

Twelve Lessons

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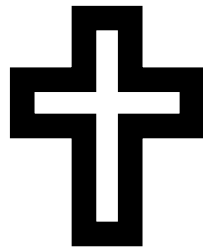
The Book of James I

Compiled and Written

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THE BOOK OF JAMES SYNOPSIS

The Book of James was written to set forth the ethical requirements of the Christian life. It answers the questions:

1. How should a Christian behave?
2. How does a Christian behave under trials?
3. In temptations?
4. In compromising situations?
5. In church?
6. With his tongue?
7. In control of his passions?
8. In planning his future?
9. In using his finances?
10. In times of impatience?
11. In times of joy and sorrow?
12. In periods of sickness?
13. In his prayer life?
14. In dealing with an erring brother or sister?

Those matters are so practical that the epistle of James has been called "Christianity in shoe leather". It tells us how we are to live.

The Book of James is a brief epistle. It has only 5 chapters, 108 verses, and 2,309 words.

The Book of James reflects the teachings of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, but shows no relation to the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke), indicating that the book of James preceded them.

James 1:1 – Matthew 5:10-12

James 1:4 – Matthew 5:48

James 1:5 – Matthew 7:7-12

James 1:22 – Matthew 7:21-27

James 4:11-12 – Matthew 7:1-5

James 5:1-3 – Matthew 6:19-21

The epistle of James is a masterpiece of Christian literature. It has several qualities that make it unique among the epistles of the New Testament.

1. Christ is named only twice, but the epistle is saturated with His teachings.
2. There is no mention of Christian missions, missionaries, or world evangelism.
3. The language is concise, authoritative, and unvarnished.
4. There is an uncompromising stand on ethical demands of the faith.
5. There is an expression of Christian affection in statements like "my brethren"(eleven times) and "my beloved brethren" (three times).
6. It is the most practical book in the New Testament and is strikingly similar to the book of Proverbs in the Old Testament.
7. It has graphic, dynamic speech. One sentence can command a duty, rebuke a fault, denounce a wrong, and crown a virtue.
8. It is so vehement in its opposition to sin that James has been called "the Amos of the New Testament".

Most of the book of James can be arranged under two headings: True Religion and False Religion.

Part 1: THE MARKS OF TRUE RELIGION

Chapter 1 – The marks of True Religion.

1. Joy and patience in the midst of trials – vs. 2-4
2. Unwavering faith and singleness of mind – vs. 5-8
3. Acceptance of the providential allotments of life – vs. 9-11
4. The endurance of temptation – vs. 12
5. The recognition of the sources of temptation and the results of yielding thereto – vs. 13-15
6. The recognition of the divine source of all blessings – vs. 16-18
7. Spiritual hearing, deliberation in speech, and patience under provocation – vs. 19-20
8. Forsaking all evil, and the meek reception of saving truth – vs. 21

9. Searching after the truth and practicing it – vs. 25
10. Practical philanthropy and purity – vs. 27

Chapter 2

11. Good works.
 - a. As a demonstration of faith – vs. 18
 - b. Cooperating with, and perfecting faith – vs. 21-25

Chapter 3

12. Heavenly wisdom – vs. 21-25

Part II: THE MARKS OF FALSE PROFESSION

Chapter 1

1. Careless and forgetful hearing of the Word of God – vs. 22-24
2. The semblance of religion, accompanied by the unbridled tongue – vs. 26

Chapter 2

3. Respect of persons; honoring the rich and despising the poor – vs. 1-9
4. Partial obedience to the law – vs. 10-12
5. Unmercifulness – vs. 13
6. Mere profession of faith unaccompanied by acts of mercy – vs. 14-16
7. Inactive faith – vs. 17-18
8. Intellectual assent to truth, without change of character – vs. 19-20

Chapter 3

9. The unbridled tongue, destructive in its influence – vs. 1-8
10. Blessings and cursings proceeding from the same mouth – vs. 9-12
11. Envy, strife, and satanic wisdom – vs. 14-16

