

“LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR” AS A MISSIONARY METHOD IN JAMES’ EPISTLE

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Abstract: Phyllis D. Johnson's article, "Love Your Neighbor" as a Missionary Method in James' Epistle, delves into the missional theology embedded in the book of James, particularly chapter 2. Johnson argues that a deeper hermeneutic reveals James' emphasis on the Royal Law: "Love your neighbor as yourself," derived from Leviticus 19:18 and reinforced by Jesus. This principle serves as a moral and ethical guide for believers, urging practical expressions of faith through compassionate actions. The article explores the broader biblical context of "neighbor," extending beyond cultural and national boundaries. Johnson posits that James' epistle calls the church to function as a missionary outpost, advocating for social justice and care for the marginalized. By integrating faith and works, James emphasizes the importance of living out kingdom principles, thereby fulfilling the Great Commission and reflecting God's love to all humanity.

The book of James has often been referred to by many theologians and scholars as a book of wisdom which serves as a guidepost for practical application in the life of the believer and in the community of faith that is the church. Moreover, it highlights the transformative witness of believers to manifest their salvation in practical ways, which leads to true wisdom and calls for action that is seen both in and outside of the church. However, when considering a missional motif in James, many theologians argue that this epistle has little to say on the matter of missions.¹ In their book, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission*, Andreas Köstenberger and Desmond Alexander contend that this missional oversight is due to the fact that James does not highlight a direct missional implication or command.² Moreover, one may also argue that a cursory reading of James neglects or obfuscates a missional hermeneutic completely.

In this article, I will argue that a superficial examination of the writings of James fails to acknowledge the presence of a missional theology and that a correct hermeneutic of the book of James, particularly chapter 2, provides a missional perspective and a deeper understanding of missional theology and its implications for the church's role. In addition, the epistle of James extends an invitation to the church to operate as a missionary outpost within a society that deviates from the patterns and customs associated with the *missio Dei*,³ particularly the role of social and missional engagement of one's neighbor.

This article will explore and examine particular passages of scripture both in the Old and New Testaments which serve to shape the patterns by which we configure the world and how we should live in it with one another. James's metanarrative becomes mission critical to the metanarrative of the Bible, which revolves around God's intersection with humanity to bring about redemption and restoration for his own glory. This narratological story can be witnessed in each book of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. God's self-revelation and his ultimate plan for humanity is for humankind to be reconciled to him and one another (2 Cor 5:19).

¹ Donald Senior and Carrol Stuhlmueller, *The Biblical Foundations for Missions* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1983), 309.

² Andreas J. Köstenberger and T. Desmond Alexander, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Missions* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2020), 132.

³ Joel Green, "Reading James Missionally," in *Reading the Bible Missionally*, edited by Michael W. Goheen (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 212.

Transformation encountered as a result of God's mission is summed up in Leviticus 19:18, which serves as a *précis* for James' kingdom instruction or Royal Law: "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Jas 2:8).⁴

I contend that a missional ecclesiology provides moral and ethical guidelines in the life of the believer which are imperative to demonstrate kingdom principles to others and to be carried out in the Great Commission (Mt 28:19–20), as well as in James.⁵

THE NATURE OF THE ROYAL LAW IS LOVE

The first step in this discussion is to build a strong base by giving a clear explanation of what is often referred to as "the royal law." What is the "royal law"? Upon initial conception of this statement, many would immediately refer to Jesus' conversation with a legal scholar who endeavored to examine Jesus' knowledge by asking him to articulate the preeminent commandment inside the Mosaic Law.⁶ Jesus succinctly summarized the whole rule bestowed to Moses by God in a single profound declaration: "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets" (Mt 22:37–40). Jesus was quoting the Royal Law.

