

James Chapter 1 – Trials and Temptations

James 1:2-27

I. Trials and Temptations – James 1

Introduction

James begins his book helping his readers better understand trials and temptations and giving them practical ways to face and deal with them.

“Why does God allow the righteous to suffer?” is, indeed, one of the most perplexing and difficult questions that God’s people can ask. James gives no complete answer. But implicit in what James says is a conviction that the suffering of believers is always under the providential control of a God who wants only the best for his people.” – Moo

A. External Trials – James 1:2-12

The first section of this chapter deals with trials. Douglas Moo titles this section, “The Pursuit of Spiritual Wholeness.”

Here is the text for this section:

James 1:2-12 – ²Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, ³knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. ⁴And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. ⁵But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. ⁶But let him ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷For let not that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, ⁸being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. ⁹But let the brother of humble circumstances glory in his high position; ¹⁰and let the rich man glory in his humiliation, because like flowering grass he will pass away. ¹¹For the sun rises with a scorching wind, and withers the grass; and its flower falls off, and the beauty of its appearance is destroyed; so too the rich man in the midst of his pursuits will fade away. ¹²Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

<1:2> Πᾶσαν χαρὰν ἡγήσασθε, ἀδελφοί μου, ὅταν πειρασμοῖς περιπέσητε ποικίλοις,

<1:3> γινώσκοντες ὅτι τὸ δοκίμιον ὑμῶν τῆς πίστεως κατεργάζεται ὑπομονήν. <1:4> ἡ δὲ ὑπομονὴ ἔργον τέλειον ἐχέτω, ἵνα ᾗτε τέλειοι καὶ ὀλόκληροι ἐν μηδεὶ λειπόμενοι. <1:5> Εἰ δέ τις ὑμῶν λείπεται σοφίας, αἰτείτω παρὰ τοῦ διδόντος θεοῦ πᾶσιν ἀπλῶς καὶ μὴ ὀνειδίζοντος, καὶ δοθήσεται αὐτῷ. <1:6> αἰτείτω δὲ ἐν πίστει μηδὲν διακρινόμενος· ὁ γὰρ διακρινόμενος ἔοικεν κλύδωνι θαλάσσης ἀνεμιζομένῳ καὶ ῥιπιζομένῳ. <1:7> μὴ γὰρ οἰέσθω ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐκείνος ὅτι λήμψεται τι παρὰ τοῦ κυρίου. <1:8> ἀνὴρ δίψυχος, ἀκατάστατος ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ὁδοῖς αὐτοῦ.

<1:9> Καυχάσθω δὲ ὁ ἀδελφὸς ὁ ταπεινὸς ἐν τῷ ὕψει αὐτοῦ. <1:10> ὁ δὲ πλούσιος ἐν τῇ ταπεινώσει αὐτοῦ, ὅτι ὡς ἄνθος χόρτου παρελεύσεται. <1:11> ἀνέτειλεν γὰρ ὁ ἥλιος σὺν τῷ καύσῳ καὶ ἐξήρανε τὸν χόρτον καὶ τὸ ἄνθος αὐτοῦ ἐξέπεσε καὶ ἡ εὐπρέπεια τοῦ προσώπου αὐτοῦ ἀπώλετο· οὕτως καὶ ὁ πλούσιος ἐν ταῖς πορείαις αὐτοῦ μαρανθήσεται.

<1:12> Μακάριος ἀνὴρ ὃς ὑπομένει πειρασμόν, ὅτι δόκιμος γενόμενος λήμψεται τὸν στέφανον τῆς ζωῆς ὃν ἐπηγγείλατο τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν αὐτόν.

1. How to view trials: Vs. 2-4

Count, consider (Imperative!) –

Blomberg and Kamell say, “This is a verb of thought rather than emotion. James is not commanding how one should *feel*, but rather how one should *think* about one’s circumstances.

Various, divers –

And one of the first things you’ll notice is that James says, “when” you encounter trials, not “if”!

4164 ποικίλος poikilos {roy-kee'-los}
of uncertain derivation; TDNT - 6:484,901; adj
AV - divers 8, manifold 2; 10
1) a **various colours**, variegated
2) of various sorts

The trials we face are various and diverse.

I can look around the room at you and in nearly every life or at least family list a major trial you have experienced in the 12+ years we have been together. I don’t intend this to reopen wounds, but look around! Cancer. Job layoffs. Lost spouses. Difficult spouses. Prodigal children. Major disease. Handicapped children. Debilitating injuries. Abuse. Wealth. Infidelity. Chronic health issues.

Trials, temptations –

3986 πειρασμός peirasmos {pi-ras-mos'}
from 3985; TDNT - 6:23,822; n m
AV - temptation 19, temptations 1, try 1; 21
1) an experiment, attempt, trial, proving
1b) the trial of man's fidelity, integrity, virtue, constancy
1b1) an enticement to sin, temptation, whether arising from the desires or from the outward circumstances
1b2) an internal temptation to sin
1b2a) of the temptation by which the devil sought to divert Jesus the Messiah from his divine errand
1b3) of the condition of things, or a mental state, by which we are enticed to sin, or to a lapse from the faith and holiness

1b4) adversity, affliction, trouble: sent by God and serving to test or prove one's character, faith, holiness

1c) temptation (i.e. trial) of God by men

1c1) rebellion against God, by which his power and justice are, as it were, put to the proof and challenged to show themselves

This list of trials I made earlier was just the big ones. All of us have many, and likely most are going through one right now. I've heard it said that every growing Christian is either in the middle of a trial, just finishing one, or just about to enter one.

What trial(s) are you facing right now? _____

Encounter, fall into –

4045 περιπλο peripipto {per-ee-pip'-to}
from 4012 and 4098; TDNT - 6:173,846; v
AV - fall into 2, fall among 1; 3

1) so to **fall into as to be encompassed**

Luke 20:10 – “fell among thieves”

James' use of the word gives us a sense of **the external nature and unexpectedness of trials.**

Trying, testing –

1383 δοκιμιον dokimion {dok-im'-ee-on}
a presumed derivative of 1382; TDNT - 2:255,181; n n
AV - trying 1, trial 1; 2

1) the proving

2) that by which something is tried or proved, a test

This word only shows up in the NT twice.

“Troubles and hardships afford an opportunity for proving the genuineness of faith. The Greek word for “trying” found in the NT only in this passage and in 1 Peter 1:7 originally denoted the instrument of means by which a thing (e.g. a coin) was tested or proved.” – Wiersbe

Moo says that while Peter used the word to prove the genuineness of one's faith, James uses it to “denote the process of refining silver or gold.” “The difficulties of life are intended by God to refine our faith: heating it in the crucible of suffering so that impurities might be refined away and so that it might become pure and valuable before the Lord.”

