**James, a Bible Study - Chapter 5**

1. Read James 5
2. **V5:1-6 - Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming on you. 2Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes. 3Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth in the last days. 4Look! The wages you failed to pay the workers who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty. 5You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter.6You have condemned and murdered the innocent one, who was not opposing you.**
   1. What subtitle would you give this passage?
   2. In **V1** James uses the word “wail” to describe what awaits people who pursue riches. The Greek word is *ololuzein*. Do a quick word study. What other NT passages use this word?
   3. Look at **V1-3**. How does this passage describe people who pursue riches? Do you ever see yourself in this description?
   4. What kinds of sins are particularly attractive to the wealthy?
   5. Look at Proverbs 11:28. Why is trusting in riches so tempting? So dangerous?
   6. Are there ways in which the church has allowed prosperity to wrongly affect its teaching and witness? What are some examples?
   7. Look at Luke 10:7 and 1 Timothy 5:18. How do these verses amplify the lesson of **V4**?
   8. Consider **V4-6**. Many commentators believe that this passage is really a cry for social justice. What does the concept of social justice mean to you? How has this insight affected your behavior?
3. **V5:7-9 - Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord’s coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains. 8You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord’s coming is near. 9Don’t grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!**
   1. In **V7** James uses the words “patient” and “patiently” to describe how we should wait for the Lord’ coming and then describes farmers who wait patiently. What can we learn from how farmers wait?
   2. Not only are we to be patient, but we are to stand firm in our faith **(V8)**. What does “stand firm” mean? Where else have we seen this phrase/idea?
   3. Look at **V9**. Why do you think James felt the need to include this bit of guidance in this passage?
   4. What circumstances particularly try your patience?
   5. James, like many in the Early Church, felt that Christ’s return was eminent. He uses the phrase “Jesus is standing at the door.” See, too, [Mark 13:29](https://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Mark+13:29&t1=en_nas) and [Matthew 24:33](https://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Matthew+24:33&t1=en_nas). What should we learn/believe/do in light of these passages?
   6. Why is it important that we not know when Christ will return?
   7. What do [1 Peter 4:7](https://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=1%20Peter+4:7&t1=en_nas), [2 Peter 3:4](https://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=2%20Peter+3:4&t1=en_nas), and [1 Thessalonians 3:13](https://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=1%20Thessalonians+3:13&t1=en_nas) say about what we are to/become even as we wait patiently?
4. **V5:10-12 – Brothers and sisters, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. 11As you know, we count as blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job’s perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy. Above all, my brothers and sisters, do not swear—not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. All you need to say is a simple “Yes” or “No.” Otherwise you will be condemned**.
   1. This passage seems to take us back to the opening verses of James 1:2-3. Why do you think James felt it was important to return the idea of perseverance?
   2. Look at **V10**. What responsibilities do we have to the body when we suffer? Or a member of the body is suffering? How can we help other believers who are suffering?
   3. Why does James ask us to remember the prophets and how they persevered?
   4. How does Matthew 24:13 help make this point?
   5. James then quotes the1 example of Job. Was Job patient in his perseverance? Look at Job 13:15 and 16:19. What do these passages teach us about how Job persevered?
   6. Why does James make this admonition against oaths?
5. **V5:13-15 – Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. 14Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. 15And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven.**
   1. Under what kinds of circumstances are you most often drawn to prayer?
   2. In this passage James offers us three qualities (characteristics) of a healthy Early Church. First, singing. Second, calling of elders for healing. And third, prayer. Why would these qualities be so attractive/important in Jesus’ day? Why would they be attractive today?
   3. Note V14. Who is responsible for alerting the elders to the need for prayer? Why do you think James felt it was important to remind people of this?
   4. What changes would you like to make in your prayer life?
6. **V5:16-18 – Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. 17Elijah was a human being, even as we are. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years.1Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.**
   1. **V16** comes right out of the blue. Why it is important for believers to confess their sin to one another? How would this kind of confession promote fellowship?
   2. Why does James use Elijah to illustrate the statement in **V16b**? What prayer habits did Elijah exhibit?
7. **V5:19-20 – My brothers and sisters, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring that person back, 20remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins.**
   1. What “truth” is James alluding to in **V19**?
   2. The New Testament stresses the importance of truth. In Thessalonians 2:10 we learn that truth is something which a man must love; it is something which a man must obey ([Galatians 5:7](https://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Galatians+5:7&t1=en_nas)); it is something which a man must display in life ([2 Corinthians 4:2](https://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=2%20Corinthians+4:2&t1=en_nas)); it is something which must be spoken in love ([Ephesians 4:15](https://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Ephesians+4:15&t1=en_nas)); it is something which must be witnessed to ([John 18:37](https://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=John+18:37&t1=en_nas)); it is something which must be manifested in a life of love ([1 John 3:19](https://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=1%20John+3:19&t1=en_nas)); it is something which liberates ([John 8:32](https://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=John+8:32&t1=en_nas)); and it is something which is the gift of the Holy Spirit, sent by Jesus Christ ([John 16:13-14](https://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=John+16:13-14&t1=en_nas)). Why do you think that the New Testament writers spend so much time reminding us of the importance (centrality?) of truth?
   3. Look at [1 Timothy 4:16](https://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=1%20Timothy+4:16&t1=en_nas) and **V20** in this chapter. What larger point is James making?