

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

NOVEMBER 27TH, 2022 // BOOK OF JAMES

INTRODUCTION TO JAMES

Most likely written by James, the half-brother of Jesus, to the Jewish Christians who were once associated with the church in Jerusalem.

- **One of the primary reasons to study the book of James is to examine the relationship between works and faith.** Faith is mentioned 14 times, and there are about 59 commands in the book of James.

Obedience, commands, and works are NOT acts of legalism. Because we love Him, we don't just listen to the Word, we do it! We not only find that faith works, but it's also effective in the world.

- **The second reason to study the book of James is to explore the impact of our faith on life in this city and the world.**

James addresses many practical issues: trials, poverty, riches, materialism, favoritism, social justice, the tongue, worldliness, boasting, making plans, praying, and what to do when we're sick, among other things.

- **James repeatedly shows how faith impacts not only the details of our lives but also the lives of people around us—both locally and globally.**

TRIALS (JAMES 1:1-12)

"CONSIDER IT GREAT JOY..."

This is not about a feeling. It's not putting on a happy face and pretending everything is okay. This is about the way we think.

- **We need to realize that trials are not joyful in and of themselves, but they are joyful when we realize they are under the authority of a sovereign God who is accomplishing His purposes through them.**

"MATURE AND COMPLETE, LACKING NOTHING"

This is really the ultimate purpose for trials in this passage and in the book of James as a whole. God's goal in our lives is maturity in Him and growth in His likeness.

- **Most people live to be successful: job, money, position, influence, family. When trials hit, they are easily devastated. A God-centered perspective on life changes us.**

WISDOM

When it comes to trials, there is one thing we all need: wisdom. Sometimes we don't know what's going on, can't see it for what it is, and simply lack experience.

- **God, on the other hand, possesses all knowledge, He has an eternal perspective, and in Christ, He has experienced every kind of test and has prevailed.**

"FULL EFFECT..."

We wouldn't choose them, but we do endure because, in trials, we experience growth in godliness like we couldn't experience other ways.

- **When you set your sights above the stuff of this world and fix your eyes on God and the knowledge of Him and maturity in Him, then trials will be a joy to you because they will teach you to know, love, and trust Him.**

"IN FAITH, WITHOUT DOUBTING..."

Wisdom doesn't mean we get an easy answer or that our circumstances will be fixed.

- **God says, "Draw near to Me and ask Me to help you understand why this is happening and to give you perspective on what you are going through and to walk alongside you as the One who possesses all knowledge, eternal perspective, and perfect experience."**

DEPENDENCE

James shares that trials aren't dependent on your financial, social, political, or even spiritual status. We will ALL face trials.

- **As we endure trials and depend on His wisdom, we find reward in this life (His blessing) and in the next (eternal life!).**
- **God's blessing isn't material. It is the promise of His presence in our lives.**

TEMPTATION (JAMES 1:13-15)

"HIS OWN EVIL DESIRE"

Every trial brings temptation with it. God, in His sovereignty, will test our faith, but He never tempts us to sin.

- **Satan may be involved with the temptations of this world, but the responsibility for our sins lies squarely with us. OUR sinful desires lead us to give in to temptation.**

THE PROCESS

It begins with a lie, and we somehow don't believe God. Desire is when the lie starts to look good and pleasing. Sin is when we decide to pursue our evil desire. And sin always results in death.

- **This isn't metaphorical or some kind of symbolism, and it can't be sanitized to make us feel better; CHRIST DIED.**

GIFTS (JAMES 1:16-18)

GOD IS GOOD!

James reminds us that God is good and doesn't change. And although we didn't deserve His goodness (grace) toward us, He chose us.

- **Since God is the source of every good thing in us, we need His goodness to change us from the inside out.**

TASTE THE FIRSTFRUITS

What God has done in our lives and hearts to get us through the trials we have endured is only a taste of what He has planned for our future.

- **In the meantime, we must remember that the God who has saved us from our sins will get us through our sorrow.**

WHY TRIALS

- God allows and uses trials to strengthen our relationship with Him.
- **Once we understand that God has a plan, we receive the strength to endure trials.**
- **Each trial, however painful, will be used by God to conform us to the image of Christ, and for this, we rejoice and trust Him more.**

WHY TEMPTATIONS

- God is NOT the author of temptation.
- **We can't blame everyone else for our temptation because of our evil desire.**
- **When we ignore God's Word and believe that our evil desire is what is best for us, we follow our familiar path to sin.**

OUR RESPONSE

- Are we praying for God to get us out of our trials to get us through them?
- **Will we run from the temptations in our lives?**
- **How often will we remember the God who conquered sin and death through Jesus Christ, promises to be with us through trials, and deliver us from temptations?**