Earlier I asked you to think of the trial(s) you are facing right now. What outcome might result in your enduring and seeing God's purpose in it(them)?

Patience, endurance –

5281 υπομονε hypomone {hoop-om-on-ay'}
from 5278; TDNT - 4:581,581; n f

AV - patience 29, enduring 1, patient continuance 1, patient waiting 1; 32

1) steadfastness, constancy, endurance

1a) in the NT the characteristic of a man who is not swerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings

1b) patiently, and steadfastly

2) a patient, steadfast waiting for

3) a **patient enduring**, sustaining, perseverance

“Immature people are always impatient. Mature people are patient and persistent. Impatience and unbelief usually go together, just as faith and patience do.” – Wiersbe

About perseverance, Moo says, “The picture is of a person successfully carrying a heavy load for a long time.” “Like a muscle that becomes strong when it faces resistance, so Christians learn to remain faithful to God over the long haul only when they face difficulty.”

“Unswerving constancy to faith and piety in spite of adversity and suffering.” – Ropes

“Patient endurance” – Turner

“Staying power” – Vaughan

The product in our lives from trials is patience, and Hebrews 12:1 gives us a clear picture of why we need it:

Hebrews 12:1- Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with **endurance** the race that is set before us, ²fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the **joy** set before Him **endured** the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³For consider Him who has **endured** such hostility by sinners against Himself, **so that you may not grow weary and lose heart.**

That's beautiful! And so parallels and adds meaning to our verses in James.

Let (endurance) have (Imperative! (2)) ... –

James here is demanding that we let endurance accomplish in us God's desired result.

2192 εχο echo {ekh'-o}

including an alternate form schein {skheh'-o}, used in certain tenses only), a primary verb; TDNT - 2:816,286; v

AV - have 613, be 22, need + 5532 12, misc 63, vr have 2; 712

- 1) to have, i.e. to hold
 - 1a) to have (hold) in the hand, in the sense of wearing, to have (hold) possession of the mind (refers to alarm, agitating emotions, etc.), to hold fast keep, to have or comprise or involve, to regard or consider or hold as
- 2) to have i.e. own, possess
 - 2a) external things such as pertain to property or riches or furniture or utensils or goods or food etc.
 - 2b) used of those joined to any one by the bonds of natural blood or marriage or friendship or duty or law etc, of attendance or companionship
- 3) to hold one's self or find one's self so and so, to be in such or such a condition
- 4) to hold one's self to a thing, to lay hold of a thing, to adhere or cling to
 - 4a) to be closely joined to a person or a thing

This second imperative in James instructs us to let endurance have its rightful outcome.

Perfect –

Here we see James' first of many calls to maturity. In fact, he uses two forms of the same adjective.

- 5046 τελειος teleios {tel'-i-os}
 from 5056; TDNT - 8:67,1161; adj
 AV - perfect 17, man 1, of full age 1; 19
- 1) brought to its end, finished
 - 2) wanting nothing necessary to completeness
 - 3) perfect
 - 4) that which is perfect
 - 4a) consummate human integrity and virtue
 - 4b) of men
 - 4b1) full grown, adult, of full age, mature

First, he says we should let endurance finish its work in us, do everything in us that it can and needs to.

- 3648 ολοκληρος holokleros {hol'-ok'-lay-ros}
 from 3650 and 2819; TDNT - 3:766,442; adj
 AV - whole 1, entire 1; 2
- 1) complete in all its parts, in no part wanting or unsound, complete, entire, whole
 - 1a) of a body without blemish or defect, whether of a priest or of a victim
 - 1b) free from sin, faultless
 - 1c) complete in all respects, consummate

Then he describes the outcome of endurance getting finished with us as being mature and complete. Consummate (=showing a high degree of skill and flair; complete or perfect). This second word has the connotation that all

the various required parts are together. Like a puzzle with all the pieces present, a full deck of cards, etc.

The picture here, then, is that the result of letting endurance work fully in us is that we are completely ready for our mission, purpose, assignment. We are fully prepared. We have completed the course and graduated with honors.

Lacking nothing –

Implicit in his last restatement is a warning.

- 3007 λειπο leipo {li'-po}
 a root word;; v
 AV - lack 2, be wanting 2, want + 1722 1, be destitute 1; 6
- 1) to leave, leave behind, forsake, to be left behind
 - 1a) to lag, be inferior
 - 1b) to be destitute of, to lack
 - 2) to be wanting, to fail

If we are not careful to let endurance complete its work, we will leave behind part of the lesson or maturing that God intends for us. You could have had it, but you left it behind.

Trials are not our enemies. William MacDonald says, "God harnesses the adverse circumstances of life to conform us to the image of Christ." Another commentator says, "trials are part of God's curriculum to build His people's faith."

Vaughan warns that "patience is sometimes hindered from exercising its due influence and achieving its crowning triumphs in our lives. This happens when we grow weary of trial and resort to questionable ways of extricating ourselves."

How might we short-circuit trials and not get the benefit God intends? _____

Example: A kid gets in trouble with the law and the parent bails him out and gets high powered lawyers to keep the kid from suffering the consequences of his actions.

"Sometimes when problems come we become desperate and use frantic means to cut short the trial. Without consulting the Lord as to His purposes in the matter, we rush to the doctor, for instance, and gulp down large doses of medicine in order to shorten the trial. By doing this, we actually may be thwarting God's program in our lives. And it is just possible that we may have to undergo a longer trial in the future before His particular purpose is realized in us." – William MacDonald

"Here James teaches that patient endurance of trials fits a man for doing what God placed him in the world to do." – Vaughan

On a scale from one to ten, how would you rate yourself as being prepared for what God placed you in the world to do? _____

Summary of verses 2-4:

The trials we face are varied, and while they are not joyful in themselves, we should recognize with joy God's purpose and their valuable product in us.

"The Christian knows (or at least ought to know) that his trials are a spiritual discipline essential to the maturing of the Christian life. They are designed to purify faith (3a), produce patience (3b), and perfect Christian character (4)." – Vaughan

"God wants to make us patient because that is the key to every other blessing."
"The only way the Lord can develop patience and character in our lives is through trials. Endurance cannot be attained by reading a book, listening to a sermon, or even praying a prayer. We must go through the difficulties of life, trust God, and obey Him. The result will be patience and character. Knowing this, we can face trials joyfully." – Wiersbe

Brief Rabbit Chase: How to minimize trials in life:

Trials happen because: we are human, we sin, and we need to learn lessons / have our patience increased.

