

BE PATIENT, ENDURE; KEEP YOUR EYES FOCUSED UPON THE RETURN OF THE LORD

JAMES 05:07–11

DIVISION OVERVIEW (James 05:07–20)

Victory Over Temptations and Trials

This begins the last section of the Book of James, a book that discusses the temptations and trials that confront and attack us day by day. It has been a helpful study, very helpful, and this last section is just as helpful. Temptations and trials must be combated step by step in order to conquer them. If we want victory over the temptations and trials of life, then we must combat them step by step. In particular, there are two steps that we must take.

1. Step 1: Be Patient, Endure, Keep Your Eyes Focused Upon the Return of the Lord (Jas. 5:7-11).
2. Step 2: Take Each Circumstance and Respond Properly (Jas. 5:12-20).

Introduction (James 05:07–11)

The temptations and trials of life are terrible foes. If we give in to temptations they can enslave and destroy us before we know it. Temptations can hook us on the world and its possessions and pleasures or else they can destroy our wills, families, friendships or jobs. The trials of life can unsettle and disrupt our lives, and if we are not on guard, they can crush us through some bad happening or accident, disease or death. How can we overcome temptations and trials — conquer and gain a permanent victory over them? There are two steps. The first step is covered in this passage: *be patient, endure, keep your eyes focused upon the Lord's return.*

- I. Be patient, for the Lord is going to come again (v. 7).
- II. Be as patient as the farmer, for the Lord's coming is near (v. 7-9).
- III. Be as patient as the prophets in suffering, for they believed and spoke in the name of the Lord (v. 10).
- IV. Be as patient as Job in suffering trials and temptations, for he saw the end of the Lord — that the Lord was full of compassion and mercy (v. 11).

I. James 05:07 Be Patient; Jesus Christ will Return

Be patient, for the Lord is going to come again. Time and again Scripture declares in no uncertain terms that Jesus Christ is going to come again and return to earth.

=> Christ is coming again to reward every person for what he has done.

Mat 16:27 “For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done.”

=> Christ is coming again to separate the sheep from the goats.

Mat 25:31-32 *“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.”*

=> Christ is coming again to judge both the living and the dead.

2 Tim 4:1 *In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge.*

=> Christ is coming again to execute judgment upon the unbelievers or the ungodly of the earth.

Jude 1:14-15 *Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: “See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him.”*

=> Christ is coming again to judge believers.

2 Cor 5:10 *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.*

Note also what Scripture declares about the return of Christ and believers. It clearly declares how believers are to live.

=> Believers are to work, be busy in serving the Lord until He comes.

Luke 19:13 *“So he called ten of his servants and gave them ten minas. ‘Put this money to work,’ he said, ‘until I come back.’”*

=> Believers are not to slack up one bit or lack a single gift until Christ returns.

1 Cor 1:7 *Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed.*

=> Believers are to be without spot or blame when Christ returns.

1 Tim 6:14 *To keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

=> Believers are to deny ungodliness and worldly passions and live self-controlled, upright and godly lives until Christ returns.

Titus 2:12-13 *It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope — the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.*

=> Believers are to live so as not to be ashamed before Christ when He returns.

1 John 2:28 *And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming.*

Now, this is the whole point of this passage. We must be patient — endure all the temptations and trials of life, no matter how strong and terrible their onslaught may be. We must patiently combat their enslaving power and the spirit of discouragement and defeat that can sweep over our souls before we know it. The Lord is coming and He is going to reward or judge us. And one thing is sure: none of us want to be condemned when He returns (v. 9). Therefore, how can we conquer the temptations and trials of life? How can we overcome them and be sure of being rewarded by the Lord when He returns? There is one way and only one way: be patient — endure — keep your eyes focused on the return of the Lord.

The word “patience” (makrothumeo) means longsuffering, bearing and suffering a long time, persevering, being constant, steadfast and enduring. Note: this is a very special kind of patience — a spiritual patience that never gives in; it perseveres and suffers on and on no matter what attacks it. Two significant facts need to be noted about this spiritual patience.

