

14. The consistent pursuit of wisdom is the thrust of James's initial approach. He opens with the result of this pursuit which is unalloyed happiness in verse 2, but to make that advance one must learn through experience how to achieve it.
15. This advance is going to be stimulated by testing in order to build up stamina and endurance by means of faith. This faith is placed in the veracity of the Word of God which is the expression of His integrity.
16. Knowing that God's integrity is infallible, the only way doubt could enter a believer's soul would be the assumption he is unworthy of God's provision and therefore does not qualify.
17. Principle: No one qualifies. We are *not* worthy. What qualifies us and makes us worthy is the imputation of divine righteousness at the moment of salvation.
18. At that moment we are placed into service as witnesses for the Prosecution. Spiritual growth and dependence on the grace of God and His Word advances us in the contest.
19. The advance is constantly enhanced by continued inculcation of divine thought and its employment in the scrum of the Invisible War.
20. As the advance continues the believer is to "keep on asking" for wisdom. Regardless of the "categories of pressure," we are not to "waver."
21. The strong negative adverb **μηδείς** (*mēdeís*): "nothing," is the direct object of the present middle participle of **διακρίνω** (*diakrínō*): "to doubt, hesitate, waver."
22. When a believer wavers, he is experiencing a period of time outside the bubble. This suspends spiritual growth due to unconfessed sin which in turn causes one to doubt.
23. When a believer is growing in grace, but confronts a challenge causing him to sin, doctrinal application is suspended and he enters a hiatus.
24. James describes this condition of the soul with an example from the waters of the sea.

25. Just as the waters of the sea are unstable and constantly changing under the influence of the wind, so also is the believer who has doubt.
26. The participle is in the middle voice which indicates that this person is unstable in his soul and is compared to the “wave of the sea.”
27. Although ocean/sea water makes up 71 percent of the earth’s surface, its waters are unstable and constantly on the move, driven by winds on the surface, currents and gravity below, and the moon from above. Here is some information on waves:

Wave, on a body of water, a ridge or swell on the surface, normally having a forward motion. The undulations and oscillations may be chaotic and random, or they may be regular, with an identifiable wavelength between adjacent crests and with a definite frequency of oscillation. In the latter case, the waves may be progressive, in which the crests and troughs appear to travel at a steady speed in a direction at right angles to themselves. Alternatively, they may be standing waves, in which there is no progression. In this case, there is no rise and fall at all in some places, the nodes, while elsewhere the surface rises to a crest and then falls to a trough at a regular frequency.

There are two physical mechanisms that control and maintain wave motion. For most waves, gravity is the restoring force that causes any displacements of the surface to be accelerated back toward the mean surface level. The kinetic energy gained by the fluid returning to its rest position causes it to overshoot, resulting in the oscillating wave motion.

Waves on the sea surface are generated by the action of the wind. During generation the disturbed sea surface is not regular and contains many different oscillatory motions at different frequencies.¹ (p. 12:532)

28. The four major forces that make seawater unstable are winds, currents, tides, friction, and gravity. Winds near the earth’s surface flow around regions of relatively low and high pressure.

¹ *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica: Micropaedia*, 15th ed. (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica (2010), s.v. “wave.”

29. Ocean currents are the result of a number of forces that are technically defined by the fundamental laws of mechanics and the Coriolis effect. Let's see if we can break this down:

Causes of Ocean Currents. The general circulation is governed by the equation of motion, one of Sir Isaac Newton's fundamental laws of mechanics applied to a continuous volume of water. Besides gravity, the most important forces that cause and affect ocean currents are horizontal pressure-gradient forces, Coriolis forces, and frictional forces.

Frictional Forces. Movement of water through the oceans is slowed by friction, with surrounding fluid moving at a different velocity. A faster-moving fluid moving at a different velocity. A faster-moving fluid layer tends to drag along a slower-moving layer, and a slower-moving layer will tend to reduce the speed of a faster-moving layer. This momentum transfer between the layers is referred to as frictional forces. The momentum transfer is a product of turbulence that moves kinetic energy to smaller scales until at the centimeter scale it is dissipated as heat. The wind blowing over the sea surface transfers momentum to the water. This frictional force at the sea surface (*i.e.*, the wind stress) produces the wind-driven circulation. Currents moving along the ocean floor and the sides of the ocean also are subject to the influence of boundary-layer friction. The motionless ocean floor removes momentum from the circulation of the ocean waters.² (p. 8:149–50)

30. There are other frictional forces that play a large part in the movement of ocean waters one of which is the Coriolis force, named after Gustave-Gaspard Coriolis \kor-ē-'ō-les\, a 19th-century French engineer:

The Coriolis effect is significant in the earth sciences, especially oceanography, in that the Earth is a rotating frame of reference, and motions over the surface of the Earth are subject to acceleration from the force indicated. Thus, the Coriolis force figures prominently in studies of the dynamics of the atmosphere, in which it affects prevailing winds and the rotation of storms, and in the hydrosphere, in which it affects the rotation of oceanic currents.³ (p. 3:632)

31. And what about winds which in concert with gravity produce waves:

² *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica: Macropaedia*, 15th ed. (2010), s.v. "Oceans: Waves of the Sea: Frictional Forces."

³ *Micropaedia*, s.v. "Coriolis, Gustave-Gaspard."

