

1 **James**

EXHORTATIONS TO PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY

2 **Passing the crown tests**

JAMES 1:9-12

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Now let the brother of humble circumstances boast in his high position, but the rich person in his humiliation, because he will pass away like a flower of the grass. For the sun rises with its burning heat and dries up the grass, and its flower falls off, and the beauty of its appearance is lost. So also the rich person in his pursuits will wither away. Blessed is the person who endures testing, because when he is approved he will receive the crown of life that he has promised to those who love him. (James 1:9–12, LEB)

4 **Intentional Rejoicing during Purposeful Testing**

COUNT IT ALL JOY!

JAMES 1:2-4

5 **The results of testing**6 **1. I need wisdom**

ASK IN FAITH

GIVE EVIDENCE OF HOPE

BE INFUSED WITH LOVE

7 8 **Illustration from nature**

▶ *But let him ask for it in faith, without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven by the wind and tossed about. (James 1:6, LEB)*

▶ Surf of the sea, tossed about = High waves toss you up and down

▶ Driven by wind = Persistent; never stops

▶ Doubt takes you up and down like a roller-coaster and frequently challenges your believing faith

9 10 **2. Give evidence of hope**11 **James 1:9-10**

▶ *Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted: But the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away. (James 1:9–10, KJV 1900)*

▶ *Now let the brother of humble circumstances boast in his high position, but the rich person in his humiliation, because he will pass away like a flower of the grass. (James 1:9–10, LEB)*

12 **Rich and poor have one thing in common**

▶ Wealth withers like a wildflower in the hot sun. Fame will fade.

▶ The brother of low degree can glory during his trials by realizing in faith that he is exalted or lifted up spiritually and in eternity.

▶ The rich believer can rejoice in faith in his trials, that he is made low, that he can suffer loss, and

learn from it his own poverty and lowness, realizing that all his riches are but for a moment, transitory "because as the flower of the grass he will pass away."

- ▶ Both can glory in that by living for Christ, they can possess an inheritance that does not fade or suffer loss.

13 **Boasting but not arrogant**

- ▶ Here we have another command. The Christian brother of poor means is to rejoice or boast in his spiritual standing in Christ.

- ▶ This is a kind of boasting "where reality is being distinguished from appearance."

- ▶ Not arrogance.

- ▶ But confident realization that the truth of a person's standing is not measured by worldly appearances.

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14 **Why a poor Christian can rejoice**

- ▶ The Christian who is poor and of low social status must be glad [or, rejoice] when God gives him spiritual riches both now and in eternity.
- ▶ The Christians who have few possessions must feel great satisfaction when God shows them that in their hearts they are rich [or, have many good qualities].
- ▶ Their confident hope in Christ gives them a treasure that cannot be lost or confiscated.

15 **Why a rich Christian can rejoice**

- ▶ For a rich person to become a Christian, he had to humble himself – which is often hard for rich people to do.
 - ▶ *And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.* (Matthew 19:24, Mark 10:25, Luke 18:25)
 - ▶ *Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* (Matthew 5:3, KJV 1900)
- ▶ The rich Christian had to understand that he cannot place confidence in fast-fading wealth, but only in Christ's sacrifice for his eternal life with God. (Jews equated material wealth with God's favor.)

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16 **Another illustration from nature**

- ▶ The sun rises and the heat withers and destroys wildflowers.
 - ▶ A sirocco is a blistering east wind that comes off the desert and like an air blast from an oven, it destroys flowers, herbs, and grass in a few hours. (See Hosea 13.5).
 - ▶ But just the regular heat of the sun in the Middle East can destroy parched wildflowers.

17 **James 1:10**

- ▶ *For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways.* (James 1:11, KJV 1900)
- ▶ The rich Christian can rejoice in that the Holy Spirit has helped him see that riches do not bring security. So he has trusted in Christ – and not his wealth or monuments – for his legacy.

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18 **3. Love until it hurts!**

19 **James 1:12**

- ▶ *Blessed is the person who endures testing, because when he is approved, he will receive the crown of*

life that the Lord has promised to those who love Him. (James 1:12, LEB)

- ▶ We must love the Lord in order to endure testing for Him.
- ▶ Where our treasure is, there is our heart. So as we serve the Lord and endure testings for His glory, it deepens our fellowship with Him.

