

James 5:1-8
“Humility in Action, Part Two”
June 14, 2026

James 4:10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

Vv 11-12 Humility in treating our Christian brothers and sisters

Vv 13-16 Humility in treating our life plans

Today: **5:1-6** Humility in the management of wealth

5:7,8 Humility when wronged

V 1 Very likely addressed to the “rich” as a group, believers and unbelievers alike; the truths apply to both sets. It’s likely that James’s audience included rich Jews who were exploiting their fellow Jews.

“rich” “having an abundance of earthly possessions that exceeds normal experience” (BDAG). This is somewhat SUBJECTIVE and relative to one’s group. Miseries are coming to the rich whom James is describing in this passage. And, they should be weeping and howling.

V 2 “riches” = abundance; since “corrupted,” or rotted, might refer to consumables, such as food and drink. “Garments” were the prominent means of displaying wealth for all the world to see. All of these are temporary.

V 3 “corroded” = “tarnished” Gold and silver that are tarnished are *unused*; the idea seems to be that of hoarding, keeping back more than you need; treating wealth not like a tool for living and for doing good, but as an asset to be accumulated for the sake of accumulation. See **Proverbs 25:16**. Our hoarding mentality toward wealth will consume us. We are in the last days. See **2 Timothy 3:1ff**.

Matthew 6:21 “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Hoarded wealth tricks you with a false sense of security, sufficiency, influence, and independence. See **1 Timothy 6:7ff** and **Luke 12:15**.

V 4 “fraud” = the idea of never intending to give it to them

See **Deuteronomy 24:14**. The OT principles of God’s dealing with men are applicable to us today. The stolen wages cry out, and God hears the cries of those unjustly treated. It should be sobering to realize that one rich person who mistreats a voiceless laborer gets the attention of the LORD of Armies!

V 5 “lived in pleasure” = “reveled”; “luxury”= spoiled; excessive comfort. The individual living the soft life of luxury and ease, without regards to God’s plan for his or her life, is, in effect, fattening themselves up for the “slaughter.” In other words, there is a coming judgment for such attitudes and actions. Reveling in our abundance should not be one of the driving forces in our lives.

V 6 It is indeed true that withholding wages from the poor could cause them to starve to death; this might also be hyperbole, like in **James 4:2** “You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain...” It’s the same effect.

Vv 7,8 “be patient” *makrothymeo* = to remain tranquil while waiting, despite difficulties; the bear up under provocation without complaining (BDAG), not same word for “patient” in **Ch 1**, *hypomone* “abide under; endurance”. We “abide under” the circumstances that we realized God has allowed to happen in our lives; we “bear up under provocation” in those cases wherein we are treated unfairly by others.

The reason is the very soon “coming of the Lord,” His *Parousia*, “coming, or presence.” All accounts will be settled at that time. Believers will appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ (**2 Cor 5:10**) and unbelievers the Great White Throne (**Revelation 20:11-15**).

The farming illustration reminds us that we are in the middle of a long process; this life is about the sowing and the growing, not about the harvesting or the retribution.

The believer abiding in the will of God lives life with an eye toward the coming of Jesus Christ.