Surface Gravity Waves. Wind waves are the wind-generated gravity waves. After the wind has abated or shifted or the waves have migrated away from the wind field, such waves continue to propagate as swell.

The dependence of the sizes of the waves on the wind field is a complicated one. A general impression of this dependence is given by the descriptions of the various states of the sea corresponding to the scale of wind strengths known as the Beaufort scale, after the British admiral Sir Francis Beaufort, who drafted it in 1808, using as his yardstick the surface of sail that a fully rigged warship of those days could carry in the various wind forces. In the Table the Beaufort wind force is followed by the name given to such a wind at sea and ... the range of wind speeds. (p. 154)

The height of wind waves increases with increasing wind speed and with increasing duration and the distance over which the wind blows. Together with height, the dominant wavelength also increases. Finally, however, the waves reach a state of saturation because they attain the maximum significant height to which the wind can raise them.⁴ (p. 155)

32. And, finally, we cannot ignore the forces imposed by the man in the Moon:

Tide-Generating Forces. A tide-generating force is the resultant force of the attracting force of the Moon or the Sun and the force of inertia that results from the orbital movement of the Earth around the common center of gravity of the Earth-Moon or Earth-Sun system.

Considering the Earth-Moon system, at any time the tide-generating force is directed vertically upward at the two places on the Earth where the Moon is in the vertical (on the same and on the opposite side of the Earth); it is directed vertically downward at all places where the Moon is in the horizon at that moment.^{5,6} (p. 25:154–56)

33. With these excerpts, I have again validated the claim that I am the most boring pastor in America. But there is a method in my madness. Let's consider these applications to James's illustration of the "doubting" believer:

James 1:6b ... the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. (NASB)

⁴ *Macropaedia*, s.v. "Oceans: Waves of the Sea: Surface Gravity Waves: Wind Waves and Swell."

⁵ *Ibid.*, s.v. "Oceans: Ocean Tides: Tide-Generating Forces."

⁶ Footnotes 2, 4, and 5 contain excerpts from *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica: Macropaedia*, 15th ed. (2010), vol. 25, by the following contributors: Pier Groen, Ronald A. R. Tricker, and Arnold L. Gordon.

1. Lack of doctrine in the soul causes the low-inventory believer to be unstable. He cannot manage the challenges that will consistently occur in the life of every Christian.
2. This believer is characterized by the “surf of the sea.” Exegesis of the word “surf” in the NASB is important if we are to accurately analyze this illustration.
3. The other major translations—KJV, NIV, and NET choose the word “wave.” We must go the dictionaries for help.
4. The word “surf” is translated by *The Oxford American Dictionary* as “the mass or line of foam formed by waves breaking on a seashore or reef”; by *Webster’s New Twentieth Century Dictionary* as “the waves or swell of the sea which breaks upon the shore or upon shoals or rocks”; by *The Oxford English Dictionary* as “The swell of the sea which breaks upon a shore, especially a shallow shore”; and by *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* as “The offshore waters, waves, or wave action between the shoreline and the outermost boundaries of the breakers.”
5. These definitions really do not really define the “waves of the sea” that is indicated by the Greek word for “surf” found in our verse.
6. That word is the noun **κλύδων (klúdōn)** and it is defined in *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* as “The raging of the sea; a tempest”; in *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Greek New Testament* as a “wave; i.e., “the surge of the sea” and “the billowing sea”; and in *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* as “a succession of waves, rough water.”
7. In addition, we have **κλυδωνίζομαι (kludōnízomai)**, a deponent from *klúdōn* in *The Complete Word Study Dictionary*, “a surge of the sea; wave. To surge, be tossed in billows” and in *A Greek-English Lexicon* **κλυδασμός (kludasmós)**, “surging of waves.”
8. What’s the point? The illustration James uses does not refer to waves flopping in on the shore as per the word “surf,” but rather the multiple influences that contribute to the instability of ocean waters.

9. In verse six, it is the “one who doubts” that is described as being “driven and tossed by the wind.” These and multiple other factors constantly manipulate the waters, first one influence, then another, and then another.
10. In our research on the oceans we observed a few of the many forces that control, influence, and manipulate the environment so that ocean waters are “driven and tossed.”
11. Waves have “undulations and oscillations that may be chaotic and random” or with “an identifiable wavelength between adjacent crests and with a definite frequency of oscillation.”
12. Without doctrinal recall, a believer is like ocean waves which are pushed in certain directions by wind:
Jonah 1:4 **The Lord hurled a great wind upon the sea and there was a great storm on the sea so that the ship was about to break up. (NASB)**
12. Water seeks stability. Our teachers told us as children, “Water seeks its own level.” But, even when the Beaufort scale indicates no wind and ocean waters are calm, other oceanic forces still keep them moving.
13. When wind picks up, waves are created, but gravity still keeps them coming back in search of the mean surface level. Underneath are ocean currents, Coriolis effect, and frictional forces.
14. Winds’ increasing forces are described by the Beaufort scale from calm at less than one mile per hour to hurricane force when exceeding 73 miles per hour. The greater the speed the probability of rain increases.
15. The illustration by James would be played out literally by Paul in c. A.D. 60 when on a trip to Rome he and 275 other passengers and crew were caught in a hurricane that is described in precise detail by Luke in Acts 27:1–28:16.
16. Reading now from Acts 27:1–44 in the NET Bible along with the associated visuals, “Paul and Company Sail for Rome”:

Recitation of Acts 27:1–44, NET Bible.