

THE ESSENTIAL ATTITUDE TO TRIALS AND TEMPTATION: JOY JAMES 01:02–04

Introduction

The path of life is not an easy path to walk. It is filled with all kinds of trials, trials such as sickness, disease, accidents, disappointments, sorrows, suffering and death; and trials such as all the seductions to sin and evil. What we need is a guaranteed way to conquer all the trials of life. This is the glorious message of this passage: there is a way to conquer and triumph in this life, no matter how severe the trial. What is the way? It is possessing a spirit of joy and perseverance as we face the trials and temptations of life.

- I. The fact: we will have many trials and temptations (v. 2).
- II. The needed attitude: joy (vv. 2-4).
- III. The result: makes us mature and complete (v. 4).

Another Outline: Endurance (James 01:03–08)

This is a striking study on endurance.

- I. The source: testing, trials and temptations (v. 3).
- II. The condition: must let trials do their work (v. 4).
- III. The purpose and results (v. 4).
 - a. Makes one mature.
 - b. Makes one complete.
- IV. The way to endure (v.5).
 - a. Ask wisdom from God.
 - 1) God gives generously.
 - 2) God does not scold.
 - b. Ask in faith — must believe (v. 6).
 - 1) Doubt illustrated.
 - 2) Doubt receives nothing (v. 7).
 - 3) Doubt shows instability — in all things (v. 8).

I. James 01:02 Trials and Temptations

The fact is certain — we will have many trials and temptations. The Greek word used for temptations or trials throughout James is peirasmos. It means to tempt; to try; to test; to prove. Throughout the Bible the word peirasmos and its various forms are used to refer to both the temptations and trials of life. But note that the word means far more than just to tempt; it means...

- to test
 - to try
 - to prove
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That is, the temptations and trials of life are to prove us: they are for a beneficial purpose; they are permitted by God for a good purpose (W.E. Vine. *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, p. 116). What is that purpose? To make us stronger and more pure.

- => When we conquer trials and temptation, we become a much more pure person — more holy, righteous and just.
- => When we triumphantly go through the trials of life, we become a much stronger person — more steadfast, enduring and persevering
- => When we stand up against trials and temptations, we become a dynamic witness to all those who see us: we demonstrate the living presence and power of Christ — that He actually does live in our hearts and lives and is going to give us eternal life.

As said, God allows temptations and trials for a good and beneficial purpose: to prove us — to make us much stronger and much more pure and righteous. God wants us to face the temptations and trials of life and to conquer them, and by conquering them to become much more like Christ and to make Christ more fully known to the world.

Note one other thing that James says: he says that we shall *fall into all kinds* of temptations and trials. The Greek scholar A.T. Robertson says, “It is the picture of being *surrounded* (*peri*) by trials” (*Word Pictures In The New Testament*, Vol. 6. p. 11). The idea is that of many trials and temptations, of all sorts and of all kinds of temptations and trials. But we must always remember: no matter what the trial or temptation, it is for our good and for our benefit. It is to help us. It is to prove us — to make us stronger and much more pure and righteous — to make us much more dynamic witnesses for Christ. God allows trials and temptations to make us more and more like Jesus.

2 Cor 3:18 *And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*

2 Cor 4:17 *For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.*

Heb 12:11 *No discipline [trials] seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.*

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 3:14 *But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. “Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened.” But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.*

1 Pet 4:14 If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.

Rev 7:14 I answered, "Sir, you know." And he said, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

Job 23:10 But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold.

II. James 01:02–04 Trials, Temptations and a Spirit of Joy

The attitude needed to face the trials and temptations of life is startling — it is joy. We are to face every trial and temptation with a spirit of joy. How is this possible? How can a believer be joyful...

- when facing such trials as disease, accidents, pain, sorrows, disappointments, suffering, pain and death?
- when facing the seductions of temptations?

Joy is usually not what fills our heart when we face these things. When severe trials come our way, too often we despair and become discouraged and defeated. Most of us certainly do not joy.

There is only one way to face trials and temptations with a spirit of joy: we have to *switch our thinking*; turn our attitudes about trials and temptations completely around. We have to quit thinking negatively and think positively. In the words of Scripture we must know something and we must do something.