- => First, spiritual patience is *not a passive acceptance*. It does not just lay back and accept trials and temptations as though they are a part of life and nothing can be done about them. Spiritual patience is an active, fighting endurance that confronts trials and temptations and that sets out to conquer them. Gaining the victory is the very purpose for patiently confronting and standing fast against them. The believer patiently confronts them to conquer them, not to be defeated by them.
- => Second, spiritual patience is a *fruit of the Spirit* (see note, pt. 4, Gal. 5:22-23). When the believer faces some trial or temptation, the Holy Spirit arouses the urge to combat the situation and to conquer it. The arousal or the urge is stirred by the Spirit of God. It is up to us to respond and follow the urge of the Spirit and to persevere. It is up to us to refuse to give in to the enslavement or discouragement and defeat. This kind of patience is a spiritual patience — a work of the Holy Spirit — and it can be had only by trusting the Spirit of God. Therefore, the believer must trust the Spirit of God to stir his heart to stand fast against the temptation and trial, and then he must exert his own will and energy to conquer the situation. When the Holy Spirit does His part, the believer is to do his part. The believer is to patiently combat the temptation or trial when the Spirit of God arouses his heart. The believer is to stand fast and not to give in to the sin of the temptation or to the discouragement of the trial. He is to struggle and fight, persevere and endure — patiently suffer on and on against the temptation or trial — and all the while, he is to keep his eyes fixed on the goal and the end: the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Keeping his eyes fixed upon the return of his wonderful Lord will stir the believer to follow the leadership and power of the Holy Spirit in combating all temptations and trials.

GALATIANS 05:22–23 PATIENCE

There is the fruit of patience or long-suffering (makrothumia): bearing and suffering a long time, perseverance, being constant, steadfast and enduring. Long-suffering never gives in; it is never broken no matter what attacks it.

=> Pressure and hard work may fall upon us, but the Spirit of God helps us to be patient under it all.

=> Disease or accident or old age may afflict us, but the Spirit of God helps us to be patient under it.

=> Discouragement and disappointment may attack us, but the Spirit of God helps us to be patient under it.

=> Men may do us wrong, abuse, slander and injure us; but the Spirit of God helps us to be patient under it all.

Two significant things need to be noted about patience or long-suffering.

a. Patience or long-suffering never strikes back. Common sense tells us that a person who is attacked by others could strike back and retaliate. But the Christian believer is given the power of patience — the power to suffer the situation or person for a long, long time.

b. Patience or long-suffering is one of the great traits of God. As pointed out in this verse, it is a fruit of God's very own Spirit, a fruit that is to be in the life of the believer.

=> God and Christ are patient, long-suffering toward sinners.

***Rom 2:4** Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance?*

=> God saves believers so that they may be examples of patience.

***1 Tim 1:16** But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life.*

=> God withholds His judgment from the world because He is patient, waiting for more and more to be saved.

***2 Pet 3:9** The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. (cp. 1 Pet. 3:20)*

***Isa 48:9** For my own name's sake I delay my wrath; for the sake of my praise I hold it back from you, so as not to cut you off.*

William Barclay says that if God had been a man. He would have long ago wiped man off the face of the earth because of his terrible disobedience (*The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians*, p. 56). But God loves and cares for man; therefore, God is patient, long-suffering toward man. God is patient a long, long time with man, allowing more and more men to be saved.

Col 1:11 Being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully.

2 Tim 4:2 Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage — with great patience and careful instruction. □

II. *James 05:07–09 Be Patient Like the Farmer*

Be as patient as the farmer, for the Lord's coming again draws near. The farmer is a good example of the kind of patient waiting believers must have as they wait for the Lord's return. The farmer plants his seed and patiently waits for the early rain to germinate the seed and the later rain to ripen the crop. Note this: the farmer looks forward to the day of harvest with great expectation — so much so that he does all he can to protect the glorious day of harvest. He combats the trials of dry and wet weather, insects and disease, and the wild weeds and briars of the world. No matter what confronts him the farmer patiently endures the trial and combats it every step of the way. He does all he can to conquer the trial. Why? Why does he labour so diligently? Endure so patiently? Because his eyes are fixed upon the great day of harvest.

The example for believers is strong: “Believers — you also be patient — patiently endure just as the farmer. Do two things.”

