

James 1:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.

Analysis

A double minded man is unstable in all his ways. The descriptor "double minded" translates dipsychos (δίψυχος), literally "two-souled," portraying a divided interior life. Such a person is "unstable" (akatastatos, ἀκατάστατος) in all ways, tottering like a trembling table. James traces gossip, favoritism, and worldliness back to inner duplicity that refuses single-hearted devotion to Christ.

Reformed spirituality emphasizes integrity of heart: sola fide faith is not fragmented but wholly oriented toward Christ. James is not calling for sinless perfection but for covenantal loyalty that resists being blown about by cultural winds. The term dipsychos reappears in 4:8, linking prayer, speech, and holiness to a unified heart.

Historical Context

Diaspora believers were tempted to divide their allegiance between the risen Lord and the social expectations of synagogues or trade guilds. James's pastoral authority as Jerusalem's overseer lent weight to his call for single-mindedness. His emphasis parallels Jesus' warning that no one can serve two masters (Matthew 6:24) and Paul's insistence on sincere faith (1 Timothy 1:5).

The instability mentioned may refer to communal turmoil—factions, quarrels, favoritism—that plagued early congregations. James addresses root issues rather than merely treating symptoms.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. Where are you tempted to divide your loyalties between Christ and worldly security?
2. How can spiritual disciplines cultivate single-minded affection for Jesus?
3. Who in your community can help you identify and repent of hypocrisy?

Interlinear Text

ἄνθρωπος	δίψυχος	ἀκατάστατος	ἐν	πάσαις	ταῖς	ὁδοῖς
man	A double minded	is unstable	in	all	G3588	ways
G435	G1374	G182	G1722	G3956		G3598

αὐτοῦ
G846

Additional Cross-References

1 Kings 18:21 (Parallel theme): And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.

Matthew 6:24 (Parallel theme): No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

James 4:8 (Parallel theme): Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.

Isaiah 29:13 (Parallel theme): Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have

removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:

2 Peter 2:14 (Parallel theme): Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children:

2 Kings 17:41 (Parallel theme): So these nations feared the LORD, and served their graven images, both their children, and their children's children: as did their fathers, so do they unto this day.

2 Peter 3:16 (Parallel theme): As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

2 Kings 17:33 (Parallel theme): They feared the LORD, and served their own gods, after the manner of the nations whom they carried away from thence.