A historical overview of the book of Leviticus reveals the instructions given by God to the nation of Israel in Leviticus 19, including not just a call for holiness but also guidelines for ethical behavior. This chapter offers guidance to the Israelites on the proper comprehension of worship, economic regulations, and social statutes, with the ultimate aim of attaining holiness in the eyes of God. Furthermore, in early Judaism, the command to "love God with your whole heart" is also found in the *Shema*, a central affirmation of the Jewish faith found in Deuteronomy 6:5. This directive emphasizes a holistic and devoted love for God, encompassing the entirety of one's being—heart, soul, and strength. It serves as a foundational principle for ethical living and spiritual devotion in Judaism.⁷ As a result, Leviticus 19 is regarded as an important passage in the religious traditions of both Jews and Christians. Both of these communities place a significant emphasis on holiness, as well as the love of God and of one's fellow man as a central value in their lives. The mandate to love, which is stressed in both the Old Testament and the New Testament, lies at the heart of both the Decalogue and Leviticus 19, as well as the teachings that Jesus imparted to his disciples.⁸

EARLY JUDAISM

What is this *love* that is at the central focus of these commandments? The meaning of love in Hebrew is deeply rooted in the concept of "*ahavah*." In both early Judaism and Christianity, love is a central theme that encompasses a range of sentiments, including affection, loyalty, and commitment. The understanding of love is multifaceted and plays a crucial role in shaping ethical and moral frameworks within these religious traditions. "*Ahavah*," goes beyond mere emotional attachment and includes a strong element of commitment and action. Love is often expressed through deeds and behaviors that demonstrate loyalty, kindness, and care. The Old Testament, or Tanakh, contains numerous references to love, illustrating its significance in the Hebrew Bible. In both Judaism and Christianity, the command to love God wholly emphasizes the primacy of a devoted and sincere relationship with God. Moreover, it implies a commitment that extends beyond superficial feelings, involving a deep and abiding loyalty to God. The

⁴Green, "Reading James," 207.

⁵ Darrell L. Gruder, *Missional Church: A Vision for Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 12.

⁶ John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, *Leviticus*, The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook Publishing, 1984).

⁷ Erhard S. Gerstenberger, *Leviticus: A Commentary* (Kentucky: John Knox, 1996), 18.

command to love one's neighbor furthermore emphasizes the importance of compassionate and just treatment of others which encourages believers to express their love for God through actions directed toward their fellow human beings who are their neighbors.

CHRISTIANITY

Likewise, Christianity builds upon the Hebrew understanding of love, incorporating the teachings of Jesus Christ. The New Testament further emphasizes the importance of love, portraying it as a transformative and redemptive force. In Christianity, the command to "love your neighbor as yourself" is central and is derived from passages like Matthew 22:39.

Additionally, this love reiterates the prohibition against engaging in acts of theft, falsehood, and perjury. It also forbids any form of oppressive behavior towards individuals who are economically disadvantaged, as well as those who are visually or audibly impaired. Furthermore, it emphasizes the importance of treating all individuals with fairness and impartiality. Lastly, it highlights the significance of employing rationality and compassion rather than harboring feelings of animosity or seeking revenge.⁹

The challenges that Christianity face lie squarely in the face of a Western context of love. In a Western context, the term "love" has undergone diverse interpretations and applications, both within theological and psychological frameworks. The understanding of love in modern Western culture is often influenced by a variety of factors, including secularization, individualism, and the evolving nature of relationships. The use of the term has expanded to encompass a broad spectrum of meanings, ranging from romantic and familial love to self-love and platonic affection. More specifically, in contemporary Western culture, there has been a shift toward more secular and individualistic views of love. The emphasis on personal happiness and fulfillment sometimes takes precedence over traditional religious or moral frameworks.

Some modern theologians grapple with the tension between traditional religious views of love and the evolving cultural understanding. Theologians such as Paul Tillich, for example, explore the intersection of existential concerns and religious concepts of love. Tillich argues in his book titled *Power, Love and Justice*, how love is a powerful force that addresses fundamental human concerns and needs.¹⁰ Moreover, it must be noted that oftentimes the modern understanding of love in Western contexts sometimes diverges from biblical teachings, particularly when it comes to concepts like self-love and the emphasis on individual happiness. Traditional biblical impetus often underscores sacrificial, selfless love and emphasizes the primacy of love for God and others.