1. We must know something: know that trials and temptations develop perseverance (v. 3). We must know what point one stressed: that trials and temptations are not to defeat and discourage us, but to prove us, to make us much stronger and more pure and righteous. The word “perseverance” (hupomonen) means to be steadfast; to persevere; to endure. The believer is to know that the trials and temptations of life will make him more steadfast, more persevering and more enduring. They will make him much stronger, not weaker. They will make him strong just like Jesus and they will give him a pure and righteous character just like Jesus. When the believer keeps this fact in his mind, he can face trials and temptations much more positively. He can then begin to move toward the spirit of living joyfully in the face of trials and temptations.
2. We must do something: we must let perseverance finish its work within us. As stated above, perseverance means to be steadfast, to be patient and to endure. But it means more than this in the Greek. It means far more than just bearing and putting up with the trials and temptations. It means far more than just following the advice of medicine and psychology: to take it easy; to be calm; to relax in stressful situations. It means far more than learning to deny the existence of trials and temptations.

Perseverance means...

- to persist and to continue on, never giving in.
- to take the initiative and to exert the energy and effort to conquer and to gain the victory and to triumph over the trial and temptation.

Now note the point: How can we joy when a trial or temptation confronts us? By knowing that it will make us stronger by persevering against it and conquering it. By knowing that it is an opportunity to make us stronger and more pure just like Jesus and by using the trial or temptation to become a little stronger and a little more pure and righteous.

When we look at trials and temptations as opportunities, then we will begin to face them in joy. And when we begin to persevere and conquer them, then we will begin to walk through them in the joy of the Lord.

1 Cor 10:13 *No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.*

Heb 2:18 *Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.*

James 1:2-3 *Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance.*

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.*

1 Pet 5:8 *Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.*

2 Pet 2:9 *If this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment.*

Rev 3:10 *Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth.*

Prov 1:10 *My son, if sinners entice you, do not give in to them.*

Prov 4:14 *Do not set foot on the path of the wicked or walk in the way of evil men.*

Rom 6:13 *Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.*

Eph 6:13 *Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.*

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.*

III. James 01:04 *Becoming More Perfect and Complete*

The results of facing trials and temptations can be wonderful. A most wonderful thing happens when a person perseveres and conquers the trials and temptations of life.

A person becomes more perfect or mature (*teleioi*). The word does not mean perfect in the sense of becoming a perfect person. The word means *perfection of purpose*. It has to do with an end, an aim, a goal, a purpose. It means fit, mature, fully grown at a particular stage of growth. For example, a fully grown child is a perfect child; he has reached his childhood and achieved the purpose of childhood. It does not mean perfection of character, that is, being without sin. It is fitness, maturity for task and purpose. It is full development, maturity of godliness. (See note, Eph. 4:12-13; cp. Ph. 3:12; 1 Jn. 1:8, 10.)

This means at least two things.

1. First, when a person stands against trials and temptations and conquers them...
 - he grows in maturity for the purpose God intended. That is, he becomes a stronger and more pure person — a person who is a little more like Jesus.
 - he grows in maturity for his task and purpose for being on earth a little bit more.

God has a twofold purpose for every believer: to become more and more like Jesus and to do a specific task or job while on earth. When the believer perseveres against and conquers trials or temptations, he matures in both purposes a little bit more. He becomes more like Jesus and he finishes his task a little more.

2. Second, a person becomes more and more complete in all parts (A T. Robertson. *Word Pictures In The New Testament*, Vol. 6, p. 12). The person becomes complete (*holoklerian*), wholly fit, perfectly sound, complete with no weaknesses, flaws, defects or shortcomings. This means a most wonderful thing. When a person perseveres and conquers trials or temptations...
 - he becomes more complete, more fit, more sound and more complete.
 - he also eliminates more weaknesses, more flaws, more defects and more shortcomings.

Day by day — trial by trial — when a person perseveres and conquers, he becomes more and more complete. He becomes stronger and more pure and righteous — more and more like the Lord Jesus. As the last three words of verse four say, “not lacking anything.” The believer who faces trials and temptations in the joy of Christ conquers all, and he does not lack anything.