Chapter 4

12. Unrest and unholy passions – vs. 1-2
13. Unanswered prayer and worldliness – vs. 3-4
14. Pride, stubbornness, impurity, double-mindedness, and impenitence – vs. 5-9
15. Evil speaking and uncharitable judgment – vs. 11-12
16. Presumption in arranging future business enterprises – vs. 13-16
17. Neglect of known duty – vs. 17

Part III: WARNINGS, EXHORTATIONS, AND INSTRUCTIONS

Chapter 5

1. Warnings to the rich.
 - a. Concerning future misery – vs. 1-2
 - b. Respecting hoarded wealth, and withholding the wages of the poor – vs. 3-4
 - c. Concerning pleasure seeking and persecution of the righteous – vs. 5-6
2. Exhortations in view of the coming of the Lord.
 - a. To be patient and steadfast, refraining from murmuring against one another – vs. 7-10
 - b. To follow the example of the prophets and Job in patient endurance – vs. 10-11
 - c. To refrain entirely from oaths – vs. 12
3. Instructions respecting prayer, confession of faults, and soul-winning.
 - a. Prayer in time of trouble and for the sick – vs. 13-15
 - b. The confession of faults and intercessory prayer – vs. 16
 - c. Effectual prayer illustrated by Elijah – vs. 16-18
 - d. The duty of soul-winning – vs. 19-20

THE PURPOSE OF TRIALS – LESSON 1

James 1:1-4

Introduction: Before beginning the study on James, we must first correctly identify the writer. There are three men named James in the New Testament. First is James, the son of Zebedee. Mark 1:19 states, *"And when he had gone a little farther thence, he saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship mending their nets."* The second is James, the son of Alphaeus found in Mark 3:18, *"...and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddeus, and Simon the Canaanite."* The third is James, the Lord's brother. Galatians 1:19, *"But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother."*

Many have asked, "Which James could have written the book of James?" We know that it could not have been James, the son of Zebedee, because he was killed before the book was written. Acts 12:2 records, *"And he killed James the brother of John with the sword."* We also know it could not have been James, the son of Alphaeus, because he was not the "the Lord's brother". After Jesus was born, Mary and Joseph had a normal marriage relationship with other children being born to them. Mark 6:3, *"Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us?"*

Although James was reared in the same house with Jesus, he did not become a believer until sometime after the earthly ministry of Jesus began. John 7:5, *"For neither did his brethren believe in him."* James was one of the first that Jesus appeared unto after His resurrection. I Corinthians 15:7, *"After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles."*

James was a leader in the church at Jerusalem, and presided at its first council. Acts 15:13, *"And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me."*

According to Halley's handbook, James was killed by being thrown off the Temple. They told him to say to the people below that "Jesus was not the Messiah." He cried out, saying, "Jesus is the Son of God and judge of the world." They threw him off the temple, those on the ground stoned him, and he was finally clubbed to death upon his knees as he was praying, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."

Lesson Goals:

1. To identify the writer of the Book of James.
2. To study the various purposes of trials in the life of the Christian.
3. To understand why God permits trials.
4. Acknowledgement of the faithfulness of God concerning the trying of our faith.

Definitions of Important Terms and Phrases:

1. Patience – The suffering of afflictions, pain, toil, calamity, provocation or other evil, with a calm, unruffled temper; endurance without murmuring or fretfulness. Patience may spring from constitutional fortitude, from a kind of heroic pride, or from submission to the divine will. (Webster's 1828)
2. Divers – Different; various
3. Testimony – A solemn declaration or affirmation made for the purpose of establishing or proving some fact. Such affirmation in judicial proceedings, may be verbal or written, but must be under oath. Testimony differs from evidence; testimony is the declaration of a witness, and evidence is the effect of that declaration on the mind, or the degree of light which it affords. (Webster 1828)

I. THE FIRST PURPOSE OF TRIALS IS THE APPROVAL OF OUR FAITH – Vs.1-3

A. If we can understand the real purpose of trials in our lives, we can be joyful in the severest testing.

B. God permits trials to come for two reasons: For our own sake and for the sake of others around us.

1. Vs. 3 – *"Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience."* (We do not know if we have any patience until we have been tried.)
2. Romans 5:3 – *"...we glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience;"*
 - a. The word "tribulation" here means "pressure and affliction".
 - b. A lady asked Uncle Bud Robinson to pray for her that she would have patience.
3. Acts 14:22 – *"...that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."* See I Peter 4:12.
4. Most Christians visualize living their life on the spiritual mountaintop. I can assure you, that will not be your experience. The mountaintop is a small place.
5. Stars shine in the night and can't be seen in the daytime. Spices are most fragrant when bruised.