The directive to show love for one's neighbor in a way that is similar to how one loves oneself is unmistakable, despite the fact that it is sometimes misconstrued. This phrase does not imply that having self-love is a required prerequisite for being able to love other people; rather, it simply states that having self-love is desirable. This statement proposes that people should attach the same level of significance to the well-being and worries of others as they do to their own self-care and personal problems. In addition, the passage taken from Ephesians 5:29 suggests that people have a natural tendency to love themselves, which is another implication of the passage.

One school of thought contends that people do not have ill will against their own material existence, but, rather, they enthusiastically support and nurture it in their lives. In the biblical passage found in 2 Tim. 3:1–7, the apostle Paul delivers a warning about the "last days" during which humanity would be self-serving and self-centered. This warning is one of stiff consequences and should not be taken lightly. The task at hand is to convey to other people the same level of warmth and affection that we feel for ourselves, as much as is humanly possible.¹¹ Therefore, the Royal Law holds great importance in the diverse landscape of Judaism, representing a sacred covenant based on love that is deeply ingrained in

⁹ John Piper, *Love Your Enemies* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989), 10.

¹⁰ Paul Tillich, *Power, Love and Justice: Ontological Analyses and Ethical Application* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1954), 3–4.

¹¹ Ibid.

the intricate relationship between Israel and God. As per Samuel Escobar, such nurturing love from God to Israel and for fellow beings can act as a driving force for transformative missionary work, helping to bridge cultural differences and promote holistic communities.¹² Additionally, Musa Dube asserts that Israel's covenant with God involves a responsibility to all peoples.¹³

As we navigate the theological terrain influenced by a variety of perspectives, the Royal Law persists as a perennial summons for Israel, and by extension, for the worldwide assembly of faithful individuals, to manifest covenantal love in their interpersonal connections, moral behavior, and missionary endeavors.

THE "NEIGHBOR" IN THE ROYAL LAW

As stated previously, the Bible contains many iterations of the royal law, generally referred to as the mandate to "love your *neighbor* as yourself." Now that we have addressed love in its narratological context, let us address the question, who is my "neighbor?" The term "neighbor" in the Old Testament has seen its share of various interpretations within the context of cultural, theological, and exegetical lenses.

The emphasis on this passage's significance is further underscored by the use of this verse by both Jesus and Paul as a succinct portrayal of the moral duty that humans have towards their fellow human beings (Mt 22:39–40, Rom 13:9). Unfortunately, a significant portion of individuals belonging to the ancient Jewish community maintained a narrow understanding of the word "neighbor," confining its scope only to those they were familiar with and those who shared their nationality. In Luke 6:27, Jesus imparts a command for humanity to exhibit compassion toward their foes. Moreover, in Luke 10:25–37, Jesus conveys the concept that an individual's neighbor ought to be seen as one in need of aid, irrespective of the prevailing perception of them as an adversary.¹⁴

Theologians have often argued for different interpretations of Leviticus 19:18 due to inadequate linkage to its context vv. 11–18b.¹⁵ Contrary to that position, in this section I will argue that the concept of "neighbor" is more directly connected to Israel's covenant with God, the Israeli community, and the world. This brings together a missiological ideology found throughout the Bible. From Genesis to Revelation, God is working to create a community of redeemed people from every tribe, tongue, and nation for his own glory. This writer has chosen to lean heavily on the work of Rolf Jacobson in "The Old Testament and the Neighbor" to elucidate the term neighbor which explores various Old Testament passages found in the Book of Psalms and the Prophets. further shining light on the usage of the term "neighbor."¹⁶

When one examines James 2 in further detail, one discovers that the word "neighbor" occurs at least five times between verses 13 and 18. Other phrases, such as "one another," "your people," "brother," and "sons of your own people," are also employed as synonyms for "neighbor," which serves to emphasize the deep care for interpersonal connections within the community.¹⁷ Moreover, this brief recitation of rules governing interpersonal relations is summarized in verse 18. "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Love, then is not an empty command, but rather a command to act a specific way toward one's neighbor.¹⁸

¹² Samuel. Escobar, *The New Global Mission: The Gospel from Everywhere to Everyone* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 155.

¹³ Musa W. Dube, *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, (2003), 96.

¹⁴ Calum M. Carmichael, *The Laws of Deuteronomy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974), 17.