We can't change the fact of a fallen world and lost people around us. And the only way our endurance can grow is through trials. But there are ways we can minimize the trials we face:

1. Stop sinning. Some trials are punishment for our sin. Stop the sinning, stop the punishment.
2. Learn the lesson God has for you. Some trials are to teach us lessons, grow our endurance. Learn the lesson the first time through. Pay attention to your trials. Milk them for all they're worth. You may only need the lesson once. And often once you learn the lesson, the trial no longer is a trial.

Paul summarized the proper perspective on trials in Romans:

Romans 5:3-5 – ³And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; ⁴and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; ⁵and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

The other day I heard someone say something interesting. When faced with trials we might think to ourselves, "My life is falling apart." But the truth is more accurately, "My life is falling into place."

2. Want to know why? Vs. 5

Verse 5 is one that is often taken and used out of context.

⁵But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

<1:5> Εἰ δέ τις ὑμῶν λείπεται σοφίας, αἰτείτω παρὰ τοῦ διδόντος θεοῦ πᾶσιν ἀπλῶς καὶ μὴ ὀνειδίζοντος, καὶ δοθήσεται αὐτῷ.

Lacks –

This is the same word as in the previous verse. Interesting the use of "lacking" to connect vs. 4 with vs. 5. This statement about asking God for wisdom is tied to the previous verses about trials and their product of pure faith, patient endurance, and Christ-like character.

Wisdom –

4678 σοφία sophia {sof-ee'-ah}
from 4680; TDNT - 7:465,1056; n f
AV - wisdom 51; 51

1) wisdom, broad and full of intelligence; used of the knowledge of very diverse matters

In this context, the wisdom James is talking about is understanding the purpose of the trial you are experiencing.

Let him ask (Imperative! (3)) ... –

If you need wisdom, then ask!!!

We naturally do this: "Why me? Why me? Why me?" That's not what James is suggesting!

"In the future, when I am tempted to ask the question "Why me?", I will immediately counter with the answer: "Why not me?" Challenges are a gift, an opportunity to learn. Problems are the common thread running through the lives of great men and women. In times of adversity, I will not have a problem to deal with, I will have a choice to make. My thoughts will be clear. I will make the right choice. Adversity is preparation for greatness. I will accept the preparation. Why me? Why not me? I will be prepared for something great!" – Andy Andrews, *The Seven Decisions for Success* (The Responsible Decision)

The "Giving God" –

τοῦ διδόντος θεοῦ

To all –

3956 πᾶς pas {pas}
including all the forms of declension; TDNT - 5:886,795; adj
AV - all 748, all things 170, every 117, all men 41, whosoever 31, everyone 28, whole 12, all manner of 11, every man 11,

no + 3756 9, every thing 7, any 7, whatsoever 6,
whosoever + 3739 + 302 3, always + 1223 3, daily + 2250 2,
any thing 2, no + 3361 2, not tr 7, misc 26; 1243

- 1) individually
 - 1a) each, every, any, all, the whole, everyone, all things, everything
- 2) collectively
 - 2a) some of all types

This shows “his nature as the one who gives whether or not we deserve it.”

“They are not restricted to certain nations, to favored classes, or to particular individuals, but are available to all mankind. **No sincere seeker is sent away empty.**” – Dr. Curtis Vaughan

Generously, liberally, simply –

574 απλος haplos {hap-loce'}
from 573 (in the objective sense of 572);; adv
AV - liberal 1; 1

- 1) **simply**, openly, frankly, sincerely

This is an interesting word. Many translations render this as “liberally” or “generously.” But rarely is that the meaning of this word. Nearly all of the time, it means “simplicity” or “integrity.”

Most likely, James is “not so much highlighting God’s generosity in giving as it is his single, undivided intent to give us those gifts we need to please him.” – Moo

Gundry connects this word, which can also be translated “singly”, as the opposite of the double-minded man which shows up in the next verses.

Without reproach, does not upbraid –

3679 ονειδίζω oneidizo {on-i-did'-zo}
from 3681; TDNT - 5:239,693; v
AV - upbraid 3, reproach 3, revile 2, cast in (one's) teeth 1,
suffer reproach 1; 10

- 1) to reproach, upbraid, revile
 - 1a) of deserved reproach
 - 1b) of undeserved reproach, to revile
 - 1c) to upbraid, cast (favours received) in one's teeth

Dr. Ralph Martin translates this phrase, “God who gives to all **without hesitation or recrimination.**”

It shall be given him –

The giving God is going to give it!

Prov. 2:6 – For **the LORD gives wisdom**; From His mouth come knowledge and understanding.

Hebrews 4:15-16 – ¹⁵For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶**Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.**

Summary:

James isn't generically saying here that if you ask God for wisdom you'll get it. The context is trials. James is saying, if you don't know God's purpose for your current trial, then ask Him! He'll tell you! This phrase is written in such a way as to denote the “hidden agency of God.” - Martin

“We need wisdom so we will not waste the opportunities God is giving us to mature.”

We need to find out from God the purpose of the trial so we will be on the same page and work together with Him toward the same outcome.

3. But ask in faith: Vs. 6-8

In verse 5, James describes God's response to prayer. Now in verses 6-8, he talks about the human side of the prayer dialogue.

An Important Sidebar: What is faith???

Faith is hearing something from God and acting on it, living like it is so.

It is not ever just imagining, wishing, or assuming that something is God's will and then expecting Him to do it. You have to hear it from God. Once you hear it from God, it is a done deal. It is final. It is certain. More certain than anything you have ever heard, been taught, or experienced. And more certain than anything you can see, touch, or feel. And whether or not it is possible is irrelevant.

EVERYONE in the Bible who lived by faith lived exactly that way.

Let's look at a few examples:

Abraham –

Genesis 12:1-4 – ¹Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father's house, To the land which I will show you; ²And **I will make you a great nation**, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; ³And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

⁴So Abram went forth as the LORD had spoken to him; and Lot went with him. Now **Abram was seventy-five years old** when he departed from Haran.

Genesis 16:1-3 – ¹Now Sarai, Abram's wife had borne him no children, and she had an Egyptian maid whose name was Hagar. ²So Sarai said to Abram, "Now behold, **the LORD has prevented me from bearing children.** Please go in to my maid; perhaps I shall obtain children through her." And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai. ³And **after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan,** Abram's wife Sarai took Hagar the Egyptian, her maid, and gave her to her husband Abram as his wife.

Genesis 17:1-2, 21 – ¹Now **when Abram was ninety-nine years old,** the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; Walk before Me, and be blameless. ²"And I will establish My covenant between Me and you, And I will multiply you exceedingly.

²¹"But **My covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at this season next year.**"

Genesis 22:1-14 – ¹Now it came about after these things, that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." ²And He said, "Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah; and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you."