20 **What is a crown?**

- ▶ God gives crowns as rewards for faithful service.
 - ▶ Our salvation is not based on our service but is only received as a gift from God's grace when we receive Christ (John 1:12).
 - ▶ However, our works (service) will be judged and we will be rewarded accordingly on both the quantity and quality of our works.
 - ▶ While we cannot lose our salvation, we can lose rewards if we backslide into a life of doubting God. (This is the message of the warning passages in Hebrews.)

21 **1 Corinthians 3:11-15**

For no one is able to lay another foundation than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, grass, straw, the work of each one will become evident. For the day will reveal it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the work of each one, of what sort it is. If anyone's work that he has built upon it remains, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, but he himself will be saved, but so as through fire. (1 Corinthians 3:11–15, LEB)

22 **The crown of life**

- ▶ God blesses someone who perseveres under trial.
 - ▶ In this verse James returned to the theme with which he opened this passage in verses 2–3; both refer to "trials," "testing," and "perseverance."
 - ▶ The Christian who steadfastly endures (*hypomenei*) trials (*peirasmon*) and has stood the test (*dokimos genomenos*; cf. *dokimion* in v. 3) ... will receive the crown of life.
 - ▶ This "crown" consists of life, that is, the crown is life (cf. Rev. 2:10).

23 **Revelation 2:10**

- ▶ *Do not be afraid of the things which you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison so that you may be tested, and you will experience affliction ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. (Revelation 2:10, LEB)*

24 **What is this crown of life?**

- ▶ *The life which is promised is probably life here and now, life in its fullness, life in its completeness" (cf. James 1:4) (Curtis Vaughan, James: Bible Study Commentary, p. 28).*
 - ▶ God promises such life to those who love Him.
 - ▶ Love for God enables believers who undergo trials to rest confidently in Him.
 - ▶ Their steadfastness reveals their love.
- ▶ Some, however, say the crown refers not to full life now but to eternal life, for all true believers do in fact love God; 1 John 4:8.
 - ▶ *The one who does not love does not know God, because God is love. (1 John 4:8, LEB)*

25 **Revelation 4:9-11**

And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to the one who is seated on the throne, the one who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before the one who is seated on the throne and worship the one who lives forever and ever, and put down their crowns before the throne, saying, "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, because

you have created all things, and because of your will they existed and were created.” (Revelation 4:9–11, LEB)

26 **Crown of rejoicing**

- ▶ *For who is our hope or joy or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at his coming? (1 Thessalonians 2:19, LEB)*
- ▶ *So then, my beloved and greatly desired brothers, my joy and crown, thus stand firm in the Lord, dear friends. (Philippians 4:1, LEB)*
- ▶ The souls that we win to Jesus make up our crown of rejoicing.

27 **Crown of righteousness**

- ▶ *Finally, the crown of righteousness is reserved for me, that the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me, but also to all who have loved his appearing. (2 Timothy 4:8, LEB)*
- ▶ The crown of righteousness belongs to those who live in a righteous way so that they would not be ashamed by what they were doing whenever Christ might appear.

28 **Crown of glory**

- ▶ *Therefore I, your fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a sharer of the glory that is going to be revealed, exhort the elders among you: shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not by compulsion but willingly, in accordance with God, and not greedily but eagerly, and not as lording it over those under your care, but being examples for the flock. And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. (1 Peter 5:1–4, LEB)*
- ▶ A crown for faithful pastors who serve willingly, unselfishly, and live as an example to other believers.

29 **In a nutshell**

- ▶ Asking for wisdom with faith (James 1:6–8), hope (vv. 9–11), and love (v. 12) brings not only the blessing of wisdom but also the blessing of winning.
- ▶ To have the right attitude in trials, one must see the advantage of trials.
- ▶ But if it is difficult to see the advantages, one can ask for wisdom and, if one asks correctly, God will give him the right attitude in trials.
- ▶ He can rejoice in trials (v. 2) and be blessed (v. 12) and be a blessing to others by enduring them.

30 **For next time**

- ▶ James explains to us the steps from temptation to sin
- ▶ James gives us 3 keys to overcoming temptation
- ▶ We all need this message ... so don't miss it!