

9. Absent these impediments, the rudder's task was to direct the ship along a course to Rome. Like the horse, the ship is a very large, seagoing vessel, but it is incapable of maintaining an assigned course without a rudder.
10. Here is an example of what happens when a ship loses one of its screws [the propellers of a ship]:

A thing need not be physically large in order to be important. The degree of control which the rudder exerts upon the course of a great ship is disproportionate to its size. The ship goes in the direction dictated by the impulse of the man at the helm. The starboard screw on a 19,000 ton ocean liner broke off in the mid-Atlantic. The captain, enroute to Europe, immediately ordered that the speed be reduced to eight knots, even though it meant that the ship would be a week late in Southampton. He explained that the loss of the starboard screw resulted in a torque effect which would drive the ship in a circle to the right. The rudder would be used to hold against the force of the torsion and thus keep the ship on course, but only at a reduced speed. Otherwise the strain on the rudder could snap it, in which case the ship would be helpless and could only wait for a rescue tug to come out of England and tow it to port. We limped in to Amsterdam with the loss of a week from a summer's study tour. Later that summer we saw the ship in dry dock in Amsterdam and were able to appreciate how small the rudder was in comparison to the ship.⁴

11. James's illustrations of the bit (v. 3), the rudder (v. 4), and the flame (v. 5) stress what appears to be small and insignificant but the absence of the first two results in the cause of great disorder while the presence of the third has the same result.
12. The human body is quite large by comparison to the organ of the tongue, but when used by a believer without reference to the working objects of doctrine in the soul, it causes spiritual disorder among those affected by it.
13. As is noted above, ships are driven by strong winds which fill the sails, but the ship goes in whatever direction the wind blows unless it is "directed by a very strong rudder."

(End JAS3-74. See JAS3-75 for continuation of study at p. 201.)

⁴ Randolph O. Yeager, *The Renaissance New Testament: James et al.* (Gretna, La.: Pelican Publishing Co., 1985), 16:561-62.



14. The power possessed by a believer is potentially kinetic, but the failure to grow spiritually causes the content of his stream of consciousness to remain inactive with regard to a biblical inventory of ideas.
15. A believer without doctrine has no biblical problem-solving devices and is therefore at the mercy of the cosmic residents of the devil's world.
16. The ship in our context is large, the winds are strong yet regardless of these advantages the ship is able to stay on course by being guided by a very small rudder.
17. The word "driven" is the present passive participle of **ἐλαύνω** (*elaínō*): "to be propelled, to advance, to make progress." It is in the passive voice and best translated, "and are propelled."
18. There are a number of things going on simultaneously here. The ship, *plōion*, is quite large, *tēlikóutos*, propelled, *elaínō*, by fierce, *sklēros*, winds, but nevertheless, these things are "directed," the present passive indicative of the verb **μετάγω** (*metágō*): "to direct, steer, or guide," by "a very small rudder," **πηδάλιον** (*pēdálion*).
19. The huge ship is being propelled by fierce winds but is being directed, steered, and guided by a very small rudder. Big ship, stormy seas, fierce winds blowing into giant sails yet at the mercy of these elements were it not for the very small rudder, a *pēdálion* that keeps them on course.
20. The rudder is a piece of machinery so even its function is dependent upon the desires of the "pilot." Let's take a look at the last phrase of verse 4, "... whithersoever the governor listeth."
21. "Whithersoever" is changed by the NASB to "wherever." The "governor" is the **ὁρμή** (*hormē*): the "pilot." And he determines the direction the rudder is set to advance toward the destination.
22. The word, "listeth," indicating the pilot's directives, is the compound of two verbs, **βούλομαι** (*boúlomai*): "predisposition," and **εὐθύνω** (*euthúnō*): "to steer a ship." Together these two words refer to the pilot's predisposition about the course he wishes for the ship to travel and therefore the positioning of the rudder to accomplish that objective.

23. Here is the expanded translation of verse 4:

James 3:4 Consider the example of ships which are quite large and are propelled under the influence of fierce winds upon its sails, yet it is guided by the positioning of a very small rudder toward whatever direction the volition of the ship's pilot determines.
(EXT)

Principles:

1. The ship is the second example that James uses to address the power of the tongue, illustrated in verse 3 by the bit in a horse's mouth and in verse 4 by the rudder of a ship.
2. The horse is a large, strong, and yet trainable animal. We have noted quite a number of principles associated with the flexibility horses have in the learning process.
3. The horse is easily controlled by the bit and bridle. The second illustration is the ship whose rudder is small, especially by comparison to the boat it is tasked to guide.
4. James's major points in his illustration is that the tongue is small compared to the size of the human body just as the rudder is small compared to the size of the ship.
5. The bit in the horse's mouth is behind its tongue; the rudder of the ship is paltry by comparison to the ship it guides. When two people engage in disagreements the result can often lead to use of fisticuffs, arms, elbows, legs, knees, feet, and body slams.
6. Yet those tactics are usually employed one-on-one. Eventually the fight is over, one makes his point while the other nurses his wounds. There is yet another part of the human body that can do far worse damage and include an entire group of people.
7. Lasting damage to a congregation can rip apart its membership when one person uses his tongue to gossip, malign, judge, criticize, insult, or demean a fellow believer.
8. Sides are taken; some leave the church others separate but continue to attend; some agree with the accusations while others do not. Regardless of the responses, pro and con, the congregation suffers divisions that without the application of the Royal Law the body remains fractured by the use of an easily enunciated criticism of a fellow believer.