- => He becomes more and more mature, fulfilling his task and purpose for being on earth a little bit more.
- => He becomes more and more complete and fit, eliminating more and more weaknesses and shortcomings in his life.

The person does not lack anything. He has no unmet needs. He has all the abundance and fullness of life. He walks through life conquering and triumphing over all the trials of life, no matter how severe and stressful. It may even be death, but he stands fast in his faith and conquers death. And God rewards him with an eternity of perfection, fitness, completion and fulfilment — all forever and ever. The believer is conformed to the perfection of Jesus Christ.

Rom 16:20 *The God of peace will soon crush [defeat] Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.*

Mat 5:48 *“Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”*

Luke 21:19 *“By standing firm you will gain life.”*

Rom 12:12 *Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.*

2 Cor 13:11 *Finally, brothers, good-by. Aim for perfection, listen to my appeal, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.*

Eph 4:1e-13 *To prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.*

James 3:2 *We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check.*

Phil 3:12 *Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.*

Col 1:28 *We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.*

Heb 6:1 *Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God,*

Heb 10:36 *You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.*

James 1:4 *Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.*

James 5:7 *Be patient, then, brothers, until the Lord’s coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains. ■*

THE WAY TO CONQUER TRIALS AND TEMPTATION

JAMES 01:05–12

Introduction

Trials and temptations are common to us all. We all suffer such trials and temptations as...

- hurt
- anger
- divorce
- cheating
- immorality
- greed
- loneliness
- loss
- sickness
- separation
- pain
- lust
- lying
- disappointments
- emptiness
- accidents
- disease
- death

What is the worst trial that you face — right now? What is the worst temptation — the temptation that just swarms in upon you and overcomes you and leads you into sin?

Is there an escape? Is there a way to overcome the trial? the temptation? A way that can assure victory and deliverance? This is the subject of this passage: *the way to conquer trials and temptations*.

I. Ask wisdom of God (vv. 5-8).

II. Rejoice in one's status (vv. 9-11).

III. Remember the reward for persevering: a crown of life (v. 12).

I. James 01:05–08 Wisdom to Conquer Temptation

How can a believer conquer trials and temptations? First, he must ask wisdom of God. Wisdom means far more than just knowledge, far more than just being intellectual about life or some area of life. Knowledge is the grasping of facts, and most people in the world have heads full of facts.

=> Just think of all the schools in the world: schools for children, schools for young people, schools for men and women, schools for tradesman.

=> Just think of the millions of farmers, scientists, business people, tradesmen, mechanics, contractors, physicians and on and on.

Millions and millions of us are knowledgeable. People with heads full of knowledge are very common. But when coping with the trials and temptations of life, something more than a head full of facts is needed. Being a knowledgeable person is not enough in order to be a victorious and fulfilled person in life. Much more is needed: wisdom is needed. What is wisdom? What does the Bible mean by wisdom? Wisdom is not having a head full of facts. It is not only seeing and knowing all about life, it is seeing and knowing what to do about life. Wisdom is not only seeing and knowing the truth, it is seeing and knowing what to do with the truth.

Wisdom grasps the great truths of life. It sees the trials and temptations that surround life and death, God and man, time and eternity, good and evil — the deep things of the universe and of God. But wisdom not only grasps these facts, wisdom knows what to do about them, and it does it. Wisdom not only understands the trials and temptations, but it understands what to do with them and how to do it, and it does it. Wisdom acts and conquers and gains the victory over the trials and temptations.

Now, if we lack that kind of wisdom — if we do not understand — if we do not know how to conquer life or some trial and temptation — then there is one sure way to get the wisdom:

James 1:5 *If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.*

Asking wisdom of God is the way to conquer the trials and temptations of life. Now, note two significant points.

1. Note the wonderful promises made to us when we ask God for wisdom.

=> God will give us wisdom.

=> God will give us a generous amount, an abundance of wisdom.

=> God will not reproach or rebuke us — not scold us — for not knowing how to handle the trial of temptation. The idea is that God will not even question us for lacking wisdom and for not knowing what to do.