¹⁵ The author acknowledges various interpretation of "neighbor" and its uses in the Old Testament. See Hroboň Bohdan, "Be Useful to Your Neighbor Who Is Like You": Exegesis and Alternative Translation of Lev 19:18B." *Communio Viatorum* 59, no.1 (2017): 5–24; <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLAI FZU171223002953&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

¹⁶ Jacobson, "Old Testament," in *Word & World* 37, no. 1 (2017): 16–26.

¹⁷ Carmicheal, *Laws*, 10.

¹⁸ Oscar S, Brooks, "The Function of the Double Love command in Matthew 22:34–40," *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 1 (1998): 7–22.

The question remains: Who or what is *re'a*? The concept of concern for the neighbor (*re'a*), originated in the Ten Commandments and subsequently was extended to include the whole of the law, therefore permeating it with a divine sense of care for one's fellow human beings. As previously observed, the concept of God's regard for the neighbor (*re'a*) is deeply ingrained into the primary text of biblical law, namely as found in Leviticus chapters 17-26. The presence of the term *re'a* in Leviticus 19:17-18 indicates that, in its original context, it denoted an individual belonging to the community of Israel, namely a "neighbor from among one's own people." The word is used in conjunction with the phrase "anyone of your kin" (specifically *'akh*, meaning "brother" in a literal sense). In verses 17-18, the English translation uses the term "neighbor" to render two distinct Hebrew terms. The Hebrew phrase "*amit*," which is translated as "neighbor" in verse 17, is a relatively uncommon word. This verse states that one should not reprove their neighbor. The phrase in question refers to the collective designation of individuals belonging to one's ethnic group of origin. Hence, the presence of *re'a* alongside two designations for those belonging to one's own community seems to suggest that, initially, one was instructed to love fellow members of one's own people.¹⁹

Consequently, the Pentateuch contains a directive that encourages individuals to express love towards their neighbors, especially in cases when these neighbors exhibit enmity and hostility. This instruction may be seen within the Exodus narrative, which emphasizes the need of safeguarding one another's possessions. In the event that one encounters an ox or donkey belonging to an adversary that has strayed, it is incumbent upon them to retrieve and return such animal. According to Exodus 23:4-5, individuals are advised to assist in freeing a donkey belonging to someone who harbors animosity against them, in the event that they come across the animal struggling under a load and are inclined to refrain from providing aid.

This quick look at Pentateuchal law sheds light on an essential component of the theology and ethics found in the Old Testament. The term "neighbor" as used throughout the Pentateuchal law refers to anybody who is not a member of one's own tribe, religion, or nation. God's people are instructed to love them.²⁰ Furthermore, a cursory overview of the Psalms and the Prophets sheds more light on the meaning of the phrase when seen in the context of poetry and prophecy. It is highly recommended that one should read these texts through the lens of the Torah to capture the meaning, identity and function of neighbor, which is quite similar in many respects to what is mandated and imagined in the law of the Pentateuch. Both Israel's worship language and God's messengers' discourse examined Israel's neighbors' social and ethical bounds.²¹

The first book of Psalms begins with a lyrical contemplation on the contrasting attributes of righteousness and wickedness. Those who adhere to moral principles and exhibit virtuous behavior are deeply connected to the teachings and doctrines of God. On the other hand, those who engage in immoral actions lack such a connection. People who possess moral integrity trust God, while those who lack such integrity do not. The characterization of the wicked in both the Psalms and Prophets is revealed by their interactions with their neighbors. Psalm 15:1-5 presents a comparative perspective that is both informative and prescriptive. It suggests that those who can remain in the presence of God demonstrate kindness and compassion towards their fellow human beings. Furthermore, Psalm 28 and Psalm 101 also address ethical behavior towards others. In each of these instances, the one who engages in prayer or

¹⁹ Jacobson, "Old Testament," 19.

