

Aristotle defines *éleos* as “a pain following upon the sight of a destructive or painful evil that strikes a person who does not deserve it and that one might expect to suffer oneself or see one’s own dear ones suffer.”⁵

The phrase, “full of mercy,” refers to the status quo of wisdom in the soul of a mature believer which in this case exemplifies the power maximum doctrine produces in opposition to the various verbal sins vilified by James in James 3:1–16.

When a believer’s wisdom is so cultivated that no matter what the circumstance, he is able to respond with divine viewpoint. Consequently, when a believer applies principles of divine viewpoint to difficult situations common to human life, he is displaying the virtues of mercy, sympathy, commiseration, and **compassion**.

The sequence continues with the application of this compassion:

5. The **fifth** phrase, “good fruits,” is a way to describe the volitional decision to execute the mental attitude of compassion which results in divine good.

First is the adjective **ἀγαθός (*agathós*)**: “good,” which is both beneficial and benevolent and describes the resultant production of “good works.”

These good works are mentioned next by the plural noun **καρπός (*karpós*)**: “the metaphorical use of the term to describe the production of the believer enabled by “the Holy Spirit.”

In this context, the **production of divine good** is made functional by the filling ministry of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit’s enabling power combined with application from a doctrinal inventory results in putting grace into action.

Divine Good may be defined as those Christian works and Christian service which are acceptable to God and His standards. They must originate from the grace of God under the filling of the Holy Spirit and spiritual growth.

Here are some pertinent principles on the believer’s production of divine good:

Principles on Divine Good Compared with Human Good

1. The Greek word for “good” is **ἀγαθός (*agathós*)** and in Scripture it has two prevalent applications, divine good and human good.

⁵ Ibid., “ἐλεος,” 1:471–472.



2. Divine good finds its source in God while human good is associated with the personal works of mankind. Motivated by principles found in Scripture, believers are enabled to produce divine good under the mentorship of the Holy Spirit.
3. Human good is accomplished by multiple resources that vary with different cultures and are frequently inspired by the religions that define them.
4. Divine good is the production of biblically stimulated decisions that apply biblical principles to life and circumstances. As a result, these efforts are rewardable at the Evaluation Tribunal of Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:10 cp., Revelation 2–3)
5. Therefore, divine good is based on the eternal standards and doctrines of Scripture that are retained in the souls of the believer.
6. When he volitionally recalls and applies these divine ideas, he has produced divine good. Human good is based on standards concocted from the cosmic systems and corrupted by human viewpoint.
7. Divine good performed by the believer is the result of the grace provisions of God: **(1)** the filling of the Holy Spirit, **(2)** problem-solving devices, **(3)** promises, **(4)** doctrines, and **(5)** application of these assets.
8. Summary: Unless the steps noted in point 7 are followed, no divinely approved works will result.
9. The “work” produced is by means of grace. The impact of the work is based on divine policies learned, facilitated, and applied by the ministries of the Holy Spirit.
10. The false doctrine that salvation is attainable only by performing “good works” means the power to acquire salvation is dependent upon the efforts of an unbeliever.
11. The works for salvation were accomplished by Jesus Christ on the cross: **(1)** He confirmed the power of submitting totally to divine guidance from the Holy Spirit, **(2)** He rejected all temptations to do otherwise, and **(3)** He willingly did the work of being judged for the sins of the human race up to the point he proclaimed, “It is finished” (John 19:30).
12. Jesus Christ did the work; the unbeliever benefits by placing his personal faith in Jesus Christ for salvation and eternal life:



John 3:16 “For God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes [πιστεύω (*pisteúō*): a transitive verb that demands an object] in Him [αὐτός (*autós*): Jesus Christ Who is the working object)] shall not perish, but have eternal life.” (NASB)

13. The person to whom Jesus made His remarks was Nicodemus, a Pharisee and during that period of his life was an unbeliever. As such, he was unable to discern spiritual concepts.
14. Because of this deficiency, Nicodemus came to the Lord with this question:

John 3:2 “Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do the things that You do unless God is with Him.”