God loves us: we are His sons and daughters. He is our Father, and He wants to meet our every need. Therefore, God will hear our request and cry; He will give us the wisdom to conquer the trials and temptations of life.

Mat 7:24-27 *“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”*

Luke 21:15 *“For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict.”*

Rom 11:33 *Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!*

2 Tim 3:15 *And how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.*

James 1:5 *If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.*

James 3:17 *But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.*

Prov 3:13-14 *Blessed is the man who finds wisdom, the man who gains understanding, for she is more profitable than silver and yields better returns than gold.*

Prov 8:11 *For wisdom is more precious than rubies, and nothing you desire can compare with her.*

Job 28:28 *And he said to man, 'The fear of the Lord — that is wisdom, and to shun evil is understanding.'*

Hosea 14:9 *Who is wise? He will realize these things. Who is discerning? He will understand them. The ways of the Lord are right; the righteous walk in them, but the rebellious stumble in them.*

2. Note a critical fact: we have a responsibility. We must do something, and whether or not God hears us depends upon our doing this one thing. If we do it, God hears us and gives us wisdom to conquer the trials. If we do not do it, God cannot hear us. What is it that we must do? When we ask God to give us wisdom to conquer some trial or temptation, *we must believe and not doubt*. We must believe that God loves us and that He really cares and will hear our cries and prayers and meet our every need. When we pray and cry out to God, we cannot doubt; that is, we cannot ask and then...
 - wonder if God really exists
 - wonder if God is really going to hear
 - wonder if God can really do what we ask
 - wonder if we really know God well enough for Him to hear us
 - wonder if the request is the will of God.

Such doubting cannot be heard by God. God cannot answer the prayer of a doubting person. If He did, then He would be rewarding doubt — rewarding those who do not believe or trust Him. He would be rewarding those who doubt, ignore, neglect, question and in many cases curse, deny and fight against Him. God cannot hear and answer a person who wavers in his faith. We must believe that God is, that He exists and that He does love and care for us and that He will hear and answer us when we ask for wisdom to face the trials and temptations of life.

Note what Scripture says about the person who does not believe.

- a. First, the person is just like a wave of the sea driven by the wind and tossed to and fro.
- b. Second, the person shall not receive anything of the Lord. Why? Because a person who wavers back and forth does not know the value of God's gifts. If God granted them, the person would not always use them nor would he use the gifts like they should be used. If God gave the wisdom to a person to conquer the trials and temptations of life, the person might or might not use it or might use it irregularly.

He would not value or use the wisdom or any other gift from God, certainly not to the degree that he should. He would misuse it — terribly misuse and abuse it. Therefore, the person who does not believe will not receive anything from God.

- c. Third, the person who does not believe is a double-minded person, and he is unstable in all he does. A person who does not believe lives a life that is up and down, back and forth. His whole behaviour is unstable and unreliable. He is like a person with two minds: he is not sure; he is uncertain: he feels *yes* and then he feels *no*. He begins and then backs up, then begins again. He believes, then he disbelieves; he acts, then he distrusts and backs up. He is unstable in his prayer and life with God.

Thought 1. What a descriptive picture of so many. This is the very reason so many of us receive so little from God. We either do not ask or else when we ask, we waver in believing that God will hear and answer us. As we face the trials and temptations of life, we must ask God for wisdom and believe that God will hear and show us the way and the power to conquer. When we pray believing, God will hear and answer us.

Mat 13:58 *And he did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith.*

Mark 4:40 *He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"*

Luke 16:13 *"No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money."*

Heb 4:11 *Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience.*

James 1:8 *He is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.*

James 4:8 *Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.*

II. James 01:09–11 Rejoice in One's Status in the Lord

How can a believer conquer trials and temptations? Second, he must rejoice in his status in life. It does not matter whether a person is poor or rich, healthy or unhealthy, crippled or sound, he is to rejoice in the Lord.