1. Believers must “stand firm” (striate). The word means to set upon; to fix upon; to make fast (W.E. Vine, *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, p. 41). We must set our hearts upon the Lord's coming, for His coming is near. The idea is that it is drawing ever so close and can happen at any moment. We must focus and set our hearts upon His return — be looking for it every day just as the farmer looks for his great day of harvest. Looking for the great day of redemption — for the Lord's glorious return — will stir us to combat temptation and trial step by step. It will stir us to patiently endure no matter the situation, and by patiently enduring we shall gain the victory over all — no matter how bad the situation may be.

1 Cor 15:58 Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.

Gal 5:1 It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

Gal 6:9 *Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.*

Phil 1:27 *Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel.*

Heb 12:1 *Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.*

1 Pet 5:8-9 *Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.*

2 Pet 3:17 *Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position.*

Rev 3:11 *I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown.*

2. Believers must not complain, murmur and judge other believers. We must not complain about our situations, our trials and temptations, and we must not blame each other for what happens to us. This is one thing God will not tolerate. Note the Scripture: if we complain, murmur and grumble, we shall be condemned. And, “The Judge is standing at the door.” This is a warning, a strong warning. The Lord will judge all believers who complain, murmur, grumble and judge others instead of conquering the trials and temptations of life. And His judgment is at hand, right at the door, ready to be executed against men.

1 Cor 10:10 *And do not grumble, as some of them did — and were killed by the destroying angel.*

Phil 2:14 *Do everything without complaining or arguing.*

Prov 19:3 *A man’s own folly ruins his life, yet his heart rages against the Lord.*

Lam 3:39 *Why should any living man complain when punished for his sins?*

III. James 05:10 Perseverance and Patience of the Prophets

Be as patient as the prophets in suffering affliction, for they believed and spoke in the name of the Lord. What James is saying is this: “Look at the prophets. Look at those who have gone before you — men and women who believed and hoped in God and bore witness to God. They faced all kinds of trials and temptations, but they patiently endured, combated and conquered them all. Look at the prophets, and you will have a great example to follow in patient perseverance.” As Hebrews says:

Heb 11:36-38 *Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated — the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground.*

The prophets persevered in all the trials and temptations of life. They stood fast, held onto their faith in God, and combated the trials and temptations every step of the way. They refused to give in and to question and moan and grumble against God. Contrariwise, they continued to proclaim the salvation and hope of God for the world — continued to believe and to speak up for God despite the terrible trials and temptations that swarmed in upon them.

Acts 5:41 *The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name.*

Rom 8:17 *Now if we are children, then we are heirs — heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.*

Heb 11:25 *He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time.*

James 5:10 *Brothers, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.*

1 Pet 2:20 *But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God.*

1 Pet 5:10 *And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.*

IV. James 05:11 Perseverance and Patience of Job

Be as patient as Job in suffering trials and temptations, for he saw the end of the Lord — that the Lord was full of compassion and mercy. Few people ever suffer the trials and temptations of life as much as Job suffered. He suffered utter bankruptcy — the loss of all his property, livestock and employees — and then, in the severest blow of all, he lost all of his sons in an accident. In addition to all this, his wife fussed at him because he refused to complain and curse God for destroying their lives. But note this: Job never gave in to the trials or temptations. He never forsook his faith in God. He did not understand all that was happening to him, but he refused to turn against God. He stood and persevered, struggling to conquer all and conquer it in the name of God.

Job 13:15 *Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him; I will surely defend my ways to his face.*

Job 16:19 *Even now my witness is in heaven; my advocate is on high.*

Job 19:25 *I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth.*

The point is this: Job kept his eyes fixed upon the end, that is, upon the Lord and the great hope of the Lord. The Lord carried Job through all his trials and temptations by blessing him with the very presence of God Himself — with the compassion and mercy of God. Job endured; therefore, we count him blessed or happy.

Thought 1. The believer is to bear the afflictions of trials and temptations by focusing his eyes upon the end, that is, upon the coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ. As we do, the compassion and mercy of God will flow both upon and through us. God will deliver us with His very own presence. He will deliver us through all the trials and temptations of life, giving us the most victorious life imaginable.

Mat 10:22 *“All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.”*

James 1:12 *Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.*

James 5:11 *As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job’s perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.*

1 Pet 1:13 *Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.*

1 Pet 2:19 *For it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God.*

1 Pet 5:9 *Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.*

Job 17:9 *Nevertheless, the righteous will hold to their ways, and those with clean hands will grow stronger. ■*

