

Jas 1:5–12 (ESV) If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. ⁽⁶⁾ But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. ⁽⁷⁾ For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁽⁸⁾ he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. ⁽⁹⁾ Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation, ⁽¹⁰⁾ and the rich in his humiliation, because like a flower of the grass he will pass away. ⁽¹¹⁾ 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. ⁽¹²⁾ 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.

1. REVIEW: What we have seen

- A. James taught us (1:2-4) that trials viewed correctly don't have to defeat us – we can still have joy
 - 1). But NOT if we just react emotionally – we must step back and **THINK** Biblically
 - a). Why has God brought this into my life – what is He accomplishing through it
 - 2). James tells us: Spiritual steadfastness – Spiritual maturity and Christlike Character

Transition: So we have learned we must *think* rather than just react – to have joy in times of trial

- A. Our thinking must be Biblical – NEXT our goals must be Biblical

2. Our goals must be Biblical

- A. We can have joy because we KNOW trials are producing great things in our life
 - 1). But what if we don't care about those things – Spiritual perseverance - Christlikeness
 - 2). What if my goals are more temporal – earthly – comfort – ease – abundance – possessions...
 - a). If this is true trials won't bring joy into our life because they produce what we don't value
And threaten what we do!
 - b). They shake our security so we will trust more in God than the things of this world
They bring discomfort to burn away the fleshly dross – bring us to an end of ourselves
 - 1a). They strip away our ease – they can threaten our abundance – our security

Point: So if Christ is not our treasure – if His plan for our lives is not what we really desire

- A. We will have a hard time applying these verses and finding joy
- B. But if our goals are the same as God's goals for us – these verses help tremendously in times of trial

Transition: In section this morning James carries on with thought of trials - adds another aspect needed for joy

- A. We not only need the truth that comes from God's Word – last week
- B. We need the wisdom that is given by God when we pray during the trial – this week

3. Outline

- A. The need of wisdom
- B. The need of faith to get the wisdom we need
- C. The need of a Biblical perspective – so important James returns to this
- D. The glorious result for those who persevere in times of trial

I. THE NEED OF WISDOM IN TIMES OF TRIAL

Jas 1:5 (ESV) If any of you lacks wisdom (**Context: When you are in times of trial**), let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.

1. V. 3 James tells us that trials come to teach us how to persevere

- A. But the devil and the flesh (especially if the trial is prolonged) tempt us to do just the opposite
 - 1). We are tempted to give in – to compromise (allow disobedience) – even to give up (walk away)
- B. Extended trials can wear us down – we may have fought well for awhile
 - 1). But now you feel yourself sinking – being overcome = discouraged, depressed

Point: James says in v. 2-4 you must cling to the truth of God's Word! By faith grab on to truth

- A. In v. 5 He adds another thing - you also need wisdom from God that comes through prayer

- 1). You need His assistance – need Him to speak to you – help you – He is your Father
- 2). He is the God of all comfort – you need to go to Him trusting Him

2. Wisdom defined in this context

The ability to view what you're going through from His perspective

3. The promise: He will give you the wisdom that you need

Jas 1:5 (ESV) If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, *who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.*

- A. If we really want to see the trials from His perspective – He will give us that wisdom
 - 1). Lord what are you trying to do here? Is there an area you are working on in my life?
Is there something I need to release to you? What are you trying to teach me?
 - 2). Many times the best way to end a trial is to gain wisdom on what He's working on
So you can deal with it – and move past the trial
- B. The promise is He will give to ALL – no favorites – generously = All the wisdom we need
It will be given without reproach – “I gave you a head! How about using it for once!”
 - 1). He will give what we need because He loves us
 - 2). That may come through opening up Scripture – coming to us personally to help – using a person
 - a). Tim – Romania – me in trial – sent an email – found out it was right when I was praying
Gave me wisdom – freed me from the trial

4. Illustrations of God's wisdom given

Paul's Thorn In The Flesh

- A. Turn to 2 Cor 12 - Paul's thorn in the flesh – was causing him great distress and discomfort
2 Co 12:7–8 (ESV) So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. ⁽⁸⁾ Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me.
- B. Pleads 3 times for it to be removed – God says NO – but then provides Paul with wisdom
Let me show you what is happening from my perspective Paul
2 Co 12:9 (ESV) But he said to me, *“My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”*
 - 1). Paul you think this trial is weakening you – hindering you from being effective
Here's the truth – this is actually strengthening you because it is forcing you to depend upon me
 - a). Paul unless I weaken you – you will never be strong
- C. Now watch the joy – the steadfastness this brings into Paul's life
The trial didn't change – Paul changed
2 Co 12:9–10 (ESV) But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” *Therefore (now that I've gained God's perspective = wisdom) I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.* ⁽¹⁰⁾ *For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. (Then he applies the wisdom he had gained in prayer) For when I am weak, then I am strong.*
- D. Paul was so naturally gifted – the temptation for people like this is to depend upon themselves
 - 1). God had to deal with that – true strength is when we are depending upon Him
2 Co 1:8–9 (ESV) For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. ⁽⁹⁾ Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. *But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead.*
 - a). That trial took Paul to the end of his resources – it was beyond what he could handle
It forced him to look away from self to God
 - b). Any trial that does that is a gift of grace – a source of joy

