 **Practicing Patience - James 5:7-12**

Do you ever wonder when it will be your turn? Do you look at successful people and wonder, “Why are they so successful and I’m not?” Do you ever get tired and want to complain? I would say we all feel this way sometimes and these moments are critical for our walk for the Lord. Do we trust in the Lord and remain patient even though our circumstances aren’t what we would want, or do we grumble and complain and envy in our heart? I think we know the answer, but this passage of James gives us four examples of patience and two warnings that will help solidify our belief and trust in God’s will for us in this matter.

1. Read the passage on your own
2. If you are in a group have someone read it out loud or read it aloud together

**Bible Study Methods:**

**Observation** – **Make a list**. What do you see that stands out in the passage? Look for key words or phrases, comparisons or contrasts, and spiritual qualities of a follower of Jesus.

 **Example #1 – The Farmer (vv 7-8)**

If you have ever grown anything then this is pretty simple: reaping a harvest does not happen overnight. A seed takes time to grow into the fruit or vegetable. If you reap too soon the harvest is not ready and it will not be the best. James uses this example in these two verses.

**Verse 7:** James states to the reader that they need to be patient until the coming of the Lord. They were oppressed, and as we have seen, the poorer believers were discriminated against. They were tired of it and James was aware of it. He encouraged them that the best harvest (Heaven/Eternal Life) was still to come and to be patient. This is where James uses the example of the farmer.

**James 5:7, *“****Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains.”*

**Digging Deeper: *What are the early and late rains? –*** James references the early and late rains to point out the time in which the Jewish farmers had to wait to harvest their crop. The early rain falls in October & November which softens the ground for planting. It is not until after the late rain in March & April that the farmers were able to reap their harvest. This was a 5-6 month waiting period but worth it when spring harvest came.

**Verse 8:** James encourages the believers to utilize this period of waiting on the Lord to ***“Establish your hearts.”*** This means to solidify their commitment and conviction in Christ Jesus. For the believer, the time between our second birth in becoming children of God to the point of our death should be a time of growth and development in our faith in Jesus. As we become convinced in Jesus, we can withstand persecution and temptation as we await either the return of Jesus or our death on this earth which ushers us into eternity with Him. We must not be wasteful with the time we have.

 **Warning #1 – Don’t Complain (v. 9)**

In verse 9, James interjects a warning to the believers reminding them against the danger of complaining:

***James 5:9****, “Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door.”*

Complaining is a sin. It is a sin that I believe is often overlooked but has consequences:

* **The people complained to Moses that because of Him and His talk of a promise land, Pharaoh made things worse for them** – **Exodus 5:1-22**
* **The people complained about being hungry; God gives them Manna – Exodus 16:1-4**
* **The people complained about being thirsty – Exodus 17:1-4**
* **Miriam and Aaron complain about Moses’ leadership – The Lord curses Miriam with leprosy – Numbers 12:1-12**
* **The people complained about how difficult it looked to conquer the giants in the land, so they *refused* to enter the Promise Land - Numbers 14:1-10**
* **The people complained against God and Moses – Numbers 21:4-5 – God finally brings the solution – The fiery serpents to bite them – He shows them the depth of their sin-nature.**

**Philippians 2:14**, *“Do everything without grumbling or arguing”*

James mentions this because the Judge is standing at the door. Part of the return of Christ will be judgement. For they believe it will not determine Heaven or Hell because that was determined by Jesus on the cross. However, our lives will be judged, and we can lose rewards for our actions in this life. James warns against this loss of rewards by telling the believers to not complain because it is a sin and shows a lack of gratitude towards God who is our provider.

 **Example #2 – The Prophets (verse 10)**

James references the prophets because these individuals shared future events in difficult times in Israel’s history. Isaiah prophesied about the coming Messiah whom He did not get to see in his life and end time events. Jeremiah prophesied about coming judgement and called Judah to repent. This led him into prison and almost dead. Many of the prophets we know had to endure the persecution that came with sharing an unpopular message. Many were threatened, persecuted, and killed. This required great patience.

 **Example #3 – Job (verse 11)**

The life of Job is fascinating and a great case for showing patience during suffering. Having been prosperous, Job has his entire life leveled with the death of his kids, loss of all his employees and property, all his possessions gone. Yet Job had his relationship with God and even through all of the pain he never cursed God. James uses the word “steadfast.” Just like in verse 8 where he says to establish their hearts, this is the result: a steadfast, unmovable spirit in the face of difficulties.

 **Example #4 – God (verse 11)**

James references the Lord’s character of compassion and mercy when dealing with a sinful people. We do not deserve either from the Lord.

# **Lamentations 3:22-24, “***Through* the Lord’s mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. *They are* new every morning; Great *is* Your faithfulness.”

* **2 Peter 3:9**, *“The Lord is not slow concerning his promise, as some count slowness; but is patient toward you,* ***not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”***

 **Warning #2 – Don’t make false oaths (verse 12)**

Lacking patience will lead you to make hasty and impulsive decisions. Jesus warns against making these types of oaths in Matthew 5:33-36 & Matthew 23:16-22. The point being is that we should not swear oaths on the name of the Lord or any other name because this is binding. We shouldn’t try to negotiate a better life. We need to be patient and steadfast in our faith in the Lord and allow His perfect will to unfold. Our responsibility is to be honest people who say “yes” and “no” and represent people of faith to a lost and dying world. To do otherwise welcomes God’s judgement.



**Talking it over - Group Study:** What are things in which we lack patience? How do we act when we get impatient?



**Interpretation – Ask a Question:** What is the author’s main intent or purpose of the passage?

* Ask a question about a word or an idea that you do not understand.



**Application – Put into practice**

* Think of a person that needs to go through this study.
* How can this study impact your relationship with others and with the Lord?



**Praying it through –** Take a moment to ask God to bring to light areas where you are not practicing patience but rather complaining. Confess that sin to God and ask Him to help show you in His word where you can learn and grow in that area. Pray for opportunities to live out your faith to your lost neighbors.



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