³So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him and Isaac his son; and he split wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. ⁴On the third day Abraham raised his eyes and saw the place from a distance. ⁵And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey, and I and the lad will go yonder; and **we will worship and return to you.**" ⁶And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son, and he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together. ⁷And Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." And he said, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" ⁸And Abraham said, "God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." So the two of them walked on together. ⁹Then they came to the place of which God had told him; and Abraham built the altar there, and arranged the wood, and bound his son Isaac, and laid him on the altar on top of the wood. ¹⁰And Abraham stretched out his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.

¹¹But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven, and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." ¹²And he said, "Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me." ¹³Then Abraham raised his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the place of his son. ¹⁴And Abraham called the name of that place The LORD Will Provide, as it is said to this day, "In the mount of the LORD it will be provided."

Hebrews 11:17-19 – ¹⁷By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac; and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son; ¹⁸it was he to whom it was said, "IN ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS SHALL BE CALLED." ¹⁹He **considered that God is able to raise men even from the dead;** from which he also received him back as a type.

Elijah – The contest on Mt. Carmel and the end of the three year drought:

1 Kings 18:1 – 18:1 Now it came about after many days, that the word of the LORD came to Elijah in the third year, saying, "Go, show yourself to Ahab, and **I will send rain on the face of the earth.**"

1 Kings 18:36-39 – ³⁶Then it came about at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, "O LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, today let it be known that Thou art God in Israel, and that I am Thy servant, **and that I have done all these things at Thy word.**" ³⁷"Answer me, O LORD, answer me, that this people may know that Thou, O LORD, art God, and that Thou hast turned their heart back again." ³⁸Then 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. ³⁹And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, "The LORD, He is God; the LORD, He is God."

1 Kings 18:41-46 – ⁴¹Now Elijah said to Ahab, "Go up, eat and drink; for **there is the sound of the roar of a heavy shower.**" ⁴²So Ahab went up to eat and drink. But Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he crouched down on the earth, and put his face between his knees. ⁴³And he said to his servant, "Go up now, look toward the sea." So he went up and looked and said, "There is nothing." And he said, "Go back" seven times. ⁴⁴And it came about at the seventh time, that he said, "Behold, a cloud as small as a man's hand is coming up from the sea." And he said, "Go up, say to Ahab, 'Prepare your chariot and go down, so that the heavy shower does not stop you.'" ⁴⁵So it came about in a little while, that **the sky grew black with clouds and wind, and there was a heavy shower.** And Ahab rode and went to Jezreel. ⁴⁶Then the hand of the LORD was on Elijah, and he girded up his loins and outran Ahab to Jezreel.

Peter – Walking on water

Matthew 14:28-31 – ²⁸And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, **command me to come to You on the water.**" ²⁹And He said, "Come!" And Peter got out of the boat, and walked on the water and came toward Jesus. ³⁰But seeing the wind, he became afraid, and beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!" ³¹And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and *said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?"

Roman centurion – Healing of his servant, Jesus' amazement at his faith!

Matthew 8:5-13 – ⁵And when He had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, entreating Him, ⁶and saying, “Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, suffering great pain.” ⁷And He *said to him, “I will come and heal him.” ⁸But the centurion answered and said, “Lord, I am not worthy for You to come under my roof, but **just say the word, and my servant will be healed.** ⁹“For I, too, am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, ‘Go!’ and he goes, and to another, ‘Come!’ and he comes, and to my slave, ‘Do this!’ and he does it.” ¹⁰Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled, and said to those who were following, “Truly I say to you, **I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel.** ¹¹“And I say to you, that many shall come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven; ¹²but the sons of the kingdom shall be cast out into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” ¹³And Jesus said to the centurion, “Go your way; **let it be done to you as you have believed.**” And the servant was healed that very hour.

Jesus – Raising Lazarus from the dead

John 11:1-4, 14-15, 40-44 – ¹Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ²And it was the Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. ³The sisters therefore sent to Him, saying, “Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick.” ⁴But when Jesus heard it, He said, **“This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified by it.”**

¹⁴Then Jesus therefore said to them plainly, **“Lazarus is dead,** ¹⁵and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, so that you may believe; but let us go to him.”

⁴⁰Jesus *said to her, “Did I not say to you, if you believe, you will see the glory of God?”

⁴¹And so they removed the stone. And Jesus raised His eyes, and said, “Father, **I thank Thee that Thou hearest Me.** ⁴²“And I knew that Thou hearest Me always; **but because of the people standing around I said it, that they may believe** that Thou didst send Me.”

⁴³And when He had said these things, He cried out with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come forth.” ⁴⁴He who had died came forth, bound hand and foot with wrappings; and his face was wrapped around with a cloth. Jesus *said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.”

Every one of these show explicitly what is implicit in every miracle of God: They heard a word from God and then acted on it; they lived as if it were so.

And God says four times in the Bible that He expects all of His followers to live in the same way: “The just shall live by faith.”

So how can we do that?

In verse 5, James describes God’s response to prayer. Now in verses 6-8, he talks about the human side of the prayer dialogue.

⁶But let him ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷For let not that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, ⁸being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

<1:6> αἰτείτω δὲ ἐν πίστει μηδὲν διακρινόμενος· ὁ γὰρ διακρινόμενος ὅκειν κλύδωνι θαλάσσης ἀνεμιζομένῳ καὶ ῥιπιζομένῳ. <1:7> μὴ γὰρ οἰέσθω ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐκεῖνος ὅτι λήμψεται τι παρὰ τοῦ κυρίου, <1:8> ἀνήρ διψυχος, ἀκατάστατος ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ὁδοῖς αὐτοῦ.

Let him ask (Imperative (4)) –

154 αἰτέω aiteo ahee-teh'-o

of uncertain derivation; TDNT - 1:191,30; v

KJV - ask 48, desire 17, beg 2, require 2, crave 1, call for 1; 71

1) to ask, beg, call for, crave, desire, require

“There are three reasons supplied to encourage the approach in prayer: God is good to all who call on him; he gives with an open hand and without reservation; and his giving is not intended to demean the recipient with feelings that God is reproachful or reluctant to give what is for our good.”

Faith –

4102 πίστις pistis pis'-tis

from 3982; TDNT - 6:174,849; n f

KJV - faith 239, assurance 1, believe + 1537 1, belief 1, them that believe 1, fidelity 1; 244

1) conviction of the truth of anything, belief; in the NT of a conviction or belief respecting man's relationship to God and divine things, generally with the included idea of trust and holy fervour born of faith and joined with it

1a) relating to God

1a1) the conviction that God exists and is the creator and ruler of all things, the provider and bestower of eternal salvation through Christ

1b) relating to Christ

1b1) a strong and welcome conviction or belief that Jesus is the Messiah, through whom we obtain eternal salvation in the kingdom of God

1c) the religious beliefs of Christians

1d) belief with the predominate idea of trust (or confidence) whether in God or in Christ, springing from faith in the same

2) fidelity, faithfulness

2a) the character of one who can be relied on

Don't forget our in-depth discussion of faith earlier.

