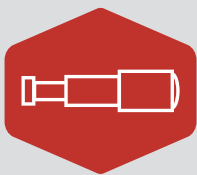




## Lesson 12: Don't Be Driven by Stuff; Be Patient

**Main Idea:** This passage contains a message from God, that your time is in His hands. All you do is conditioned by His will. Whatever you have done, you are answerable for, including injustice, which you have the opportunity to correct in your heart and life. In this lesson, you will learn how the rich will be called into account one day. James pronounces judgment on the wicked rich while encouraging the righteous poor who are enduring mistreatments. Chasing after material things may cost you priceless relationships with people. In deciding between things or people, Jesus always chooses people.

**Scripture:** James 5:1-11



### The Author's Lens (Spyglass)

*What did the Scripture mean to the original author and audience? As you explore information on the author, content, culture, history, land, and language of the Bible, you will gain a better understanding of the intended message of God's Word.*

James 5:1-6 has an Old Testament prophetic flair to it. These verses offer a glimpse of a social structure that is distinctly non-American. James describes the land of Judea in biblical days. There is no middle class. A handful of people control 90 to 95 percent of the wealth in the country. James is addressing this aristocratic group. In his day, wealth was made up of four things—food, clothing, metals (silver and gold), and livestock. James reminds the aristocracy that food spoils, moths destroy clothes, and metals corrode. James uses strong language for those who have placed much hope in riches at the expense of valuing other people.

Next, James challenges believers with three exhortations concerning patience. First, we are to be patient until the Lord’s coming. Second, believers are to be patient in the face of suffering. Third, those who patiently endure will be blessed. Whenever people feel the pressures of life, they tend to stray from the command to love others. James uses illustrations from agricultural to help drive home what it means to wait patiently, even when life is difficult. Part of patience is learning to strengthen your heart. In biblical times, the heart was understood as the seat of all aspects of one’s inner life. James encourages believers to stand firm in their heart because the day of Christ’s return is near. You are live in expectation of that day. Furthermore, God’s blessings await those who endure.

Some scholars believe that this is a general word to the body of Christ, perhaps warning of the judgment of God. Others seem to suggest that this prophetic word was fulfilled after the Romans destroyed Jerusalem.

Remember, James writes to the twelve tribes of Israel that had been scattered by persecution. They had lost most of their possessions and were forced to flee Jerusalem. Most of the work they could find was in the fields. Rich landowners cheated them of their wages. Although this section was written about rich pagans, James did not expect them to read his letter. His purpose was to comfort the persecuted believers and encourage them to be patient until the Lord comes, at which time He would judge the rich.



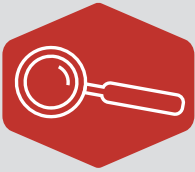
### **My Lens (Eyeglasses)**

*What does this Scripture say to you? Through completing the reading assignments below, you will better understand what God’s Word is saying to you.*

James calls Christians to have a sense of social responsibility, but the Christian solution to social injustice is not a gospel of liberation. In fact, James does not even present a solution except to say to the wealthy, “In that day, God is going to hold you responsible for how you treat the poor.” He’s going to hold everyone accountable. Consider these statements:

- The things you hoard will not sustain you through this life (5:1-4).
- God will hold you accountable for how you use the wealth you have (5:3).
- You should use your wealth as God would have you use it (5:4).

- You should not live a life that totally satisfies yourself and forget all duty to your fellow man (5:5).
- You should not live a life that oppresses the innocent (those who can't defend themselves) (5:6).
- You should maintain an attitude of patience while suffering injustices (5:7-8).
- At Christ's coming, wrongs will be righted, and believers will be rewarded for faithfulness to Christ (5:8).
- God will judge you for your complaining (5:9).
- Jesus is waiting for the signal from the Father to come back (5:9).
- You need to endure suffering with patience and perseverance (5:10-11).



### **The Holy Spirit Lens (Magnifying Glass)**

*How can the Scripture apply to your life? By listening to the Holy Spirit's leading as you answer this series of questions, you can gain useful insights that will help you apply the truth of God's Word to your daily life.*

### **Application:**

- Write down your answer to the following questions here or in your journal:
  - » Who appears in this passage?
  - » Where is this passage taking place?
  - » When is this passage occurring?
  - » Why is this passage important?
  - » What is happening in this passage?

- » How does this passage apply to my life?
- Circle and write down any reoccurring words in this passage.
  - Four times in verses 7-11, you are called to patience. Two times in verse 11, you are called to perseverance. In your own words, how does James want you to be like a farmer, prophet, and Job?
  - Read James 5:3-6. What are the four sins listed?
  - Contrast the above verses with Matthew 6:19-21. What can you learn?
  - As a believer, what are some things you should sacrifice in order to help others?





### Using My *FireBible*

*Read the study notes for the following verses in the Fire-Bible and answer the accompanying questions.*

- James 5:1. What should the Christian attitude be toward possessions?
  
- James 5:7. What are two characteristics of patience?
  
- What does patience give to you as you interact with people?
  
- James 5:11. What does the word “steadfast” mean?
  
- How is perseverance developed?