15. To this Jesus responded with a comment which was totally confusing to the soul of Nicodemus, nevertheless, the Lord began His comments by affirming the accuracy of what He was about to say:

John 3:3 “Truly, truly [Ἀμήν, ἀμήν (*Amēn*, *amēn*): “I am telling you the truth”], I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of heaven.”

16. Nicodemus was incapable of discerning the Lord’s statement indicated by his response in:

John 3:4 Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born, can he?”

17. Obviously not, if the conversation is to be interpreted literally. What the Lord is saying is indeed a literal statement. It must be interpreted not from logical, human rationales, but rather from the viewpoint of divine absolutes. The Lord’s answer was oriented to the latter in:

John 3:5 “I am telling you the truth; I say to you, unless one is born of water [physical birth] and the Spirit [spiritual birth] he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

18. Nicodemus ultimately came around to the Lord’s way of thinking. This category of thinking required Nicodemus to focus his thinking on spiritual principles rather than those of an earthly variety.

19. Following the Lord's physical death on the cross, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, both members of the Sanhedrin, the supreme Jewish court in Jerusalem, collaborated in orchestrating the Lord's burial.

Nicodemus was the brother of Josephus the historian. This Nicodemus was a member of the Sanhedrin and was counted one of the three richest men of Jerusalem.

Perhaps encouraged by the example of Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus assisted at the burial of Jesus. He brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds' weight, to anoint the body, and he assisted in its embalming and burial (John:19:39–42).⁶

Joseph: Of Arimathea, “a prominent member of the Council [Sanhedrin],⁷ who himself was waiting for the kingdom of God,” and was a secret disciple of Jesus. The crucifixion seems to have wrought in him positive convictions, for, upon learning of the death of our Lord, he “gathered up courage and went in before Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus.” Pilate, having learned from the centurion who had charge of the execution that Jesus was actually dead, gave the body to Joseph, who took it down from the cross. After it had been embalmed at the cost of Nicodemus, another secret disciple, Joseph had the body wrapped in linen and deposited it in a new tomb belonging to himself and located in a garden “in the place where he was crucified” (Matthew 27:58–60; Mark 14:43–46; Luke 23:50–53; John 19:38–42).

(End JAS3-49. See JAS3-50 for continuation of study at p. 491.)

⁶ Merrill F. Unger, “Nicodemus,” in *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary*, rev. ed., ed. R. K. Harrison (Chicago: The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, 1988), 921.

⁷ “Sanhedrin [סנהדרין] (*Sanhedhrin*); Συνέδριον (*Sunédriion*): The supreme Jewish Court of Justice in Jerusalem in which the process against Our Lord was carried on, and before which the apostles had to justify themselves. The term “Sanhedrin,” “meeting place,” in Jerusalem of 71 members, was most powerful, the internal government of the country being practically in its hands, and it was religiously recognized even among the Diaspora” (Paul Levertoff, “Sanhedrin,” in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, gen. ed. James Orr [Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956], 4:2689).



Luke describes Joseph as “a good and righteous man” and adds that “he had not consented to their plan and action,” i.e., of the Jewish authorities. From this remark it seems to be evident that he was a member of the Sanhedrin.¹

20. Two formally heathen Jews, who placed their personal faith in the Lord for their salvation, produced the divine good of orchestrating the burial of our Lord.
21. The record of their involvement in the Lord’s burial is noted in Scripture, Nicodemus in John 19:39 while Joseph’s participation is recorded in all four Gospel accounts: Matthew 27:57–60; Mark 15:42–46; Luke 23:50–53; and John 19:38–42.

The Standards of Human Good

1. Human good can only be defined in the context of what the individual perceives is good. Whatever his standards happen to be, then that is what he assumes is good.
2. What one person regards is a good thing to think, say, or do, may be quite different for another. Everyone is free to have his own opinion about what is good.
3. These opinions may or may not line up with cultural standards of society which themselves change over time. We are presently engaged in a national seminar about what ought to be perceived as good or bad.
4. The argument for some is the desire to impose on others their opinions of what is good; some of this ilk have the political power to impose their ideas on the commonwealth, but without the requisite power to do so.
5. Others orient to establishment standards that have been the ones accepted by the Founders and their progeny over the centuries but are now called into question by those who align themselves with personal opinions rather than the standards of past generations.
6. The debate does not move the conversation forward if one side argues for their personal opinions while others stand fast for establishment standards that have prevailed for millennia.
7. The Founders understood the pursuit of happiness to be the result of collectively agreed upon principles that reflect the experiences of the ages.