Point: Paul needed scripture and he needed God's wisdom for that specific situation

Asaph And Ps. 73 – see the same thing

- A. He was going through a painful – extended trial and was finding it difficult to persevere
- B. He looked at the unbeliever – who wasn't living for God – who were mocking God
Yet they seemed to have it so easy – carefree – wealth increases – popular
 - 1). It seemed like God blessed these mockers more than His children trying to live for Him
- C. This was serious – He says “My foot had almost slipped” – Maybe I'll try their lifestyle for a while
Psa 73:13 (NIV) Surely in vain have I kept my heart pure; in vain have I washed my hands in innocence.
 - 1). He was being tempted to give up – not persevere in doing what was right
- D. Until he got into God's presence – and gained God's perspective = wisdom
Ps 73:16–19 (ESV) But when I thought how to understand this, it seemed to me a wearisome task, ⁽¹⁷⁾ until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I discerned their end. ⁽¹⁸⁾ Truly you set them in slippery places; you make them fall to ruin. ⁽¹⁹⁾ How they are destroyed in a moment, swept away utterly by terrors!
 - 1). He sees the truth – their end
 - 2). He sees that God was using the trial to work on areas of his life – that he confesses
Ps 73:21–22 (ESV) When my soul was embittered, when I was pricked in heart, ⁽²²⁾ I was brutish and ignorant; I was like a beast toward you.
 - a). Beast – I was just acting from fleshly instincts
- E. With this fresh insight – seeing it from God's perspective – the trial might not change but Asaph does
Ps 73:23–26 (ESV) Nevertheless, I am continually with you; you hold my right hand. ⁽²⁴⁾ You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will receive me to glory. ⁽²⁵⁾ Whom have I in heaven but you? *And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you.* ⁽²⁶⁾ My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.
 - 1). He was envious of what the world has – the trial has dealt with that
Now he is able to say – “God you truly are enough – I'm content” – great place to be
 - a). What a source of joy when the trial can work that into our hearts

Summary: So joy in times of trial comes from applying truth we gain from reading the Scriptures

- A. And seeing the situation from God's perspective – that wisdom we gain by asking - prayer
 - 1). You in a trial today? Get your Bible out and see what God has to say – truth
And go to God your Father and ask Him to help – give me wisdom Father – He will
 - a). He may open the Word up to you - He may send a friend like Tim...

Transition: Now James says there is an essential element in receiving this wisdom – next point

II. THE NEED OF FAITH

Jas 1:6 (ESV) But let him ask (for that wisdom) in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind.

1. To gain wisdom you have to ask – but you have to ask in faith

- A. This is not saving faith – he's speaking to believers – those he has already called brothers

2. Faith defined: In this context of trials

- A. A settled belief that what the Scriptures say about trials is absolute truth
 - 1). They do come from a loving Father's hand and they ARE so beneficial – we can respond in joy
- B. A settled belief that when I ask for wisdom it will be given just like He said
 - 1). And when that wisdom is given it is perfect – there is no error in it

- C. Faith simply trusts God – His character – His purposes – His promises – His truth – His wisdom
 - 1). Faith clings to these when our flesh is trying to drag us down
When the devil is using the circumstances of the trial to tempt us to give up
 - 2). My life is being rocked – but I trust His love for me – I trust His plan for me
I trust that He is developing me – I trust His promised given to me – I TRUST YOU FATHER!

Transition: Paul shows us how devastating a failure to trust God can be – why this is serious

3. The disastrous results of unbelief

Jas 1:6–8 (ESV) But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. ⁽⁷⁾ For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁽⁸⁾ he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

- A. We think doubt is no big deal – James says it’s a huge – it effects our life in every way
Jas 1:8 (ESV) he (the one who lacks faith) is a double-minded man, *unstable in all his ways*.
- B. Faith looks away from self – circumstances to the object of faith God – His character – truth - wisdom
 - 1). It has a settling effect – it brings peace into the situation – He’s involved – He loves me
 - 2). Doubt leaves us with nothing to hold on to – no stability when the storms hit
- C. Greek word for unstable is interesting – *it is being exposed to unrest because of outside forces*
 - 1). The Septuagint (Greek translation of OT) uses this same word *akatastatos* in Isaiah 54:11
Isaiah prophesied about a city’s instability from outside forces
And described what it was going to be like – like this *“lashed about and not comforted”*
 - a). Perfect description of what James says this instability caused by doubt is like
Jas 1:6 (ESV) But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind.
 - 1a). Driven – tossed – up and down – miserable
 - 2a). Victorious for a moment then doubt outshouts the truth and down they go