Matthew 21:18-22 – ¹⁸Now in the morning, when He returned to the city, He became hungry. ¹⁹And seeing a lone fig tree by the road, He came to it, and found nothing on it except leaves only; and He *said to it, “No longer shall there ever be any fruit from you.” And at once the fig tree withered. ²⁰And seeing this, the disciples marveled, saying, “How did the fig tree wither at once?” ²¹And Jesus answered and said to them, **“Truly I say to you, if you have faith, and do not doubt,** you shall not only do what was done to the fig

tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' it shall happen. **22And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive."**

This faith is not "a promise of health and wealth to every Christian – if only his or her faith is strong enough. Neither Jesus nor James intends to give Christians a blank check on which the can writer whatever they want and expect God to back it up. **The 'whatever you ask' is clearly qualified by Scripture elsewhere to include only what God has promised to give his people."** – Moo

And don't think that living by faith means that you will always be trusting God for a "good" thing – your pleasure, comfort, health, success, etc. Remember Paul when he was on his final journey to Rome. He had faith – God had clearly spoken to him about what was going to happen – and the journey required faith numerous times. But the promise of God was that he was going to Rome to be imprisoned and killed. That's not exactly health and wealth.

Wavering, doubting –

1252 διακρινω diakrino dee-ak-ree'-no
from 1223 and 2919; TDNT - 3:946,469; v
KJV - doubt 5, judge 3, discern 2, contend 2, waver 2, misc 5; 19
1) to separate, make a distinction, discriminate, to prefer
2) to learn by discrimination, to try, decide
2a) to determine, give judgment, decide a dispute
3) to withdraw from one, desert
4) to separate one's self in a hostile spirit, to oppose, strive with dispute, contend
5) to be at variance with one's self, hesitate, doubt

Wavering is positioned here as the opposite of faith.

"James is not, then, here claiming that prayers will never be answered where any degree of doubt exists — for some degree of doubt on at least some occasions is probably inevitable in our present state of weakness. Rather, he wants us to understand that God responds to us only when our lives reflect a basic consistency of purpose and intent: a spiritual integrity." – Moo

Gundry – "Doubt is not unbelief, it's switching, waffling."

"Doubting not only says something about God that's uncomplimentary and untrue. It also says something about the asker that's uncomplimentary—but true in this case."

"Doubt is pervasive. It can't be isolated. It produces instability all the way around."

Wave –

2830 κλυδων kludon kloo'-dohn
from κλυζω kluzo (to billow or dash over);; n m
KJV - raging 1, wave 1; 2

1) **a dashing or surging wave**, a surge, a violent agitation of the sea
For Synonyms see entry 5857
2949 - a wave, suggesting uninterrupted successions
2830 - a billow, surge, suggesting size and extension. So to in fig. application of the words.

Unreliable, inconsistent

Driven –

416 ανεμιζω anemizo an-em-id'-zo
from 41Z;; v
KJV - driven with the wind 1; 1
1) to agitate or drive by the wind

Tossed –

4494 ρηπιζω rhipizo hrip-id'-zo
from a derivative of 4496 (meaning a fan or bellows);; v
KJV - toss 1; 1
1) to raise a breeze, put air in motion, whether for the sake of kindling a fire or cooling one's self
1a) to blow up a fire
1b) to fan, i.e. cool with a fan
2) to toss to and fro, to agitate
2a) of the wind
2b) of persons whose mind wavers in uncertainty between hope and fear, between doing and not doing a thing

Inconstant

Let him think, expect (Imperative (5)) –

3633 οιομαι oiomai oy'-om-ahee or (shorter)
oimai oimai oy'-mahee
middle voice apparently from 3634;; v
KJV - suppose 2, think 1; 3
1) to suppose, think
For Synonyms see entry 5837
3633 a subjective judgment which has feeling rather than thought (1380) for its ground.

He mustn't expect ...

Receive –

2983 λαμβανω lambano lam-ban'-o
a prolonged form of a primary verb, which is use only as an alternate in certain tenses; TDNT - 4:5,495; v
KJV - receive 133, take 106, have 3, catch 3, not tr 1, misc 17; 263
1) to take
1a) to take with the hand, lay hold of, any person or thing in order

to use it

1a1) to take up a thing to be carried

1a2) to take upon one's self

1b) to take in order to carry away

1b1) without the notion of violence, i.e. to remove, take away

1c) to take what is one's own, to take to one's self, to make one's

own

1c1) to claim, procure, for one's self

1c1a) to associate with one's self as companion, attendant

1c2) of that which when taken is not let go, to seize, to lay hold

of, apprehend

1c3) to take by craft (our catch, used of hunters, fisherman, etc.), to circumvent one by fraud

1c4) to take to one's self, lay hold upon, take possession of,

i.e. to appropriate to one's self

1c5) catch at, reach after, strive to obtain

1c6) to take a thing due, to collect, gather (tribute)

1d) to take

1d1) to admit, receive

1d2) to receive what is offered

1d3) not to refuse or reject

1d4) to receive a person, give him access to one's self, 1d41) to

regard any one's power, rank, external circumstances, and on that account to do some injustice or neglect something

1e) to take, to choose, select

1f) to take beginning, to prove anything, to make a trial of, to experience

2) to receive (what is given), to gain, get, obtain, to get back

For Synonyms see entry [5877](#)

Gundry – “So the doubter, who because of his doubt can't be sure the Lord will give him wisdom if he asks for it, *can* be sure the Lord won't give him anything at all because of his doubt.”

Double-minded –

1374 διψυχος dipsuchos dip'-soo-khos

from [1364](#) and [5590](#); TDNT - 9:665,1342; adj

KJV - double minded 2; 2

1) double minded

1a) wavering, uncertain, doubting

1b) divided in interest

I have always made a distinction between those who are struggling against sin verses those who have made peace with sin. I think I have missed an important additional category: “Such people may not be willfully rebellious, but they are often unwilling to commit to anything and thus prove unreliable.” (Blomberg & Kamell)

In some extrabiblical literature, this word is used to describe Lot, “who typifies those who doubt God's power, incur judgment, and are a warning to all generations.” - Martin

Unstable, distracted –

182 ακαταστατος akatastatos ak-at-as'-tat-os

from [1](#) (as a negative particle) and a derivative of [2525](#); TDNT - 3:447,387; adj

KJV - unstable 1; 1

1) unstable, inconstant, restless

Literally, “unsettled, not at rest.”

