

BELIEVE

WISDOM FROM JAMES FOR THE WAR CALLED LIFE

GROUP NOTES, WEEK 6

OPENING QUESTION

What's something that you've really had to persevere to achieve?

SCRIPTURE

Read James 5

BIG IDEAS

As we conclude our study in the book of James, the pastor of the Jerusalem church ends with an admonition to remain faithful, even though there are so many things that distract us. In short, **gospel faith is expressed in faithfulness**. The world, our enemy, and our flesh offer us three faith-killers that threaten to destroy us:

Faith-Killer 1: Money

In vv. 1-6, James hits "the rich" right on the nose. Here he's not talking about wealthy Christians, but the worldly rich who oppress God's people. When you have money, it's just really easy to lose faith. Why? Because material wealth creates a feeling of sufficiency and strength. The horrible irony of living for wealth is that, in the end, it consumes you (v2). But, for many of us, the temptation to gain wealth kills our faithfulness because "you cannot serve two masters. You will either love one and hate the other, or love the other and hate the one..." (Matt. 6:24).

>>Re-read vv.1-6. *What are the "wealthy" doing with their money for which James is rebuking them? How do you need to repent in the ways you use wealth?*

Faith-Killer 2: Quitting

Persevering with God is hard, and there are many times we feel tempted to quit. "This church just wants my money," or, "they always need me to serve," or, "No one understands me." Simply put, bearing fruit in ministry, in relationships, and in our own character is hard. It can take a really, really long time. The one thing our enemy wants us to do is quit. and James reminds us to persevere.

>>Re-read vv. 7-12. *What areas does James outline over which we often feel tempted to quit? Of these (ministry fruit, relationships with believers, and personal virtue) which one do you feel most tempted to quit on? How are you going to resist that temptation?*

Faith-Killer 3: Undisciplined Spirituality

In the final passage, James tells us to pray, to worship, to get prayer, to repent ... basically to go through all the emotions and experiences of life before God. This means he wants that imaginary wall between sacred "church stuff," and secular "world stuff" to come crashing down. In order to live a life of gospel faith, we must act out in gospel faithfulness. We must pray, worship, repent, gather, and all the other disciplines that Jesus asks of us.

>> Re-read vv. 13-20. *What practices does James outline that you really love? With which ones do you struggle? How can the community help you with this?*

Here is the good news of the gospel: Jesus kills the faith killers. Jesus, who had all wealth, let go of it to prove his faithfulness to us and invite us to trust him. Jesus, who had ever reason to quit on us, never did. He is the faithful friend, true older brother, and trustworthy savior. Jesus, who felt all the stress of redeeming the world, lived his whole life before God. He prayed, worshipped, cried, and stayed connected to spiritual family. Worldliness and unbelief start with a feeling – a feeling that we should quit, should horde, should "take a break from God." Jesus had all those feelings. He overcame them, and has sent his Spirit to help us overcome them too, and shed his blood to forgive us as we struggle on.

PRAY

As you pray today, take a moment to deeply search your heart. What faith-killers are threatening you today?