²⁰ Ernst Simon, "The Neighbor (*Re'a*) Who We Shall Love," in *Modern Jewish Ethics: Theory and Practice* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1975), 30-56. It is important to acknowledge that a Jewish interpretation of the Pentateuchal law has reached the conclusion that the testimony is ambiguous. In the Jewish culture and tradition, the inquiry of "who is my neighbor?" is posed. Ernst Simon conducts a "semantic analysis" on the *re'a*. Simon's analysis suggests that the biblical evidence lacks decisiveness. Moreover, it is also necessary to understand that Simon has thoroughly examined the directive to love one's neighbor within the rabbinic tradition and in light of contemporary Jewish diaspora circumstances. He concludes that only when we possess a profound understanding that our neighbor encompasses all individuals, and genuinely demonstrate reverence towards them similar to the love we have for ourselves, will God reveal Himself as the God of Israel. See 54.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 21.

singing assumes the responsibility of addressing a theologically oriented ethical inquiry. The purpose of this contrast and the resulting tension it creates in the reader is to emphasize ethical inquiry. Frequently, the supplications of individuals who are unwell or socially disadvantaged, as well as the psalms that address the concept of community, grapple with the predicament of neighbors who have chosen to distance themselves or even to exhibit hostility.²²

According to the Scriptures, the people of God are commanded to love their neighbors, and these neighbors are often portrayed as the most defenseless members of society, including the widow, the orphan, and the foreigner. It is expected that the limitations specified in the Pentateuch will be upheld in the Psalms and the Prophets. The need to love our neighbor is both a moral obligation and a manifestation of righteousness. Failure to exhibit love towards our neighbor signifies a deficiency in our moral character. According to the Prophet Jeremiah (Jer 5:4), our failure to exhibit love towards our neighbors serves as an indication that we lack understanding of the way and Law of God.²³

As previously mentioned, the inclusion of an individual's relatives or fellow Israelites is not a prerequisite for the classification of an individual as a neighbor. The concept of "neighbor" expanded beyond Israel's physical boundaries. Again, this care is voiced for three sorts of persons or groups who are much too frequently overlooked: the widow, the orphan, and the stranger (Is 1:11–17) which is emphasized both in the Psalms and the Prophets.

It was customary for prophets who wrote throughout the eighth century B.C. to express their disapproval of ritualistic worship practices, instead of emphasizing the importance of adhering to theological principles and ethical behavior. This sentiment is seen in several passages, such as Hosea 6:6, Amos 5:21–24, Micah 6:6–8, and Psalms 50:7–23. The central emphasis on an ethical framework characterized by love and inclusivity, as well as the responsibility to care for one's neighbor, has significant importance within the teachings of in ancient Israel. The focal point is in the prophetic plea for the nation of Israel to acquire knowledge on the manner in which God wants them to conduct their lives, and, subsequently, to maintain that way of living.²⁴

MISSIOLOGICAL ASPECT OF THE ROYAL LAW

We now shift our focus to the fundamental missiological message in James. As previously stated, there is a tendency to neglect such a significant focus. It is noteworthy that James starts his epistle by directing it towards "the twelve tribes dispersed among the nations" (Jas 1:1), indicating his intention to communicate with a Jewish-Christian audience residing outside of Palestine. The speaker proceeds with his discourse by alluding to the Old Testament, specifically highlighting Leviticus 19:18. James has a strong belief in the need to ensure that his audience is aware of the perpetual significance of the imperative to demonstrate love towards one's fellow human beings. If one adheres to the principle of "loving one's neighbor as oneself," one might be considered to be acting in a commendable manner. The individual asserts that adhering to this principle is a significant indication of living a virtuous life and exemplifies genuine religious conviction, which James designates as the "supreme directive." The author emphasizes the need of actively fulfilling the obligation to demonstrate love towards one's fellow human beings as a fundamental element of an authentic expression of religious belief. While James does not explicitly mention the Pharisees in his work, his teachings align with those of Jesus, who emphasized the importance of fundamental components of the law, such as love and justice (Mt 23:23). The message that Jesus imparted about loving one's neighbor may most likely be found in the parable of the Samaritan, which can be found in Luke 10:25–37. The narrative demonstrates that the concept of neighbor goes beyond the confines of culture and religion, and that it entails love and compassion even in the face of sacrifice (Jas 2:18).

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid., 24.

²⁴ Ibid., 25.

