

1. **Introduction**: This final section of the letter deals with patient suffering.
2. **James 5:7-12**: *Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸ You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. ⁹ Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door. ¹⁰ As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. ¹¹ Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful. ¹² But above all, my brothers, udo not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but let your “yes” be yes and your “no” be no, so that you may not fall under condemnation.*
3. **The Patience of Hope**: Christian endurance is fruitful. As faith meets and passes the tests and temptations of life, it grows, by patience, into full maturity of character.
 - Be obedient. Under testing, display constancy. Your hope in Christ will keep you on course. James gives the example of a farmer who in patience and hope labors to produce a harvest, dependent upon the rain and other factors beyond his control ...
 - Our hope is in the Lord whose return is “at hand.”
 - In times of stress, impatience often shows itself in our speech. Do not grumble against each other. Keep speech simple and truthful.
 - Patience is a mark God desires in His chosen servants (think of the prophets or Job).
 - Through His patient servants, God enriches His people. God is full of compassion and mercy for those who persevere.
 - Believers must encounter and endure the tests and temptations of life with “wisdom from above,” growing in faith and maturity of character. We are called to be patient.
 - Patience is an attitude that will see us through many trying situations.
4. **Galatians 5:22-23**: *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.*
 - Hope in Christ will keep us on course. James gives the example of a farmer who in patience and hope labors to produce a harvest even though he knows a good result depends on getting rain at the right times and other factors beyond his control.
 - In stressful times, we are often impatient. That impatience shows in our speech. We tend to exaggerate our situation, grumble and complain against both circumstances and other people. We should not!
 - We are to keep our speech simple, accurate, and truthful. James says God enriches His people through His patient servants. We should be thankful and do likewise.
 - God is full of compassion and mercy for those who persevere. Be patient. Do what you know and can do. Be an imitator of our Lord Jesus.

5. **James 5:12**: *But above all, my brothers, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but let your “yes” be yes and your “no” be no, so that you may not fall under condemnation.*
- Swearing oaths is an important issue to James, underlined by his “*above all else.*”
 - The issue is “truth in communication.” Believers are to be truthful in whatever mode they communicate so that they do not fall under judgment.
 - A believer’s attitude is to constantly be one of honesty – an honesty so transparent that, for example, only a “yes” or “no” is needed, never needing to bolster their answer with an oath or other proof.
 - There should be no need to establish the genuineness of your intent by swearing “on a stack of Bibles” that what you will deliver what you have promised.
 - Scripture does not prohibit all oaths, but it does restrict them.
 - James has cautioned that believers are to pay close attention to being truthful in all forms of communication.
 - Believers should be known for their unadorned truth in speech and other means of communication. For example, resist the temptation to emphasize truth. Don’t adorn an answer like “yes” or “no” with an oath or other claim for your veracity.
 - From being truthful and straight-forward to other people, James turns to being truthful and straight-forward to God in prayer.
 - In addition to the “physical ministry of the deacons to those in need, there is to be a special ministry to the sick in each local church. That ministry is vested in the church “elders” not in a “faith healer.”
 - A sick person must desire this ministry and ask for it, thereby demonstrating faith.
6. **James 5:14-15a**: *Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵ And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up.*
- The elders anoint the sick person, who, in faith, has asked for this ministry. They pray for the person and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord.
 - The elders pray subject to “Thy will be done.” Healing is done by the Lord!
 - Note, the “prayer of faith” is the prayer of the elders on behalf of the sick person, not the prayer of the sick person.
7. **James 5:15b**: *And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.*
- In addition to physical healing, there is a spiritual dimension of healing.
8. **James 5:16**: *Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.*
- This admonition appears to refer to healing the spirit. There is to be no prying curiosity on the part of the listener. There is to be no confession by the sick without determination to be healed, which requires being rid of the sin confessed.
 - When the motives are right, this mutual ministry of praying friends is a powerful and gracious thing that God honors.