¹ Merrill F. Unger, “Joseph of Arimathea,” in *The New Unger’s Bible Dictionary*. rev. ed., ed. R. K. Harrison (Chicago: The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, 1988), 710.



8. The Declaration's opening Statement established the foundational principle for how a free and functional society ought to order itself which requires a rational appeal to the intellect:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal ...

9. The egalitarians of our present day are prone to cite this sentence fragment by imputing a period after the word "equal." They do so without reading further, but rather leave the phrase, "created equal," to stand alone as if the entire document rests upon that nebulous statement.
10. However, the sentence does not stop there; instead, following the comma, it stipulates what "these truths" happen to be and with which all members of the nation may engage and enjoy:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness.

11. What are the "self-evident truths" to which "all Men," who are "created equally," may "pursue"? The first is "Life," the privilege from "their Creator" to live their own lives as they see fit while doing so within the environment of "Liberty."
12. This refers to the Law of Liberty which allows everyone "equally" to "pursue their happiness" restrained only by the laws of the land.
13. "Equality" allows all citizens to function within the environment of "Liberty" in pursuit of those endeavors they trust will result in their "general happiness." Some choose to pursue one path while others pursue another.
14. Those who take advantage of their "Liberty" remain free to make the "pursuit." Some make good choices others not so much. However, this freedom allows each person to make good choices from a position of strength or, sadly, for others, to make poor choices from a position of weakness.
15. We are all equally responsible for our own decisions whether good or bad.
16. Finally, and most importantly, on what are these principles founded? The Statement clearly indicates that "all Men are created equal." But by means of what resource?
17. The next phrase clearly states, "they are endowed by their Creator." This clause reveals the Source of the endowment to be Jesus Christ Who is identified as our Creator in Colossians 1:16–17.



18. Our Lord is said to have endowed us with “certain unalienable Rights” of which some are cited: **(1) Life, (2) Liberty, and (3) the Pursuit of Happiness.**
19. The words “endow” and “endowment” are primarily defined in modern English dictionaries as a legal grant from a “dower” as the benefactor, to an individual or organization, in the form of funds or property.
20. However, in the 1700s, “endowment” had quite a different meaning and once observed gave important insight into Jefferson’s choice of words:
Endowment: That which is given or bestowed on the person or mind by the creator; gift of nature; any quality or faculty bestowed by the creator.²
21. What Jefferson included in the divine endowment were, “unalienable Rights.” **Unalienable:** “that cannot be alienated; as *unalienable* rights.”³
The word group under “alien” in Webster’s 1828 dictionary provides the meanings associated with this noun: **Alienability:** The capacity of being transferred. **Alienable:** That may be sold or transferred to another. **Alienate:** To transfer title, property, or right to another. **Alienation:** A transfer of a legal conveyance of property to another.⁴
22. Some have made the assertion that Jefferson’s use of “unalienable” in the Declaration’s Statement is a misspelling and insist on spelling the word, “inalienable.” As noted above, Webster’s 1828 dictionary includes Jefferson’s spelling with the definition, “cannot be alienated.”
23. Many modern dictionaries cite “unalienable” but reference the reader to “inalienable.” Both spellings were in use in the early 1600s, so there is no need to adjust Jefferson’s spelling.
24. What Jefferson’s statement does is to certify the inflexibility of colonists’ belief that the crown was imposing upon them regulations that violate their “unalienable rights.”
25. Patrick Henry was opposed to Virginia’s ratification of the Constitution unless certain of these “unalienable rights” were amended into the Constitution so that some future tyrant could not deny them afresh.
26. Henry’s efforts resulted in an agreement that once the Constitution was ratified, at Congress’s first assembly, certain rights would be codified into the document. When the first ten Amendments were approved, they became known as the Bill of Rights.