The expression "love your neighbor as yourself" is more than just a meaningless platitude; rather, it is a dynamic summons to empathy and constructive participation. It entails a realization of shared humanity, as well as the need to take into consideration the well-being of others in the same serious manner as one's own. Köstenberger contends that the definition of "neighbor" encompasses more than mere geographical closeness, placing an emphasis on the sense of shared identity and duty.²⁵ This principle encourages people to go beyond their own interests in order to cultivate a society in which every member makes an active contribution to the health and happiness of their fellow members. In addition, this precept echoes a fundamental theological reality known as the *imago Dei*, which is the notion that every single human being carries the image of God inside themselves. Therefore, loving one's neighbor entails recognizing the divine spark that is inside every individual, reaffirming the interconnectivity of all people.²⁶

The verse James 2:8, "If you really fulfill the Royal Law according to the scripture, 'you shall love your neighbor as yourself, you are doing well,'" echoes the timeless ethical imperative articulated in Leviticus 19:18. James builds upon this foundational principle, emphasizing its practical application within the Christian community and how it should be played out in the world.²⁷

The ethical concord between faith and active love is further emphasized by James' juxtaposition of faith and deeds. True religion, he argues, is shown in actions, especially those motivated by compassion for one's neighbor. The missiological component of religion is concretely shown in acts of mercy, justice, and compassion, rather than in an intangible idea which reveals congruency and continuity of ethical teaching that promotes a missiological thread from the Old to the New Testament.²⁸

CONCLUSION

The epistle of James introduced a missionary technique that emphasizes the significance of a faith that is shown through actual actions. The manifestation of faith is in the daily lives of those who adhere to a certain religious or spiritual belief system. Faith is not only a matter of affirming a set of beliefs, but rather a powerful catalyst for change that needs to be shown expressively through concrete deeds, such as displaying compassion towards those who are marginalized and powerless. James emphasizes the need of social justice and fairness within the Christian community. He offers a critical analysis of favoritism and prejudice, advocating for a communal framework that embodies the principles of divine love via equitable and empathetic engagements. Furthermore, James demonstrates a strong connection between the missiological subject and his concern for those who are impoverished and oppressed. The epistle presents a call to action for those who have religious beliefs to actively demonstrate compassion towards people who are in disadvantaged circumstances. This call to action is rooted in a complete understanding of the concept of mission, which encompasses both the act of spreading religious teachings and engaging in social initiatives. James argues for the amalgamation of faith and works, emphasizing the notion that genuine faith is manifested via tangible actions.²⁹ This aligns with a missiological perspective that sees mission as including not just the act of proclaiming, but also engaging comprehensively with the needs of all people and communities. Similarly, the missiological framework of James may be seen via emphasizing the significance of ethical conduct as a potent means of bearing testimony. Christians are tasked with the responsibility of serving as representatives of Christ by means of their behavior, and in doing so, aiding in the purpose of exemplifying God's attributes throughout the global community. In essence, James emphasizes the need for the community of faith to demonstrate resilience when faced with

²⁵ Andreas Köstenberger, *A Theology of John's Gospel and Letter* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013), 23.

²⁶ Gordon J. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 202.

²⁷ Glenn E. Schaefer, *Love Your Neighbor as Yourself*, Baker Theological Dictionary of the Bible (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996), 494-95.

²⁸ Douglas J. Moo, *The Letter of James*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 123.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 125

challenges and barriers in their pursuit of the *missio Dei*. He sees hardships as occasions that foster spiritual growth and the concept of resilience and significance within a missiological framework.

It appears that James does not present a clear concise methodical approach to missions. But the practical and ethical aspects of his letter provide an integrated faith and works approach, with concern for the vulnerable that reaches out to those who are lost, hopeless and in need of the good news.

In the backdrop of a global society that is becoming more diverse, our continued demonstration of love for our fellow humans is a response to the divine call for us preach the good news to all, thus carrying the mission mandate to the entire world. It is possible for people to learn that the God they worship is not only present in the kind acts they do for their neighbors, but also that God joyfully expects them to be present and participate in the missiological call for believers to reach out with the love of God to their neighbors whenever and wherever they are found.

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