

47. The word, *saprós*, clearly has to do with the tongue and its enunciations because its source is said to be “from your mouth.”
- The meaning of σαπρός in Ephesians 4:29a may be seen from 4:29b, “but that which is good for edifying where needed.” A λόγος σαπρός (*lógos saprós* [“damaging word”]) does not serve the needs of the community. Hence it is unprofitable (idle gossip”).<sup>3</sup>**
48. In this verse, the worthless, damaging word is described as “idle gossip.” What is communicated may be true, but to spread the information to others is not beneficial since it “does not serve the needs of the community.”
49. Our subject in James 3 has to do with the control of the tongue. The first example given by James is “We stumble in many ways.” If you don’t stumble it is because you have advanced to such a level in your spiritual growth that you are able to bridle your body.
50. Gossiping is the use of the tongue to convey information that does harm to others in the Christian “community.” This does not “serve the needs” which is accomplished by the development of integrity in the souls of believers.
51. There are other examples, but no need to browbeat further to communicate the idea James is addressing. James is using the word, bridle, to make his point. It’s that long, multisyllabic noun, **χαλιναγωγέω (*chalinagōgēō*)**: “to restrain, govern, or control.”
52. This is obviously a compound. The first half of the word is the noun **χαλινός (*chalinós*)**: “a bridle,” followed by verb, **ἄγω (*ágō*)**: “to restrain, govern, or control.”
53. The principle James communicates by the use of this word is personal integrity. How is personal integrity characterized in Scripture? The application of the Royal Law in James 2:8 which is executed by the commandment in Leviticus 19:18b, “you shall love your neighbor as yourself.”
54. The word “love” in Leviticus, and its quotations in the New Testament, is the verb **אָהַב (*’ahav*)**. In the New Testament it is **ἀγαπάω (*agapáō*)**. In the context of the Royal Law, these words do not refer to familial relationships but rather to the population at large, i.e., “your neighbor.”
55. The Hebrew word for “neighbor” in Leviticus is **רֵעִי (*rea’*)** while in the New Testament it is **πλησίον (*plēsión*)**. English Bibles translate it with “neighbor,” but the better rendering is, “fellow man.”

<sup>3</sup> Otto Bauernfeind, “σαπρός,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Friedrich, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1971), 7:97.



56. So, how is the commandment to “love” your fellow man accomplished? Well, we get guidance by observing the definition of love and its coordination with the righteousness and justice of God. Here are some excerpts that define how the love of God is in concert with the righteousness, justice, and omniscience of God:

1. The righteousness of God is the perfect standard of His essence. He cannot compromise His righteousness without destroying His perfect character.
2. God protects His righteousness with His justice which is the source of both blessing and judgment. God’s justice guards His righteous standards which possess absolute truth.
3. Therefore, God’s righteousness and justice combine to form the integrity of God which is the synchronized operation of His righteousness and justice.
4. Righteousness is the *principle* of God’s integrity; justice is the *function* of God’s integrity.
5. God’s love is an inherent quality of absolute benevolence that does not require inspiration to be gracious, generous, or merciful.
6. His love always functions in a dispassionate, but benevolent manner.
7. Omniscience refers to the fact that God knows all that is knowable, confirming that He is never without all the facts regarding the details of angelic or human life or the inner thoughts and rationales of their souls.
8. Righteousness, justice, and omniscience form the integrity of God. The love of God is perfect because it works in concert with the integrity of God.
9. PRINCIPLE: The integrity of God is the love of God and the love of God is the integrity of God.<sup>4</sup>
10. The NET Bible’s translation of Psalm 33:4–5a is interesting because of its expanded translation of the Hebrew and its support for the preceding principles.
11. Accompanying this passage are four “translator’s notes” that help expand their translation:

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<sup>4</sup> Principles 1–9 are adapted from: R. B. Thieme, Jr., *The Unfailing Love of God*, ed. Robert B. Thieme III (Houston: R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 2009), 6–11.



**Psalm 33:4** For the Lord's decrees<sup>9</sup> are just,<sup>10</sup> and everything he does is fair.<sup>11</sup>

**v. 5a** The Lord promotes<sup>12</sup> equity and justice ...

12. Translators' Note 9: "decrees" is the singular noun, דְּבָר (davar): "word."

**tn 9.** In this context, which depicts the Lord as the sovereign creator and ruler of the world, the Lord's "word" refers to the decrees whereby he governs his dominion.