- Some foundational truths help in thinking about the lessons revealed in these verses.
 - **First:** Original sin refers to the sin nature inherited from Adam (Rm 5:12).
 - These verses deal with our day-by-day personal sin that arises from our sin nature. (Rm 7:14-23). Original sin is the root, personal sin is the fruit.
 - **Second:** Original sin brought spiritual and physical sickness and death humans.
 - **Third:** Scripture tells us that there can be a direct connection between personal sin and sickness. David and Bathsheba sinned. David refused to acknowledge it for a time. In Ps 32:3-4, David reveals his resulting physical suffering.
 - After being rebuked by Nathan, David confessed and repented. The story is in 2 Sam chapters 11 and 12, but Ps 32 is David's personal journal of that period of his life.
 - **Fourth:** Scripture also shows that not all sickness is related to personal sin. One example is in Jesus' response to His disciples when they asked whose sin caused the blindness of a man they were just passing.
 - **John 3:3:** *Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him."*
 - **Fifth:** As seen in Scripture, it is not God's will that everyone be healed. Paul had the gift of supernatural healing (Acts 20:9-12; 28:7-9). Yet Paul left Trophimus sick in Miletus (2 Tim 4:20). Epaphroditus almost died while helping Paul (Philipp 2:25-27).
 - Timothy, Paul's spiritual son, had a stomach problem and frequent other ailments (1 Tim 5:23). Paul asked God three times to remove Paul's "*thorn in the flesh,*" but God said, "*My grace is sufficient for you*" (2 Cor 2:9b).
 - We pray, not my will, but your will, O God, be done. Our prayers are brought into alignment with God's will. When we pray consistent with God's will, there is power and effectiveness in our prayers.
 - James illustrates that truth with the example of Elijah.
9. **James 5:17-18:** *Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth.¹⁸ Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit.*
- Such prayer brings together a human agent with a supernatural result.
 - The time at which this event occurred was the reign of wicked king Ahab and Jezebel as depicted in 1 Kings 17 and 18. Elijah's prayer that there be no rain or dew to wet the earth in Israel was in response to the wickedness of the time.
 - God answered Elijah's prayer (note the prayer was not for benefit of Elijah but to draw Israel back to God) and for 3 years and 6 months there was no rain.
 - At the end of that time, Elijah confronted Ahab and challenged him to send 450 prophets of Baal to Mt. Carmel. There, Elijah challenged them prepare a bull for sacrifice and ask Baal to provide the fire for the sacrifice. They prayed loudly.
 - Nothing happened. Elijah prepared an altar to God using 12 stones, fixed the wood in place, dug a trench around the wood, and three times had jars of water poured on the wood until the wood was thoroughly wet.

- Elijah prayed earnestly to the Lord that He would demonstrate to all, who were there, that He is God who was turning their hearts back to Him.
- The fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. The people fell on their faces and said, ***“The Lord, he is God; the Lord, he is God.”***
- Elijah had the Baal prophets captured, brought to the brook, Kishon, and killed.
- Elijah returned to Mt. Carmel and bowed to the Lord. Soon it began to rain. God used drought and its end to bring the people back to Him. Normal seasons again!
- It was not Elijah, the man, that made his prayers so effective. It was his obedience to God in acting out of concern for the people of Israel who had been drawn away from the true God to worshipping Baal.

10. **1 Kings 19:1-3a**: *Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. ² Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, “So may the gods do to me and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by this time tomorrow.” ³ Then he was afraid, and he arose and ran for his life and came to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah.*

- James closes the letter expressing concern that believers pay attention to the spiritual condition of other believers.

11. **James 5:19-20**: *My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back. Let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.*

- The Christian Church is intended to be a fellowship of loving mutual concern both for fellow believers and for outsiders (Love your neighbor as yourself, even your enemy).
- We are to form a fellowship of loving concern in which each of us acts toward others as God in Christ has acted toward us.
- If we see someone wandering from the truth, then out of care for the wanderer’s soul, we are to run and help them to rejoin the group joyfully marching to heavenly Zion.
- Believers are in God’s everlasting family, brothers and sisters of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are to live our life following the rules of the Father of our spiritual family.

12. **Commentaries**:

- **The Tests of Faith**, J.A. Motyer, InterVarsity Press (1972).
- **James**, Douglas Moo, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, InterVarsity Press (1985).
- **James** (Guidelines for a Happy Christian Life), John MacArthur, Thomas Nelson, (2007).
- **James, 1 & 2 Peter**, Chuck Swindoll, Tyndale House Publishers (2024).