Ways –

3598 οδος hodos hod-os'

apparently a root word; TDNT - 5:42,666; n f

KJV - way 83, way side 8, journey 6, highway 3, misc 2; 102

1) properly

1a) a way

1a1) a travelled way, road

1b) a travellers way, journey, travelling

2) metaph.

2a) a course of conduct

2b) a way (i.e. manner) of thinking, feeling, deciding

This word is an idiom for a person's daily life in its affairs and business.

Moo – “It is what we might call ‘spiritual schizophrenia’ that James criticizes in these verses explicitly and implicitly throughout his letter: a basic division in the soul that leads to thinking, speaking, and acting **that contradicts one's claim to belong to God.**”

Vaughan – “The unstable man is a vacillating man, **inclined one moment to do good, the next to do evil.** When James says that the doubting man is unstable *in all his ways*, he points up that it is not only in prayer that this lack of constancy manifests itself. It comes out in every area of life. **The lack of constancy in the prayer life is simply an index of the man's character generally.**”

Blomberg and Kamell – “These are people who are unwilling to let go of the world and truly follow Christ, torn between sin and obedience, reluctant to let go of the pleasures of the world for the sake of discipleship. **This description hits close to home in an age of nominal Christians who attend church from time to time, perhaps even regularly, but who refuse to let God interfere with their daily lives and goals.**”

Can you give examples of how a Christian can be double-minded? _____

4. An example of a proper perspective: Vs. 9-11

James gives us two concrete examples of trials: the test of poverty and the test of prosperity. Trials can be either painful or pleasant. (Vaughan)

⁹But let the brother of humble circumstances glory in his high position; ¹⁰and let the rich man glory in his humiliation, because like flowering grass he will pass away. ¹¹For the sun rises with a scorching wind, and withers the grass; and its flower falls off, and the beauty of its appearance is destroyed; so too the rich man in the midst of his pursuits will fade away. ¹²Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

<1:9> Καυχάσθω δὲ ὁ ἀδελφὸς ὁ ταπεινὸς ἐν τῷ ὕψει αὐτοῦ, <1:10> ὁ δὲ πλούσιος ἐν τῇ ταπεινώσει αὐτοῦ, ὅτι ὡς ἄνθος χόρτου παρελεύσεται. <1:11> ἀνέτειλεν γὰρ ὁ ἥλιος σὺν τῷ καύσῳ καὶ ἐξήρανε τὸν χόρτον καὶ τὸ ἄνθος αὐτοῦ ἐξέπεσεν καὶ ἡ εὐπρέπεια τοῦ προσώπου αὐτοῦ ἀπώλετο· οὕτως καὶ ὁ πλούσιος ἐν ταῖς πορείαις αὐτοῦ μαραθῆσεται.

Moo – “So James may intend us to see poverty and wealth as a, or perhaps even *the*, greatest ‘test’ for Christians.”

Moo – “Money and the things that money can buy, James well knows, are a tremendously powerful lure to compromise one’s wholehearted commitment to the Lord.”

Humble circumstances, low degree –

5011 ταπεινός tapeinos tap-i-nos'
of uncertain derivation; TDNT - 8:1,1152; adj
KJV - of low degree 2, humble 2, base 1, cast down 1, of low estate 1, lowly 1; 8

1) not rising far from the ground
2) metaph.

2a) as a condition, lowly, of low degree
2b) brought low with grief, depressed
2c) lowly in spirit, humble
2d) in a bad sense, deporting one's self abjectly, deferring servilely to others

This is not referring to the person’s spiritual condition; it is his early status.

Glory, rejoice (Imperative (6)) –

2744 καυχῶμαι kauchaomai kow-khah'-om-ah-ee
from some (obsolete) base akin to that of aucew auceo (to boast) and 2172; TDNT - 3:645,423; v

KJV - glory 23, boast 8, rejoice 4, make boast 2, joy 1; 38
1) to glory (whether with reason or without)
2) to glory on account of a thing
3) to glory in a thing

“It bespeaks a joy outwardly expressed as well as inwardly felt.”

High position, exalted –

5311 ὑψος hupsos hoop'-sos
from a derivative of 5228; TDNT - 8:602,1241; n n
KJV - on high 2, height 2, high 1, be exalted 1; 6

1) height
1a) of measurement
1b) of place, heaven
1c) metaph. rank, high stations

The unique privileges of a Christian:

- Standing and rights of a son
- New creature
- Bearer of the divine image
- Partaker of the divine nature
- Inexhaustible treasures at his disposal
- Provision adequate for every possible need
- Heir of an inheritance greater than any other in the world

There is real solid ground for glorifying! (John Adam)

Rich man –

4145 πλούσιος plousios ploo'-see-os
from 4149; TDNT - 6:318,873; adj
KJV - rich 28; 28

1) wealthy, abounding in material resources
2) metaph. abounding, abundantly supplied
2a) abounding (rich) in Christian virtues and eternal possessions

Scholars are divided as to whether the rich man in James’ example here is a Christian or not.

I’m wondering here if this is just purely a straw man. Were there really many if any rich people in James’ audience? Maybe he’s reminding all of his readers that there’s no reason to envy the rich – to be content.

Psalms 49:16-20 – ¹⁶Do not be afraid when a man becomes rich, When the glory of his house is increased; ¹⁷For when he dies he will carry nothing away; His glory will not descend after him. ¹⁸Though while he lives he congratulates himself--And though men praise you when you do well for yourself-- ¹⁹He shall go to the generation of his fathers; They shall never see the light. ²⁰Man in his pomp, yet without understanding, Is like the beasts that perish.

Moo – “The word ‘rich’ in fact occurs quite rarely in the OT as a synonym for the wicked. And in some of the intertestamental Jewish writings to which

James is indebted, rich people are presented in a carefully nuanced way: prone to pride, selfishness, and exploitation of the poor, but able to be redeemed and encouraged to honor God with their wealth.”

Humiliation, made low –

5014 ταπεινωσις tapeinosis tap-i'-no-sis

from 5013; TDNT - 8:1,1152; n f

KJV - low estate 1, humiliation 1, vile 1, be made low 1; 4

1) lowness, low estate

2) metaph.

2a) spiritual abasement, leading one to perceive and lament his (moral) littleness and guilt

“The humiliation of the rich, then, is a humbling of the soul, a disposition of the heart. It is the attitude of a man whose pride in material wealth has been shattered. He now knows that all worldly glory is perishable and that true wealth consists in the things that are eternal. In this new-found way of seeing things, he is to glory.” (Vaughan)

He shall pass away –

3928 παρερχομαι parerchomai par-er'-khom-ahēe

from 3844 and 2064; TDNT - 2:681,257; v

KJV - pass away 12, pass 10, pass by 3, pass over 1, transgress 1, past 1, go 1, come forth 1, come 1; 31

1) to go past, pass by

1a) of persons moving forward

1a1) to pass by

1b) of time

1b1) an act continuing for a time

1c) metaph.