To translate this "decrees" is fine although "divine decree" would be better.

13. Translators' Note 10: "just" is the adjective יָשָׁר (yashar) which refers to something that remains straight, not deviating to the right or to the left. This depicts the word of God as that which is immutable. "Just" is fine but "integrity" would be better.

14. Translators' Note 11: "fair" is the noun אֱמוּנָה ('emunah).

**tn 11.** "and all his work is in faithfulness."

The footnote is the better translation since His faithfulness is based on His divine integrity which is what certifies the immutability of His Word.

15. Translators' Note 12: "promotes" is the verb, אָהַב ('ahav) and refers to God's "love" for "equity and justice."

**tn 12.** The verb "loves" is here metonymic<sup>5</sup>; the Lord's commitment to principles of equity and justice causes him to actively promote these principles as he governs the world.

The NET Bible's translators view the word "love" here as the divine "promotion" of "equity and justice." This requires us to define these two English nouns.

The first is "equity," which is the Hebrew noun, צְדָקָה (sethaqah): "righteousness," followed by a second noun, "judgment," מִשְׁפָּט (mishphat): "jurisprudence."

<sup>5</sup> "Metonymy. A figure of speech that replaces the name of one thing with the name of something else closely associated with it" (Chris Baldick, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 135).

16. The two combined refer to the integrity of God. God's righteous standards are inflexible and are defended by divine justice which prosecutes violations but blesses compliance.
17. At the moment of salvation, the new believer enters into the legal environment of the plan of God. I use the word "legal," to emphasize the new relationship that exists between perfect God and imperfect man.
18. The new believer is saved, in the royal family, recipient of the imputation of divine righteousness, sustained by God's matchless grace, but ignorant of the "rules" he is required to obey.
19. The undergirding and munificent grace of God takes on the new believer, characterized as a child, and teaches him the standards He wishes him to learn, retain, recall, and apply.
20. The only resource for acquiring this information is Scripture. The only biblically approved system by which this information is to be communicated is the pastor-teacher in a local church.
21. The second most important commandment in this growth process is said by our Lord to be the Royal Law which requires the believer to "love your neighbor as yourself."
22. This statement rolls off the tongue but causes most readers to remain vague on its meaning. Yet, this is the second most important commandment the believer is required to keep according to the Lord Himself.
23. In Matthew 22:34–40, the Pharisees approached the Lord in an effort to put Him to the test. One of them identified in the verse as "a lawyer," posed this question, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" Here is the Lord's response:

**Matthew 22:37** "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart [ stream of consciousness ], with all your soul [ volition and conscience ], with all your mind [ categorical storage ].' (Deuteronomy 6:5)

**v. 38** "This is the great and foremost commandment.

**v. 39** "The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' (Leviticus 19:18)

**v. 40** "On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets [ i.e., the Tanakh ]." (NASB)



24. We have established that the love of God is the integrity of God and that the integrity of God is the love of God. God's attributes are eternal, unalterable, and inviolate. Righteousness is the attribute that certifies the veracity of His standards.
25. Justice is the attribute that guards, defends, and enforces these standards. It blesses compliance with them and disciplines noncompliance.
26. The attribute of God's love functions as an umbrella under which divine integrity is protected. Although righteousness, justice, and omniscience are attributes, the three function as composites that form the integrity of God.
27. Because mankind is fallen, because new believers are born again at salvation but almost totally ignorant of divine policies, standards, and commandments, God administers His relationship with them under a policy of grace.
28. It is under this umbrella that the believer is privileged to function. His first responsibility within this system is to "grow in grace."
29. This is accomplished through spiritual growth inside the evanescent divine power system, i.e., "the bubble," and the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit.
30. Plagued by a genetically inherited sin nature with its collection of lust patterns, the believer's spiritual growth is constantly interrupted by personal sin which pops the evanescent bubble, instantly separating him from the Holy Spirit's teaching ministry.
31. Although the believer never loses the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, he does lose His teaching ministry while functioning outside the bubble.
32. Many believers have no concept of status-quo spirituality which describes the filling and teaching ministries of the Holy Spirit.
33. Thus, the struggle to advance in one's spiritual growth is plagued by ignorance of how to achieve and consistently employ and capitalize upon the filling ministry of the Holy Spirit.

