

James 5:7-12 Persevere In Trials To The End

James now returns to the overall theme of the epistle, proven character through testing. He has expounded the three commands of 1:19 and applied them to the needs and problems of the readers. He now gives three examples of patient endurance.

Example One – The Farmer – 5:7-9

Verse 7

Therefore be patient brethren – James now clearly moves back to the theme of endurance (1:3-4).

Until the coming of the Lord – The certainty of Christ’s return should always comfort us.

Behold the farmer:

He waits – No crop appears overnight.

He is patient – He trusts that in time the seed will sprout.

He relies on God – He has no control over the early or late rain.

Only God controls the weather.

Verse 8

You too be patient – Remember the farmer and realize that there are seasons to the spiritual life also.

Strengthen your hearts – The word translated strengthen means ‘to make stable’, ‘to plant firmly’, ‘to render constant’. It is the same word used in 1 Thessalonians 3:2 and 3:13.

The coming of the Lord is at hand – How could the coming of the Lord be at hand when James wrote this? The reality is that the coming of the Lord is *always at hand* because there is no prophetic event that must occur before He returns for His church in the rapture. The Lord’s return should always be an encouragement to us and a motivation to *strengthen our hearts*.

Verse 9

Do not complain, brethren, against one another – If our hearts are established we will not ‘groan’ or ‘sigh’ against one another.

That you...may not be judged – Impatience with God will result in impatience with our brethren, and this is a sin that God will judge.

The Judge is standing right at the door – This is the third reference to Christ’s imminent return in these three verses. It is a reminder of the Judgment Seat already mentioned in 2:12-13.

Example Two – The Prophets – 5:10

Verse 10

An example of suffering and patience – (Matthew 5:10-12) The prophets suffered because *they spoke in the name of the Lord*. Paul tells us in 2 Timothy 2:12, “*And indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.*” We must remember, the will of God will never lead us where the grace of God cannot keep us! Paul reminds us in Romans 15:4, “*For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.*” We would do well to study the lives of the prophets.

Example Three – Job – 5:11-12

Verse 11

We count those blessed who endured – You cannot endure unless there is a trial in your life. If we want the blessing we must be ready to endure.

The endurance of Job – It is difficult to find a greater example of suffering than Job. Job did not know that he was under direct attack by Satan and yet he endured even when his friends and even his wife turned against him. Job was certain of the character of God even though he did not understand why all the bad things were happening to him. Listen to Job’s heart:

“*Though He slay me, I will hope in Him...*” 13:15

“*He knows the way I take; when He has tired me, I shall come forth as gold.*” 23:10

“*And as for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will take His stand on the earth.*” 19:25

The outcome of the Lord’s dealings – We can be confident that the outcome of the Lord’s dealings are good (Romans 8:28).

The Lord is full of compassion and is merciful – When you find yourself in the furnace, go to the throne of grace (Hebrews 4:14-16) and remember that His grace is always sufficient (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Verse 12

Do not swear – It is easy to say things or make bargains with God when we are going through trials. The principle is that a believer with integrity only needs to say ‘yes’ or ‘no’ and people will believe him. Clearly James is thinking of Matthew 5:33-37. We will give an account at the Judgment Seat of Christ.