Point: Here is what doubt does – it keeps loosening our grip on the truth meant to give you stability

- A. It steals the power of the promises
- B. Rips the wisdom of God’s perspective away – fixing your eyes back on the circumstances – down you go
 - 1). Like Peter – fighting well – walking on water – above the circumstances that was frightening
Starts to *doubt* the power of God who had said “Come. Walk to me on the water”
Starts looking at the circumstances – waves and begins to sink – down he goes

4. James tells us why we must deal with this

Jas 1:7 (ESV) For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord;

- A. Doubt will keep you defeated – you can’t let this monster survive
There has to be a point where you just say – I believe what God said – SETTLED!
- B. Chronic doubt is a sin that must be put to death

Transition: James now takes us to one reason why doubt may be so prevalent – be honest here

5. The two-souled Christians – the reason for doubt in this context

Jas 1:8 (ESV) he is a *double-minded* man...

- A. If you’ve ever read Pilgrim’s Progress – this is Bunyan’s “Mr. Facing-both-ways”
- B. This indicates a heart problem where faith cannot thrive in
 - 1). This is the person that has allowed competing affections in their heart
They want God’s will but they want their own too
 - 2). Their mind is divided between God and the world – God and self
 - a). While they do trust God at times – when trials come they really don’t
They don’t trust God enough to cast it all into His hands – leave it there – thy will be done

- b). They keep God at arm's length to protect their life from Him – their treasures
They trust Him with some things – but not what they really value – No-go area

- 3). This divided heart keeps them in a place of conflict – not peace – not joy

Point: The way to have peace and joy in a trial is to rest in His will – Thy will be done

- A. I surrender my life to you – I'm not going to cling to the things of this world for security

- B. But as soon as we insist on “My will be done” – that double-minded- man

- 1). Now we are in a place where we can't receive from God – we push Him away

- 2). This is what I was saying before – our goals must be the same as His to have joy in trials

- a). He may see that something must be removed – released for us to grow

If we refuse – we will not open ourselves up to the wisdom we need

Summary: The double-minded man wants God but wants his own way too

- A. That will keep the heart from opening up to God – that will keep you from receiving what you need

- 1). You will not have that stability you need – you'll be tossed to and fro

- B. Eventually we have to come to a place where we just say “You choose. Your will. I trust you”

- 1). Many times the trials are sent into our lives to bring us to that place

- 2). To convince us that our abilities are not sufficient

To persuade us that nothing in the world is stable enough to give us the rest we crave

- a). The sooner you get there the better!

Transition: So I need faith – got any suggestions what to do

6. Growing in faith

- A. You MUST read the Scriptures – you'll never have great faith without them

Ro 10:17 (ESV) So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

- B. Then ask – be honest – God help me here – I need grace to enable me to trust you completely

Remember the father whose son was being tormented by demons: Mk 9:22–24 (ESV) And it has often cast him into fire and into water, to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.” ⁽²³⁾ And Jesus said to him, “**‘If you can’! All things are possible for one who believes.**” ⁽²⁴⁾ Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, “I believe; help my unbelief!”

- 1). Jesus says “If you believe this is possible”

- 2). Great response – honest – “I do believe – but I need help to believe for this”

- a). Trials put us in that place don't they!

- b). I thought I had great faith until my son went way South – walked into the world
I discovered I didn't have enough faith for that!

- 1a). Went to God – I can't do this – I need grace to trust you in this!

At that point I started to rest – He answered that prayer

- 3). Back to our story – Jesus says “You need faith for the boy to be healed”

Father cries out “Help me to have that faith”

- a). The boy is healed – so that prayer must have been answered

Thought: I see two things we need for faith

- A. Faith needs fuel to grow – that fuel is truth that is found in the **Word**

- B. AND faith needs divine assistance to grow – a gift of grace – that is gained in **Prayer**

Transition: Now James takes us to two practical areas people deal with – Want and abundance

- A. Both of these bring trials into our life – here he is teaching a Biblical perspective

III. THE NEED FOR A PROPER BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

Jas 1:9–12 (ESV) Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation, ⁽¹⁰⁾ and the rich in his humiliation, because like a flower of the grass he will pass away. ⁽¹¹⁾ 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. ⁽¹²⁾ 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.

