

Patience

WAIT WITH PATIENCE FOR WISDOM

Focal Verses • JAMES 3:13–18; 5:7–12

Aim for Change

By the end of the lesson, we will: DESCRIBE the value of acting with wisdom and patience in the midst of trials; EMBRACE wisdom from God, and TURN from actions that have been done out of a lack of patience.

In Focus

“Why does everybody act like Mr. Jenkins is so great?” Darlique asked. “He’s not all that.” “Mr. Jenkins?” Chanel replied. “Mr. JENKINS is great. I’ve been buying from him for years. He never brags about anything; he just gets the job done.”

Mr. Jenkins ran the corner store and pharmacy. The store had been in the neighborhood and his family for three generations. Darlique started patronizing a new store in the area because she had some complaints about Mr. Jenkins. “The steps and the sidewalk outside are always dirty, and there are always people hanging by the door asking for money, and the prices are too high. Yet, Mr. Jenkins does nothing about it.”

“The prices are what they are because large supermarket chains can order in bulk. Mr. Jenkins’s store is just one corner store,” Chanel pointed out. “And as for how Mr. Jenkins runs his place, it’s what he doesn’t do that’s more important. Mr. Jenkins doesn’t hassle people for being broke. He often gives families food and allows them to pay for it later. A lot of single moms go to his store when they don’t have food and their paycheck hasn’t arrived,” Chanel went on, “And Mr. Jenkins knows his customers because he’s built up relationships over the years. It isn’t like that at the chain, and you know it. Didn’t you tell me last week that there’s always a new team of workers following you around the store whenever you go in?”

Chanel finished with her hands on her hips, “Mr. Jenkins runs a good place. You would see that if you weren’t so cranky. It’s God’s role to judge, not ours. Be patient with him, and you will see the blessing that he really is to our community!”

Could we measure up if God judged us the way we judge other people? How does patience help us in judging others?



Keep in Mind

“But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy”
(James 3:17, KJV).

Focal Verses

KJV **James 3:13** Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.

14 But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.

15 This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.

16 For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.

17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

James 5:7 Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the

husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.

8 Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

9 Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door.

10 Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.

11 Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

12 But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.

The People, Places, and Times

Oath. Covenants were always confirmed or accompanied by an oath (cf. Genesis 26:28; Ezekiel 17:18). The oath by which allegiance to the covenant was sworn involved a self-cursing formula to guard against disobedience. A person who enters a covenant places himself in a position where curses will fall upon him if he violates the covenant obligations. The Mosaic Law commands that Israelites swear by God's name (Deuteronomy 10:20). Taking a sworn oath in the Lord's name declared acceptance of God as their highest authority. Jesus cautions, however, not to make oaths at all, but to be known as so faithful to your word that you do not need to swear (Matthew 5:33–37).

Background

The thesis of the book of James, Jesus' half-brother, can be found in James 2:17– that

faith alone, without works, is dead. This is not contradictory to Paul's treatment of faith or the claim central to the Reformation that justification is by faith alone. Like John Calvin, the Reformation theologian, said, "We dream neither of a faith devoid of good works nor of a justification that stands without them." Instead, we know that true faith is always accompanied by good works, and the book of James reminds us of what those good works look like. This does not mean that as Christians, we work to earn God's approval; as such, work will never yield the result we want, which is perfection. Instead, faith links us to Christ, who justifies us and sanctifies us. As we look to the wisdom that James teaches us, let us remember the right relationship between faith and works: that in the life of the Christian, they are distinct but inseparable.

The book itself is referred to by some as the New Testament book of Proverbs. Such

a characterization is not unfounded. Here, proper patterns of Christian behavior are set with an emphasis on the commitment that the Christian is to have to the poor, the widow, and the orphan, those whom the LORD has expressed a special care for.

At-A-Glance

1. Two Types of Wisdom (James 3:13–18)
2. Endure! (James 5:7–12)

In Depth

1. Two Types of Wisdom (James 3:13–18)

According to James, there is false wisdom that stems from bitter jealousy and self-interest. In fact, these are demonic impulses because they run counter to the values imparted by the Gospel. Jealousy and bitterness suggest discontentment, which runs counter to the message throughout the Scriptures that in Christ, we have all that we need. Self-interest and a mind constantly curved in on itself suggest a self-absorption that does not readily lead to a love of God and love of neighbor, the two great commandments. According to James, it is these impulses that undergird all types of sin. Alternatively, we are to be peacemakers, sowing seeds of purity, peace, and gentleness. By showing mercy because Christ has been merciful to us, impartiality because Christ's grace was extended to us without bias, and sincerity because of the full commitment that Christ exhibited on the cross, we exhibit the wisdom from above.

When have envy and covetousness blinded you to your love of neighbor?

2. Endure! (James 5:7–12)

In the midst of trials, perhaps the last thing we want to hear is the encouragement to endure. Often while suffering, we just want the suffering

to stop. Unfortunately, life in a fallen world is full of suffering, so James' advice is appropriate throughout our lives: Be patient for the coming of the Lord. We are not to grumble as the people of Israel did at the brink of the Red Sea crossing and in the wilderness, for such a response reveals a lack of gratefulness for the gracious deliverance that the Lord has given us. Instead, James encourages us to look to the prophets and to Job as models. At first glance, even this seems difficult, as the prophets were, for the most part, reluctant, and Job's suffering was compounded by friends who were not understanding. But each of those stories end with the Lord's vindication, and so also will our stories end.

Relate a time when the Lord alleviated your suffering, whether through a friend or other means.

Search the Scriptures

1. James says seeds of peace sprout into what plant? (James 3:18)
2. What actions lead to judgment and condemnation (James 5:9, 12)?

Discuss the Meaning

1. Is the Christian life of wisdom easier or more difficult than life without it?
2. What is the best remedy for envy?

Liberating Lesson

The book of James lends itself to application quite easily, as application is the theme of the entire book. Like the book of Proverbs, the book points us to wisdom, the right use of knowledge. This is the stem from which good works flower, and the root of that plant is the Holy Spirit. This is a plant that merits daily watering through immersion in the Word and prayer, as we seek the Lord for daily wisdom. When you work, submit each conversation to the test: Am I seeking and encouraging the wisdom from above or the so-called wisdom from below? Are my conversations pure? Do they flow with mercy? Do

they yield good fruit? Or do they yield bitterness and anxiety? Asking these questions of ourselves can guide us as we seek the sanctification that only the Holy Spirit can truly offer.

Application for Activation

When you suffer misfortune, immediately run to the Lord in prayer and ask for endurance. Sometimes it is best not to pray that the trial will end, but that God will make you strong enough to go through it.

Pray daily for the coming of the Lord. Orient your heart toward that day when all suffering shall cease.

Follow the Spirit

What God wants me to do:

Remember Your Thoughts

Special insights I have learned:

Sources:

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Say It Correctly

Stablish. **STAB**-lish.
Fastiousness. fuh-**SEE**-shuss-ness.

Daily Bible Readings

DAY 330

2 Corinthians 8–9
Proverbs 8

DAY 331

2 Corinthians 10–11
Proverbs 9

DAY 332

2 Corinthians 12–13
Proverbs 10

DAY 333

Galatians 1–2
Proverbs 11

DAY 334

Galatians 3–4
Proverbs 12

DAY 335

Galatians 5–6
Proverbs 13

DAY 336

Ephesians 1–2
Proverbs 14

Notes
