

James – A Portrait of Living Faith

Memory Challenge: James Chapter 1: 1-18...

Lesson 15-Patient Endurance

James 5:7-12

The virtue of patience is probably not on the top of the list of your most admirable qualities. Yet scripture says that patience and forbearance are a fruit of the Spirit and are essential for a blessed life.

I. Be Patient, Anticipating the Lord's Soon Return (v. 7-9)

James urges patience until the Lord returns then gives a familiar example and commends the farmer who patiently waits through the long months between the early and later rains for the land to yield its valuable crops (5:7). Since the Lord's return is soon, believers must wait on Him as surely as the farmer waits upon the rain.

In verse 9, James cautions his readers not complain amidst their trials but to patiently persevere and endure them.

II. Examples of Patience of the Prophets and Job (v. 10-11b).

The rejection of God's spokesmen (the Prophets of Old) is a familiar scene in the history of Israel. Jesus denounced the Pharisees as the sons of those who murdered the prophets (Matt. 23:31). And Jesus described Jerusalem as the city who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her (Matt. 23:37).

James offers Job as a second model of patience in verse 11b, saying: "***you have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings.***" Job was steadfast and persevered through his enormous trials.

III. The Lord's Blessing, Purpose and Character (v. 11a,c).

God blesses those who endure trials, as they are the objects of His divine favor.

Those who will receive the greatest blessings in the life to come are those who have endured the greatest suffering in the present world (Matt. 20:20-23). The hope of blessing now and in the future glory should motivate suffering Christians to patient endurance.

Believers can take comfort in the indisputable truth that ***the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful***. Those who suffer, elicit a response from God in His merciful and love.

IV. Maintain the Virtue of Honesty (v. 12)

But above all, my brethren, so not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath; but you yes is to be yes, and your no, no, so that you may not fall under judgment.

The sins of the tongue involving deception and lies is all too common for fallen mankind. The result of basic dishonesty has led men to impose oaths (swearing) to invoke them to speak the truth and to keep their promises.

Verse 12 is seen as a final word on the proper response to trials, as James further instructs his readers to be on guard when tested not to invoke God's name and so curse Him in response to our circumstances. To take a vow or to swear against God is an extreme manifestation of impatience.

Conclusions:

This passage offers many reasons to persevere in the faith. James reminds us that the Lord is coming soon. He is the righteous judge who is standing at the door, ready to make all things right. James reminds us of the sufferings and patience of righteous Job and the prophets who went before us and persevered under severe trials. Yet above all James takes us to the heart of God, whose character abounds in compassion and mercy for His children. He encourages us to persevere and endure with patience, despite the adversities that God brings our way. In doing so we are being more and more conformed into his image and are experiencing the sufferings of Christ where we can best know Him and where we will receive His greatest blessings in this world and the next.