The Brother With Humble Means

1. Exaltation? We've lost everything! What exaltation!

- A. James is saying – you need to think Biblically – all they took was the temporal! What was going to burn
 - 1). Remember that you still have what really matters – you know Christ – you are forgiven

The Exaltation; Eph 2:6–7 (ESV) and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁽⁷⁾ so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

 - a). Raised up – to eternally enjoy the immeasurable riches of grace!
 - b). Why do we worry so much about every little thing here? Remember who we are!

Point: To the poor James says – but in Christ you're rich – don't forget that!

- A. You may not have all you want in this life – but this is so short – vapor
 - 1). You're rich where it counts – a richness you will enjoy for all of eternity
- B. You struggling financially – don't forget who you are in Christ

The Brother With Abundance

Jas 1:10–11 (ESV) and the rich in his humiliation...

1. Let the poor remember their exaltation – that will help you be victorious in trials Let the rich remember their humiliation – that will help you avoid trials

- A. IOW don't let your money make you proud – remember you're humility
 - 1). You came into the kingdom of God the same way the poor did – bowing!
 - a). Your money couldn't buy heaven – your power and authority couldn't merit heaven
 - b). You came in as a needy sinner in desperate need of God's grace

Transition: Because just as a lack of means can bring trials – so can an abundance – so James warns them

2. Don't put your hope in wealth

Jas 1:10–11 (ESV) and the rich in his humiliation, because like a flower of the grass he will pass away. ⁽¹¹⁾ 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.

- A. Money can't protect you from the scorching trials and troubles of life
 - 1). The rich get cancer – their kids rebel and get into trouble – they have marital problems
- B. So don't trust money – it doesn't have the power you think it has – it can't wall you off from trouble
 - 1). In fact if you're not careful it has the power to bring all kinds of trouble into your life

1 Ti 6:10 (ESV) For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.

 - a). Money has the power to cause a person to compromise with evil – to disobey
 - b). Even causing some to wander away from the faith
- C. James says if all you have is money – your life won't flourish it will fade
 - 1). You won't know abundant life Christ came to give – so filled with peace, joy, contentment
 - 2). For the one who is trusting in money instead of God

The blessing of Christianity – walking with God – used by God – just fades away

Thought: James is not saying that having money is evil – saying just make sure it doesn't have you

- A. When it grips your heart – it becomes an evil monster – so powerful – so dangerous
 - 1). So make sure you put God first in your finances – never forget you are a steward
 - 2). Then money is used in a way that invests in the kingdom – treasures in heaven

- a). Then watch what happens – rather than stealing your heart from God
Mt 6:21 (ESV) For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.
- 1a). Now all of a sudden money is used in a way that draws you closer to God
- 2a). God doesn't need your money – He is concerned about your heart

Transition: To the one with humble means – remember how rich you are in Christ

- A. To the one with abundant means – remember how dependent you are to Christ
 - 1). Guard your heart from depending on money
- B. James now encourages his readers going through trials to look ahead into glory

IV. THE RESULTS OF BEING STEADFAST IN TRIALS

Jas 1:12 (ESV) 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.

1. Peter tells us that trials are sent to test our faith – whether it is genuine or not

- A. When hard times hit what do we do? Continue to trust God (steadfastness) or run to sin
 - 1). I know those claiming to be believers who always run to drink – can be drugs – sex in hard times
 That's where they find their comfort
 - 2). Or they always get bitter at God rather than trusting Him and His plan – His goodness
 - 3). Jesus put it this way in the parable of the four soils
 Mark 4:18-19 (NIV) Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; (19) but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful.
 - a). The trials of the cares of this life – wealth – other worldly things come in and prove they aren't genuine – they don't want God they want the world

2. James tells those who are genuine – who remain steadfast in trials

- A. NOT PERFECTION – but characteristic of their life in time of trial – they trust God – still live for him
- B. James says look ahead – find great joy here – the trials have proven your faith genuine
 - 1). Peter says so that you know you're receiving the goal of your faith – salvation
 - 2). James says you know you'll receive the crown of life – eternal life – be in glory with God

Point: This world is tough isn't it – and getting tougher – but what is also happening

The finish line is getting closer – it is right upon this life that is a mere blip on the radar screen of time

- A. He speaks to those who had lost their homes – this isn't your home – it's coming soon
 - 1). For those dealing with sickness – look up that new body is right around the corner
 - 2). For those struggling financially – look up there is an inheritance waiting
- B. This is the hope of the Christian isn't it – this isn't all there is!

CONCLUSION

1. So James tells us how to have not to be defeated by trials

- A. Think – don't just react – what does the Bible say? They are valuable – the pain is worth it
- B. Ask – go to God you're Father – you need help in times of trial – turn to Him for wisdom
- B. Deal with your unbelief so that you can receive what you need
- D. Set your devotions on God – being double minded will allow instability
- E. Look up – the finish line is rushing at you – what a source of joy