1c1) to pass away, perish

1c2) to pass by (pass over), that is, to neglect, omit,

(transgress)

1c3) to be led by, to be carried past, be averted

2) to come near, come forward, arrives

“As goes the flower, so goes the rich man.” – Moo

Rises, is no sooner risen –

393 ανατελλω anatello an-at-el'-lo

from 303 and the base of 5056; TDNT - 1:351,57; v

KJV - be up 2, rise 2, spring up 1, make rise 1, at the rising of 1, spring 1, arise 1; 9

1) rise

1a) to cause to rise

1a1) of the earth bring forth plants

1b) to rise, arise, to rise from, be descended from

1b1) of sun moon and stars)

Scorching wind, burning heat –

2742 καυσων kauson kow'-sone

from 2741; TDNT - 3:644,423; n m

KJV - heat 2, burning heat 1; 3

1) burning heat

1a) of the sun

2) Eurus, a very dry hot, east wind, scorching and drying up everything

“Two points are to be noted as enforcing James’ salutary reminder: (1) the complete and swift destructiveness of the wind; and (2) the inevitability of its coming.” – Martin

Withers –

3583 ξηραίνω xeraino xay-rah'-ee-no

from 3584;; v

KJV - wither away 6, wither 5, dry up 3, pine away 1, be ripe 1; 16

1) to make dry, dry up, wither

2) to become dry, to be dry, be withered

2a) of plants

2b) of the ripening of crops

2c) of fluids

2d) of the members of the body

3) to waste away, pine away, i.e. a withered hand

Falls off –

1601 εκπιπτω ekpipto ek-pip'-to

from 1537 and 4098; TDNT - 6:167,846; v

KJV - fall 7, fall off 2, be cast 1, take none effect 1, fall away 1, fail 1, vr fallen 1; 14

1) to fall out of, to fall down from, to fall off

2) metaph.

2a) to fall from a thing, to lose it

2b) to perish, to fall

2b1) to fall from a place from which one cannot keep

2b2) fall from a position

2b3) to fall powerless, to fall to the ground, be without effect

2b3a) of the divine promise of salvations

Beauty –

2143 ευπρεπεια euprepeia yoo-prep'-i-ah

from a compound of 2095 and 4241;; n f

KJV - grace 1; 1

1) goodly appearance, shapeliness, beauty, comeliness

Is destroyed, perishes –

622 απολλυμι apollumi ap-ol'-loo-mee

from 575 and the base of 3639; TDNT - 1:394,67; v

KJV - perish 33, destroy 26, lose 22, be lost 5, lost 4, misc 2; 92

- 1) to destroy
 - 1a) to put out of the way entirely, abolish, put an end to ruin
 - 1b) render useless
 - 1c) to kill
 - 1d) to declare that one must be put to death
 - 1e) metaph. to devote or give over to eternal misery in hell
 - 1f) to perish, to be lost, ruined, destroyed
- 2) to destroy
 - 2a) to lose

“James relentlessly connects the fate of the flower to the fate of the rich person. Both can be flourishing one day and gone the next.” - Martin

So, In the same way –

3779 οὕτω houto hoo'-to or (before a vowel)
outwv houtos hoo'-toce

from 3778;; adv

KJV - so 164, thus 17, even so 9, on this wise 6, likewise 4, after this manner 3, misc 10; 213

1) in this manner, thus, so

Fade away –

3133 μαραίνω maraino mar-ah'-ee-no
of uncertain affinity;; v

KJV - fade away 1; 1

- 1) to extinguish (a flame, fire, light, etc.)
- 2) to render arid, make to waste away, consume away, perish
- 3) to have a miserable end

“The rich should maintain a lowly mind in spite of their plenty. James reminds them that the pomp of their condition is like the bloom of a wild plant, which fades away as soon as it displays its glory.” (Vaughan)

James is pretty clearly alluding to Isaiah 40:6-8:

Isaiah 40:6-8 –⁶A voice says, “Call out.” Then he answered, “What shall I call out?” All flesh is grass, and all its loveliness is like the flower of the field. ⁷The grass withers, the flower fades, When the breath of the LORD blows upon it; Surely the people are grass. ⁸The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever.

James is specifically applying this passage, which is generally warning of the brevity of life, to the rich, “because money tends to produce a false sense of security.”

Lenski – “As the poor brother forgets all his earthly poverty, so the rich brother forgets all his earthly riches.”

In the midst of his pursuits, ways, business –

4197 πορεία poreia por-i'-ah
from 4198;; noun feminine

KJV - journeying + 4160 1, way 1; 2

- 1) a journey
- 2) a going, that is: purpose, pursuit, undertaking

This outcome may catch the rich man by surprise.

Blomberg and Kamell – “Focusing on our future destiny can, of course, begin to reframe our perspectives on the present as well, as we look beyond our socioeconomic status and begin to see the world through God’s eyes.”

Read quote from Blomberg & Kamell, page 64.

5. Conclusion / Transition: Vs. 12

Here is the text for this section:

¹²Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

<1:12> Μακάριος ἀνὴρ ὃς ὑπομένει πειρασμόν, ὅτι δόκιμος γενόμενος λήμψεται τὸν στέφανον τῆς ζωῆς ὃν ἐπηγγέλατο τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν αὐτόν.

Some take this verse as the beginning of the next section: temptations. But it much more clearly is a summary / conclusion of James’ thoughts on trials.

Blessed –

3107 μακαριος makarios mak-ar'-ee-os

a prolonged form of the poetical makar makar (meaning the same); TDNT - 4:362,548; adj

KJV - blessed 44, happy 5, happier 1; 50

- 1) **blessed**, happy

The same word repeated by Jesus in the beatitudes.

This word is sometimes translated “happy”, but shouldn’t be. “Someone who is ‘blessed’ may not be ‘happy’ at all!” – Moo

“It is neither a wish, nor a mere description, but a judgment, a verdict and thus exclamatory.” – Lenski

Perseveres, endures –

5278 υπομενω hypomeno hoop-om-en'-o

from 5259 and 3306; TDNT - 4:581,581; v

KJV - endure 11, take patiently 2, tarry behind 1, abide 1, patient 1, suffer 1; 17

- 1) to remain
 - 1a) to tarry behind
- 2) to remain i.e. abide, not recede or flee
 - 2a) to preserve: under misfortunes and trials to hold fast to one's faith in Christ
 - 2b) to endure, bear bravely and calmly: ill treatments

Note the next comment below.