² Noah Webster, *American Dictionary of the English Language* (New York: S. Converse, 1820), s.v. “endowment.”

³ *Ibid.*, s.v. “unalienable.”

⁴ *Ibid.*, s.vv. “alienability,” “alienable,” “alienate,” “alienation.”



27. These Amendments may be withdrawn or amended following a two-thirds vote by both houses of Congress, 67 yes votes in the Senate and 290 yes votes in the House.
28. Recently, some governors have ordered the prohibition of certain unalienable rights by prohibiting free exercise of religion, of speech, of peaceable assembly, or bearing of arms, all of which are reserved “to the people.”
29. We are presently seeing daily examples of human good being enforced upon many citizens which violate our “unalienable rights.” Often these efforts are motivated by human good but have the danger of being converted into evil.
40. Underlying these motives is the undercurrent of fear which has been fomented by a few in positions of authority who have magnified an influenza virus into a killing machine. However, in the states of Illinois and Missouri, the death rate among those documented to have acquired the coronavirus is 0.05%.
41. There is the sneaking suspicion that death from this virus gives credence to a hidden agenda: the destruction of the economy followed by massive unemployment, failure to pay mortgages, loans, and monthly bills, and the resultant inability to provide necessities for the family unit.
42. And never forget this: the attack of the coronavirus was in the divine decree in eternity past and it has now been allowed to invade client nation America. The loss of establishment and doctrinal thought over the past 100 years has resulted in the potential destruction of our way of life.
43. The prognostications of these circumstances were the subjects of three recent Shreveport Bible Conferences: **(1)** in 2012: *The Divine Decree* (<http://www.joegriffin.org/media-archive/our-class-catalog/sbc12/>), **(2)** in 2013: *Whirlwind: The Four-Generation Curse* (<http://www.joegriffin.org/media-archive/our-class-catalog/sbc13/>), and **(3)** in 2014: *Gospel’s Missionary Journey* (<http://www.joegriffin.org/media-archive/our-class-catalog/sbc14/>).
44. The three links above take you to the audio streams of these studies. John Smith edited each of the three into small booklets under the same titles. They are available at the church or by mail order to: Joe Griffin Media Ministries, 1821 South River Road, St. Charles, MO 63303-4124.
45. Human good is on a rampage throughout the country. The problems within the souls of believers and collectively within the churches are what James has been assaulting in our studies since October 02, 2016 when we studied the first verse in *James: Chapter One*.



46. So far, we have spent 3 and one-half years of studying constant corrections by James about the way we think, the way we speak, and the way we live. It is the failure of the church that permits the human good and evil of the devil's world to gain a foothold in a client nation.
47. We have just finished James's diatribe on envy. In Chapter 4, James once again will point out our failures while offering some encouraging words along the way, yet he relentlessly keeps up the pressure.
48. The undercurrent remains the same: stop your merciless indulgence in mental attitude sins, sins of the tongue, and actions that are overtly sinful.
49. Returning now to our verse in James 3:17, we have been developing the "Six Honorable Virtues" and we now arrive at the last one on the list:
6. The **sixth** predicate adjective is **ἀδιάκριτος** (*adiákritos*) which is translated, "unwavering," in the NASB translation. Other translations include, "without partiality" in the KJV and "impartial" in the NIV, and NET. Here is some commentary on how this word should be translated:

ἀδιάκριτος. Its only occurrence in the New Testament is at James 3:17. Here it is used of the wisdom which is from above. It means "without doubts and hypocrisy." It expresses the distinctive assurance and resolution of faith, and also the reliability of Jesus Christ. The best rendering is perhaps "without wavering," "unshakable." "... a mind which is unshakable in patience."⁵

1. The passage describes the character of a believer who is functioning under the Law of Freedom. He has an inventory of doctrine from which he permits others to hold their ideas and opinions freely.
2. His policy is to allow others the latitude to express themselves from their own inventories of ideas without prejudice while still holding fast to his own principles.
3. This is the execution of the Royal Law, which allows others to use their free will to express themselves from their souls' inventories.

⁵ Friedrich Büchsel, "ἀδιάκριτος," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1965), 3>950–951.