6. James tells us what to do when we are having all kinds of trouble. Vs. 2 – *“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations;”*

C. A Christian's testimony is never greater in the WORLD than when he STANDS UP under trials.

1. Phil. 1:12,14 – *“But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel;... And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.”*
2. Earl Kelly, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Holly Springs, Mississippi, had a son to die during brain surgery. The funeral was late in the week, but he preached both services in his church. Early the next week, a man called whom he had been witnessing to and said, “You have something that I don't have, but I want it. Come see me.” That man was saved.
3. Church folks buckle under the smallest trials. God knows how much we can bear. I Cor. 10:13 states, *“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”*
4. I read where a small boy was carrying boxes from one end of his father's store to the other. His father was loading his arms when a customer said, “That's about all you can carry isn't it son?” The little boy replied, “My father knows how much I can carry.”
5. God knows the trials that you are called upon to endure. To the faithful, He gives a glorious promise in verse 12.

II. THE SECOND PURPOSE OF TRIAL IS THE DEVELOPMENT OF PATIENT ENDURANCE

A. Our Trials are Personal – vs. 3 – *“Knowing this, that the trying of your faith”*

1. God allows our faith to be tried on a personal basis.
2. The terms “your faith” shows us the personal nature of tribulation

B. Our Trials are Profitable – vs. 3 – *“worketh patience”*

1. The purpose of God in allowing trails to come our way is not to destroy, but to try us.
2. The refiner doesn't put his gold into the furnace to destroy it, but to purify it. Read I Peter 1:6-7
3. God knows how much each Christian can bear, and will not allow more to come upon them. (I Corinthians 10:13)
4. God allows trials for spiritual development.
 - a. Vs. 4 – *“But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire (complete), wanting nothing.”*
 - b. Robertson states the following: “Perfect and entire” is that which lasts as long as the testing lasts.
5. Job understood the deeper purposes of suffering. Job 13:15 – *“Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him...”*
6. Paul rebuked the Galatians because their patience wore out and they were seeking to mature spiritually apart from the refining work of the Holy Spirit. Galatians 3:3 – *“Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?”*
7. If a Christian loses his patience in the latter stages of his trial, his former crown is lost. II John 8 states, *“Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.”*

III. GOD'S PROVIDENCE IN OUR TRIALS

A. God's Watch

1. God keeps watch over his child when he is being tried.
2. Mal. 3:3 – *“And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness.”*
3. God doesn't leave his post until the testing of His child is complete. Hebrews 13:5-6 – *“Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.”*

B. God's Work

1. God permits trials not only to approve, but also to improve.
2. Job 23:10 – *“But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.”*

3. The Bible leaves no room for doubt. The Christian can expect trials. II Timothy 3:12 states, *“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”*
4. Read I Peter 4:12-16.
5. James says, “Our trials worketh patience.” There are many synonyms for the word patience: steadfastness, endurance, fortitude, and let me add one of my own, “stickability”.
6. Patience is not given to us in its fullness when we get saved. It is like the manna God gave the children of Israel. We need a fresh supply each morning.
7. Most Christians are not patient by nature. It takes the fires of trials to make them so!
8. Certain fruits will produce only under severe conditions. Apples will not grow in a region where there is no frost. It takes the cold chill of frost to take the bitterness out of persimmons. I have heard that peonies will not bloom if they have not been frozen.
4. “No state of life but must to patience bow; The tradesman must have patience for his bill; He must have patience who to law will go; And should he lose his right, more patience still; Yes, to prevent or heal many a strife, How oft, how long, must man have patience with his wife.”

Conclusion: We need to heed the abomination given the church of Smyrna: Rev. 2:9-10 – *“I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”*