1. First, the believer in humble circumstances is to rejoice in the Lord. This does not mean that he is to rejoice because he is poor, unhealthy or crippled. It means that he rejoices in Christ despite the circumstances — no matter how terrible. Christ loves the humble person. Christ has saved the lowly and has promised to exalt him as a king and prince throughout all eternity. Therefore, the believer in humble circumstances is to have a spirit that is as strong as the spirit of a king and prince. He is to have the strongest of spirits now, while he is on earth despite his circumstances of poverty or ill health. Jesus Christ has exalted him to rule throughout all eternity in the new heavens and earth. Therefore, the believer in humble circumstances on this earth is

to behave like a prince and a king — all as a testimony to Christ and His power to change lives. (See note, *Rewards*, Lk. 16:10-12.)

Luke 19:17 “‘Well done, my good servant!’ his master replied. ‘Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.’”

Luke 22:28-29 “You are those who have stood by me in my trials.”

1 Cor 6:2-3 Do you not know that the saints will judge [rule, hold authority over] the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life!

2 Tim 2:12 If we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us.

Rev 1:5-6 And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the first-born from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father — to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.

Rev 3:21 To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne.

Psa 91:14 “Because he loves me,” says the Lord, “I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name.”

Dan 12:3 Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.

Thought 1. This is too often not the case with the humble of this world. Too often the poor and unhealthy...

- allow their circumstances to dull, numb or destroy their spirit and joy in life.
- become bitter against those who have more and seek to take some of what they have.
- develop a sense of inferiority and inadequacy and take on a withdrawn or slavish type of behaviour.

This is wrong and destructive both to the humble person and to everyone else involved — including family members, friends, communities, society and the world at large. Every humble person on the face of the earth should struggle and struggle and never cease to struggle to improve his circumstances in life — even to the point that he can help others. This is the clear teaching of Scripture (Eph. 4:28). But no person is to allow circumstances — no matter how terrible — to destroy his joy or make him bitter and inferior or withdrawn and slavish. Every human being, no matter how humble, is needed to make his contribution to society and the world. This is especially true with believers. Believers must never forget God nor the glorious salvation and exaltation to which God has raised them. Rejoicing in one’s status in life — facing it squarely in the face and setting out to conquer it — is one of the ways

to conquer the trials and temptations of life. A humble person who does not allow his circumstances to defeat him, but rather who conquers his circumstances develops a strong, strong spirit. He develops such a strong spirit that with the wisdom of God He can conquer any trial thrown against him.

2. Second, the believer of rich or in high circumstances, is to rejoice in his low position. What does this mean?
 - a. First, a rich or high person is not accepted by God because of who he is or what he has. His rich and high status means absolutely nothing to God. Even if he were the ruler and owner of the whole earth, it would mean nothing to God. What is such status or wealth in comparison to the whole universe? The rich and high have to approach God bare — as nothing and as having nothing — approach Him as a little child, poor and without anything. This is the only way God accepts any person; therefore, the rich and high are no better off than the poor and lowly. All men — no matter their status in life — stand before God as equals. Let the rich and high rejoice in God and in the fact that God accepts him, not in his rich and high status.
 - b. Second, a rich and high person must use all that he has and is — all of his riches and high influence — to help meet the desperate needs of the starving, impoverished, diseased, homeless, sinful, dying and lost of the world. This is a fact that is neglected, ignored, explained away and in some cases denied. Nevertheless, let Scripture be true and every man a liar — as Scripture says. It is the clear teaching of Scripture (see notes, Mt. 19:16-22; 19:23-26; 19:27-30). The rich and high are to give and live just as sacrificially in meeting the needs of the lost and needy of the world as the middle and lower classes of society. This is not saying there is to be a classless society. There is not. A person of high status — a leader or manager of a business or nation — needs larger and more in order to deal with his equals in other businesses and nations, for most of them are not committed to Jesus Christ. They will not do business or respect a leader who holds the world in contempt. But when a person, especially a believer, meets his needs, that is all he is to do. He is not to hoard and bank beyond securing his family. He is to use all to meet the needs of this world — its desperate need for the gospel and for food, water, medicine, education, clothing and housing. Note what this passage says: the rich and high must remember a critical fact:

James 1:10-11 *But the one who is rich should take pride in his low position, because he will pass away like a wild flower. For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant; its blossom falls and its beauty is destroyed. In the same way, the rich man will fade away even while he goes about his business.*