9. Therefore, the body of Christ, which makes up a congregation, is damaged by the verbal assault of one person. Sides are taken, lines are drawn, and doctrine takes a holiday if not a sabbatical.

10. The chaos caused is done by a simple but tremendously devastating remark, one that James critiques in:

James 1:21 Therefore, put away from yourself mental attitude sins that pollute the soul and all the excesses of an evil habit of mind, you must receive with humility the implanted word, which is empowered to deliver your souls from danger.

v. 22 But keep on becoming doers of the implanted Word, and not only hearers who deceive themselves due to self-induced stupidity.

v. 23 For if, and it is true, anyone is a hearer of the Word in the *noús* and not a doer from the *kardía*, such a person, is like a nobleman who looks contemplatively at his facial features in a mirror;

v. 24 for once he had continued to contemplate himself intently in the mirror and departed, he has the existing result of immediately disregarding what kind of man he habitually and regularly was.

v. 25 But the one who looks with an earnest desire to absorb in detail the perfect law of freedom, and continues to live in close proximity to it, not having become a forgetful hearer only, but a doer, this man shall acquire unalloyed happiness by the production of divine good. (EXT)

11. The most devastating thing a believer can do is to verbally gossip, criticize, or denigrate another believer. The Royal Law does not permit this which our study of the edification complex of the soul clearly taught.

12. This doctrine presented a foundation and seven advancing levels of spiritual growth that when accumulated and applied resulted in invisible impact for that believer.

13. The foundation is obviously salvation. There has to be a starting place and acquisition of divine viewpoint and advancement toward the understanding and use of the Royal Law and the Law of Freedom are developed by means of a process.



14. The obvious first level is spiritual growth under the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit. If inculcation of biblical guidelines, vocabulary, and doctrines does not follow, then the believer remains in self-induced stupidity.
15. Bible study requires some basic principles of how Scripture is organized. Every section of the Bible takes place in a certain historical period. These are categorized as dispensations.¹ The Old Testament has two of these time periods: **(1)** the times of the **Gentiles** and **(2)** the times of the nation and people of **Israel**. These are centered around the works and acts of God related to these two groups and are referred to as Theocentric.
16. The New Testament contains four time periods. The third and fourth time periods are: **(3)** the birth, life, and public ministry of Jesus Christ is known as the **Incarnation** found in the four Gospels, followed by **(4)** the Acts of the Apostles and the period of the **Church** covered primarily in the Epistles. The Gospels were completed in the past; the Church is taking place presently and will terminate at the Rapture of the Church, yet future noted by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:51–57; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18; 2 Thessalonians 4:1–12 These are classified as Christocentric.
17. What follows these are two more time periods which take place in the future; **(5)** the **Tribulation** or the fulfilment of the prophesy of Daniel’s seventieth heptad mentioned by the Archangel Gabriel to Daniel in Daniel 9:25–27, by Jesus in Matthew 24:9–26; 1 Thessalonians 3:13; Jude 14 and **(6)** the **Millennium**, which is the perfect kingdom of Christ, mentioned by the Lord in Matthew 24:27 and by Isaiah in Isaiah 10:21–22; 60:18–25 and Joel 3:18–21.
18. Knowing what time it is enables the believer in the Church Age to develop his inventory of ideas primarily from the teachings of Jesus in the Gospels, the experiences of the apostles in the Acts, and the Epistles of the New Testament. It is from these resources that the believer is able to develop, facilitate, and execute the gradual accumulation of the ten problem-solving devices.
20. During this spiritual advance, the believer develops problem-solving devices 7 and 8: personal love for God followed by unconditional love for mankind. It is at this level that the believer is able to use his spiritual inventory to develop and execute the Royal Law.

¹ “A dispensation is a period of human history defined in terms of divine revelation. According to the Bible, history is a sequence of divine administrations. These consecutive eras reflect the unfolding of God’s plan for mankind. They constitute the divine viewpoint of history and the theological interpretation of history. The doctrine of dispensations is the vehicle by which believers living at a specific time can orient to God’s will, plan, and purpose for their lives” (R. B. Thieme, Jr., *The Divine Outline of History: Dispensations and the Church*, 2d ed., ed. Wayne F. Hill [Houston: R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 1999], 3).