In what areas of your life have you been tempted by “friendship” with the world? (4:4) Did this seem at the time as “hatred” towards God? Why or why not?

3.2 In what areas have you exhibited a kind of independence toward and arrogance toward God’s will and plan for your life? How is God working with you in these areas?

7. Learning Patience in an Instant Age (James 4:13-5:12)

Learning patience until the Lord's coming

I can't wait to become more patient! But patience, looking at the long term and being willing to accept delayed gratification, is a vital Christian virtue. We're skipping the observation questions this week to get right to interpretation.

Level 2: Interpretation Questions. What Does the Text Mean?

2.1 Why are the rich uniquely able to make the boasts of 4:13-16?

2.2 (5:1-6) List the vices and attitudes for which James criticizes the rich. Does James indicate that wealth itself is evil?

2.3 (5:5) What kinds of luxuries would First Century rich people have enjoyed? What is the advantage of luxuries? What is the danger of luxuries?

2.4 Contrast the indulgent lifestyle of verses 1-6 with the patient, forward-looking lifestyle of verses 7-12. What is the difference in the expectation inherent in each lifestyle?

2.4 (5:7-8) *For those with agricultural backgrounds:* What kind of patience do farmers show? What factors effect the optimal time to harvest a crop? How long do you typically have to bring in a harvest before it is ruined?

2.5 (5:7-9) Read these passages about the Second Coming of Christ: Matthew 16:27 24:26-51; 25:31-32; Mark 13:32-37; John 14:3; Acts 1:11; Philippians 3:20-21; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 5:2, 23; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:28; Revelation 1:7; 22:20. (See the Appendix) *Note:* This question doesn't declare open season on discussing the Second Coming – this is a study on James. :) Then answer this question:

What three or four things does James teach or infer about the Second Coming of Christ in 5:7-8?

2.6 (5:9) How do grumbling and patience relate to each other?

2.7 *Extra Credit.* (5:10-11a) Which prophets do you think are a good example of "patience in the face of suffering"? How did they exhibit patience?

2.8 (5:11b) Why is Job a good example of "patience in the face of suffering"? What happened to him in the beginning? In the end? (The Book of Job is right before Psalms in the Old Testament.)

2.9 *Extra Credit.* (5:11c) Why, in this context, does James exclaim: “The Lord is full of compassion and mercy”?

Comment: (5:12) The word translated “swear” is Greek *omnuō*, which means “swear, take an oath” (BAGD 565-566). This does not mean “to use profane or obscene language” like our English word “swear” sometimes does, but in the sense of “to invoke the name of God in an oath” (*Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, 10th edition, p. 1190). Making rash oaths and finding numerous creative ways of taking oaths that did not actually bind one were common problems in First Century Judaism.

2.10 (5:12) Read Matthew 5:33-37. Why is one’s word being trustworthy so important to Christian discipleship?

Level 3: Application Questions. What Does It Mean to Me?

3.1 In what ways is impatience with Christ’s delayed return in danger of affecting your lifestyle?

3.2 In what ways does impatience cause you to grumble? What are you doing to remedy this?

8. Praying the Prayer of Faith (James 5:13-20)

The Letter of James closes with the theme of prayer. In trouble? Pray. Happy? Praise. Sick? Ask for prayer. See your brother backsliding? Pray him back.

Level 1: Observation Questions. What Does the Text Say?

1.1 What is the theme verse or phrase found in 5:13-18?

Level 2: Interpretation Questions. What Does the Text Mean?

2.1 According to verse 14, who is to initiate prayer for healing? Why? Can you think of any times in Jesus' or the apostles' ministries where they initiated healing on their own?

Comment: The word "elders" in 5:14 is Greek *presbuteros*, "1.a. 'an old man'. 2. as designation of an official, 'elder'" (BAGD 700).

2.2 (5:14b) Do you think "elder" is used in the sense of spiritually mature believers, or of church officials? Why should "elders" be called?

2.3 How was holy anointing used in the Old Testament? Exodus 29:4-7; 30:22-25, 31-33; Leviticus 8:10-12; 1 Samuel 9:16, 10:1; 16:3, 12-13. What did anointing signify in 1 Samuel 16:13-14?

2.4 Did Jesus use anointing oil in his ministry to the sick? If not, why did the disciples use it? (Mark 6:13)

2.5 (5:14c) What is the significance of anointing "in the name of the Lord"?

2.6 According to 5:15, whose faith is necessary for healing? Does lack of healing indicate someone's lack of faith?

2.7 (5:15-16a) What relationship does sin have with sickness? (See John 5:14; John 9:2-3; 1 Corinthians 11:30) Why can confession aid in physical healing? How could not confessing one's sins prevent healing?

2.8 What is the value of confessing one's sins to another believer? What can be the value of the Catholic Sacrament of Confession? (This is a serious question. No Catholic bashing, please.)

2.9 (5:16b-18) What is Elijah used as an example of? In what ways was he "just like us" (NIV)? What weaknesses did he have? (1 Kings 19). What did his prayers accomplish?

2.10 (5:19-20) How do verses 19-20 relate to the theme of the prayer of faith?

2.11 In the light of James' emphasis on active faith (2:17), why is the role of finding the wandering "sheep" so important?

Level 3: Application Questions. What Does It Mean to Me?

3.1 Can you share any examples in your own experience or in your church where the prayer of faith has made a difference?

3.2 What lesson did you learn from your study of James during this series that is beginning to change your life for good.