James 4:14 *Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.*

1 Pet 1:24 *For, "All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall."*

Isa 40:6-7 *A voice says, "Cry out." And I said, "What shall I cry?" "All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field. The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath of the Lord blows on them. Surely the people are grass."*

Isa 51:12 *"I, even I, am he who comforts you. Who are you that you fear mortal men, the sons of men, who are but grass."*

Job 7:6 *"My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and they come to an end without hope."*

Job 9:25 *"My days are swifter than a runner; they fly away without a glimpse of joy."*

Psa 39:5 *You have made my days a mere handbreadth; the span of my years is as nothing before you. Each man's life is but a breath.*

Psa 49:12 *But man, despite his riches, does not endure; he is like the beasts that perish.*

Psa 78:39 *He remembered that they were but flesh, a passing breeze that does not return.*

Psa 103:14-16 *For he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust. As for man, his days are like grass, he flourishes like a flower of the field; the wind blows over it and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more.*

Psa 64:6 *They plot injustice and say, "We have devised a perfect plan!" Surely the mind and heart of man are cunning.*

III. James 01:12 The Reward: A Crown of Life

How can a believer conquer trials and temptations? Third, he must remember the reward for persevering. He shall be blessed and shall receive a crown of life. Note exactly what is said.

1. The person who perseveres under trial shall be "blessed" (makarios). This refers to this life, to the here and now. The word blessed means inward and spiritual joy and satisfaction; an inner assurance and confidence that carries one through all the trials and temptations of life no matter the pain, sorrow, loss or grief. Simply stated, the person is secure in this life. He knows that God is looking after and caring for him and is going to deliver him from all the corruption and evil of this life including death, and give him life eternal.

Luke 6:48 *"He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built."*

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.*

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

2. The person shall receive the crown of life in the next world. What is the crown of life? In the Greek this is what is called “the genitive of apposition”; that is, *life itself* is the crown (A.T. Robertson. *Word Pictures In The New Testament*, Vol. 6, p. 17). The believer who endures the trials of life shall be crowned with life itself, eternal life — life that will go on and on, never ending. The eternal life that will be given the believer will shine more brightly than all the earthly crowns that have ever been worn by the rulers of this world.

Thought 1. Just imagine the actual moment when Christ will crown us with the crown of life. Being crowned with the crown of life...

- will fill us with unbroken joy and rejoicing.
- will bestow upon us honour and dignity.
- will give us a deep and perfect sense of victory and triumph.
- will conform us to the image of eternal royalty.

John 14:1-2 *“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you.”*

2 Cor 4:17 *For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.*

Phil 3:20-21 *But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Saviour from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.*

1 Pet 4:12-13 *Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.*

1 John 2:25 *And this is what he promised us — even eternal life.*

3. The person who endures trials and temptations is the person who will be blessed and receive the crown of life. Endurance is an absolute essential (see note 2, pt. 1, Jas 1:2). A person has to confront the trials and temptations with the spirit of a conqueror; he has...
- to endure • to persevere
 - to be steadfast • to stand fast

He has to conquer and triumph through Christ Jesus our Lord, and then he shall receive the promises of God. A person has to be tried and tested and has to prove faithful. He has to endure to the end in order to be saved and to inherit the crown of life.

Thought 1. The weakling caves in. Therefore, he does not experience the sense of being blessed. He does not have the confidence and assurance of God’s presence and

care nor of eternity. He is not sure that he will receive the crown of life. And Scripture says he will not receive it.

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

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.*

Ga1 6:9 *Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time He will reap a harvest if we do not give up.*

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.*

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.*

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

Psa 17:3 *Though you probe my heart and examine me at night, though you test me, you will find nothing; I have resolved that my mouth will not sin.*

4. The person who loves the Lord is the person who perseveres. He is the person who is faithful to the Lord. He follows and obeys the Lord, doing all that the Lord commands. He follows Christ, obeying His commandments and enduring all the trials and temptations of this life.

John 14:21 *“Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.”*

John. 15:10, 14 *“If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father’s commands and remain in his love.” “You are my friends, if you do what I command.”*

1 Cor 10:13 *No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.*

Heb 5:8 *Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered.*

Rev 3:10 *Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth. ■*