

What Really Matters in the End?

[James 1:9-12](#)

James, Day 5

Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation, and the rich in his humiliation, because like a flower of the grass he will pass away. For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beauty perishes. So also will the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits.

Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.

- James 1:9-12, ESV

When I was a kid, I thought *The Dukes of Hazard* was great television, and I thought McDonalds was a great place to go out to eat. I didn't know what was really valuable then.

So much of the trouble we encounter in life stems from not valuing what is truly valuable. We tend to be distracted by things right in front of us, by the immediate and the material. Whether it's the tyranny of the urgent or the snare of materialism, our sinful hearts tend to be drawn to things that just don't matter that much.

James tells poor Christians to boast in their exaltation, that God reached down in His grace to save them and lift them from sin and death and give them forgiveness and eternal life. Then, he tells rich Christians to boast in their humiliation, the fact that they are spiritual paupers in the eyes of God, bankrupt and helpless apart from the riches of God's grace.

Why does James tell the rich and the poor to boast in different aspects of their salvation? Because each would be tempted to lose perspective in different ways. The poor would be tempted to think that God was against them because they were poor, so James reminds them of their exaltation. The rich might be tempted to think they were special in God's eyes because they had money. They needed to remember their humiliation without Christ.

Then James gives both rich and poor the basis for the right perspective: All human flesh and human accomplishments fade away so quickly. None of it really matters much for long. James is making an allusion to Isaiah 40:6-8:

A voice says, "Cry!"

And I said, "What shall I cry?"

All flesh is grass,

and all its beauty is like the flower of the field.

The grass withers, the flower fades

when the breath of the Lord blows on it;

surely the people are grass.

The grass withers, the flower fades,

but the word of our God will stand forever. (ESV)

As temporary as the things of this world are, the crown of life which God alone can give is unfading and glorious. For those who belong to God and who persevere in faith by His grace, we receive the best and most lasting treasure, eternal life with God Himself. And that alone is something truly worth living for.