Trial, temptation –

3986 πειρασμος peirasmos {pi-ras-mos'}

from 3985; TDNT - 6:23,822; n m

AV - temptation 19, temptations 1, try 1; 21

1) an experiment, attempt, trial, proving

1b) the trial of man's fidelity, integrity, virtue, constancy

1b1) an enticement to sin, temptation, whether arising from the desires or from the outward circumstances

1b2) an internal temptation to sin

1b2a) of the temptation by which the devil sought to divert Jesus the Messiah from his divine errand

1b3) of the condition of things, or a mental state, by which we are enticed to sin, or to a lapse from the faith and holiness

1b4) adversity, affliction, trouble: sent by God and serving to test or prove one's character, faith, holiness

1c) temptation (i.e. trial) of God by men

1c1) rebellion against God, by which his power and justice are, as it were, put to the proof and challenged to show themselves

It is not the trial that brings blessing. It is the endurance of the trial.

Approved, tried –

1384 δοκιμος dokimos dok'-ee-mos

from 1380; TDNT - 2:255,183; adj

KJV - approved 6, tried 1; 7

1) accepted, particularly of coins and money.

2) accepted, pleasing, acceptable

In the ancient world there was no banking system as we know it today, and no paper money. All money was made from metal, heated until liquid, poured into molds and allowed to cool. When the coins were cooled, it was necessary to smooth off the uneven edges. The coins were comparatively soft and of course many people shaved them closely. In one century, more than eighty laws were passed in Athens, to stop the practice of shaving down the coins then in circulation. But some money changers were men of integrity, who would accept no counterfeit money. They were men of honor who put only genuine full weighted money into circulation. Such men were called "dokimos" or "approved". (Donald Barnhouse)

This metaphor is the approval or certification of coins that were not only of the required purity, but also the exact size and weight.

He will receive –

2983 λαμβανω lambano lam-ban'-o

a prolonged form of a primary verb, which is use only as an alternate in certain tenses; TDNT - 4:5,495; v

KJV - receive 133, take 106, have 3, catch 3, not tr 1, misc 17; 263

1) to take

1a) to take with the hand, lay hold of, any person or thing in order to use it

1a1) to take up a thing to be carried

1a2) to take upon one's self

1b) to take in order to carry away

1b1) without the notion of violence, i.e. to remove, take away

1c) to take what is one's own, to take to one's self, to make one's own

1c1) to claim, procure, for one's self

1c1a) to associate with one's self as companion, attendant

1c2) of that which when taken is not let go, to seize, to lay hold of, apprehend

1c3) to take by craft (our catch, used of hunters, fisherman, etc.), to circumvent one by fraud

1c4) to take to one's self, lay hold upon, take possession of,

i.e. to appropriate to one's self

1c5) catch at, reach after, strive to obtain

1c6) to take a thing due, to collect, gather (tribute)

1d) to take

1d1) to admit, receive

1d2) to receive what is offered

1d3) not to refuse or reject

1d4) to receive a person, give him access to one's self, 1d41) to regard any one's power, rank, external circumstances, and on that account to do some injustice or neglect something

1e) to take, to choose, select

1f) to take beginning, to prove anything, to make a trial of, to experience

2) to receive (what is given), to gain, get, obtain, to get back

For Synonyms see entry [5877](#)

Future middle

Crown –

4735 στεφανος stephanos stef'-an-os

from an apparently primary στεφω stepho (to twine or wreath); TDNT - 7:615,1078; n m

KJV - crown 18; 18

1) a crown

1a) a mark of royal or (in general) exalted rank

1a1) the wreath or garland which was given as a prize to victors in public games

1b) metaph. the eternal blessedness which will be given as a prize to

the genuine servants of God and Christ: the crown (wreath) which is the reward of the righteousness

1c) that which is an ornament and honour to one

For Synonyms see entry [5833](#)

1238 - is a crown as a badge of royalty

4735 - like the Latin "corona" is the crown in the sense of a chaplet, wreath or garland -- the badge of "victory in the games of civic worth, of military valour, of nuptial joy, of festive gladness"

Paul talks about the crown we will receive in Corinthians:

1 Cor. 9:25 – Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to gain a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. (Moo)

"James probably also has this imagery in view, since the victory of a trained and disciplined athlete in a race is a fitting image for the reward that God bestows on those who remain faithful to him over the often long and difficult race of life."

Look at what Jesus said to the Ephesian Christians:

Revelation 2:10 – 'Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that you may be **tested**, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and **I will give you the crown of life.**

Crown refers to the idea of a reward, and the following word, "life", indicates what the reward is.

Life –

2222 ζωη zoe dzo-ay'

from [2198](#); TDNT - 2:832,290; n f

KJV - life 133, lifetime 1; 134

1) life

1a) the state of one who is possessed of vitality or is animate

1b) every living soul

2) life

2a) of the absolute fullness of life, both essential and ethical, which belongs to God, and through him both to the hypostatic "logos" and to Christ in whom the "logos" put on human nature

2b) life real and genuine, a life active and vigorous, devoted to God, blessed, in the portion even in this world of those who put their trust in Christ, but after the resurrection to be consummated by new accessions (among them a more perfect body), and to last for ever.

Synonyms

See Definition for βίος [979](#)

See Definition for ζωη [2222](#)

2222 - **existence, having death as its antithesis**

979 - the period, means, manner, of existence. Hence the former is more naturally used of animal, the later of men; zoology, biography. NT usage exalts 2222 and tends to debase 979.

Eternal life. It is not mercenary or selfish that at times of serious trial and suffering the "crown" can be a motivator and encouragement to continue the fight.

Promised –

1861 επαγγελω epaggello ep-ang-el'-lo

from [1909](#) and the base of [32](#); TDNT - 2:576,240; v

KJV - promise 11, profess 2, make promise 2; 15

1) to announce that one is about to do or furnish something

1a) to promise (of one's own accord) to engage voluntarily

2) to profess

2a) an art, to profess one's skill in something

Eternal life is the promised prize for those who endure trials.

Those who love him –

25 αγαπαω agapao ag-ap-ah'-o

perhaps from αγαπ agan (much) [or cf [05689](#) bge]; TDNT - 1:21,5; v

KJV - love 135, beloved 7; 142

1) of persons

1a) to welcome, to entertain, to be fond of, to love dearly

2) of things

2a) to be well pleased, to be contented at or with a thing

It is our love of Jesus ultimately that drives us to fight the fight and endure under trials.

Section Summary

Verses 2-12 are intended as encouragement for those suffering through trials.

Trials in our lives should result in:

- Joy – knowing God is using them to produce His desired results
- Godly character
- Faith
- Perseverance, patient endurance
- Wisdom
- Blessing
- Crown of life – life eternal