

James 1:5-12

Trials (continued)

Wisdom

Faith and Doubting

Accepting Things We Cannot Change

Roxborough Bible Chapel

December 4, 2016

OUTLINE

- **Review of James 1:1-4**
- **James 1:5 - Asking God for Wisdom**
- **James 1:6-8 - Faith and Doubting**
- **James 1:9-11**
 - **Lowly brother should glory in his exaltation**
 - **The rich should rejoice in their lowliness**
- **James 1:12 - A crown of life for those who stands up under afflictions.**

Review of James 1:1-4

- 1:1 James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad: Greetings.
- 1:2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials,
- 1:3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.
- 1:4 But let patience have *its* perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

Review of James 1:1-4

- **Author = James**
 - The half-brother of our Lord Jesus
 - Bondservant of God and the Lord Jesus Christ
- **Recipient = The 12 tribes that were scattered abroad**
 - We can consider it to be written to us as well
- **Trials**
 - Counting them for joy
- **Testing of our faith produces patience**
- **Perfection**

James 1:4

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 - **Tribulation (Trials) → Perseverance (Patience)**
 - **Perseverance → Character**
 - **Character → Hope**
 - **Hope does not disappoint!!!**

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- **James 1:4 says that we should let patience have its perfect work so that we will be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.**
 - **“Perfect” is not sinless perfection but spiritual maturity**

James 1:5

1:5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

- **Only divine wisdom enables believers to be joyous and submissive in the trials of life.**
- **So IF you lack wisdom or spiritual insight (don't we all, especially in the midst of trial?), we should ask God, telling Him about all of our perplexity and ignorance.**
- **IF we desire to find God's purposes in the trials, then God will reward us liberally.**
- **Don't worry about God scolding you. He is pleased when we are teachable and submissive to His will.**
- **The Bible does not give specific answers to the practically infinite variety of problems that arise in life. However, it does give general principles that we need to apply to the situation at hand.**
- **Spiritual wisdom is the practical application of our Lord's teachings to everyday situations.**

James 1:6-8

1:6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.

1:7 For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord;

1:8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

- We must approach God in faith (no doubting)
 - We must believe He loves and cares, and that nothing is impossible with Him.
 - If we doubt His goodness and His power, we will have no stability in time of trouble.
- If we waver in our faith (strong in faith then doubtful then strong in faith, then doubtful, etc.), we are unstable.
- God is not honored by this kind of wavering faith. Our faith should not be driven by our feelings (driven and tossed by the wind) but by the promises of God in His Word which we can stand firmly upon. (“Standing on the Promises of God”)
- God does not give insight to unstable people like this. God gives wisdom to those who ask and then God gives it to us liberally and without reproach.
- (Psa 37:4 Delight yourself also in the LORD, And He shall give you the desires of your heart.)
- If we take delight in the Lord and the trials that He puts us through, He will give us insight (wisdom), because He promises it and we know that it is the Lord’s will that we have wisdom.

The Back Pew – Jeff Larson



But let him ask in faith, with no doubt for he who doubts is like a wave on the sea driven and tossed by the wind. **James 1:6**

Surge of the sea

Rising to great heights
/ Falling back into
valleys

Strong in faith /
Doubtful

Optimism / Pessimism

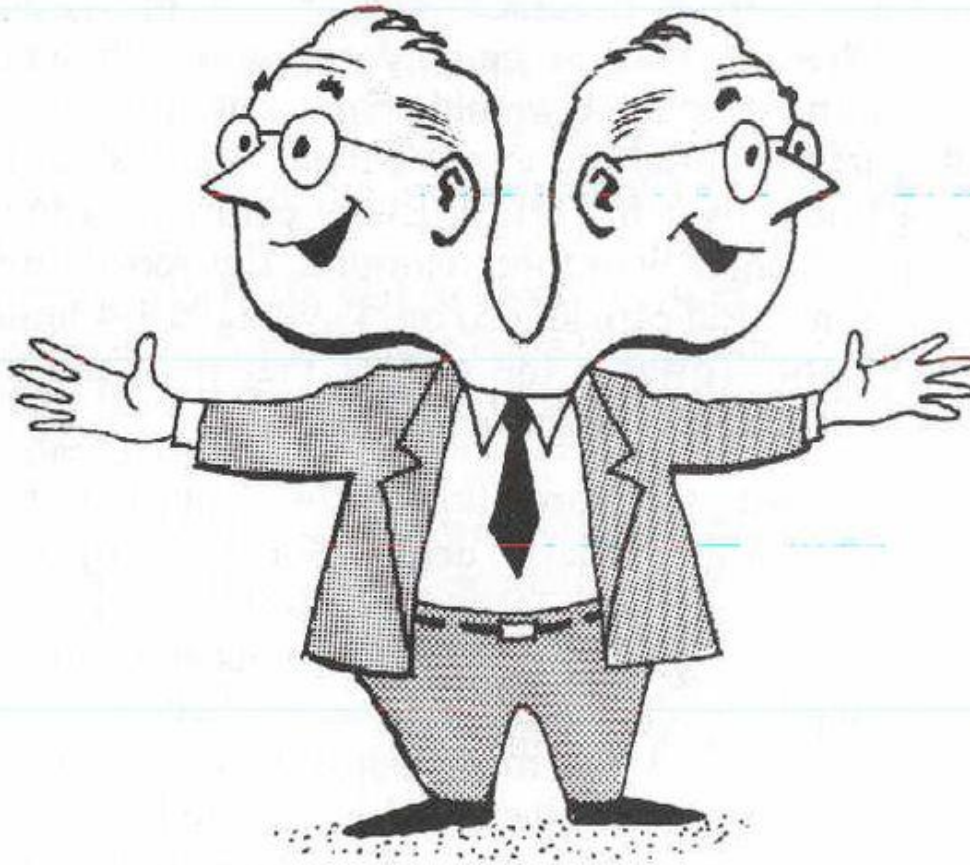
Faith and Doubting (Double-minded)

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Doubtful

Full of faith



Faith and Doubting (Double-minded)

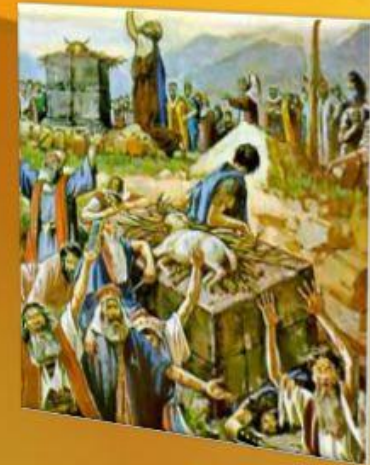
James 1:6-8



FAITH AND DOUBT

"For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways." (James 1:7-8)

James asked us the same Elijah did, "How long will you falter between two opinions?" (1K. 18:21). The "double-minded man" is hesitant between faith and doubt.



Our faith must be alive; it must grow. When we seek God and trust Him in all circumstances, we are exercising our faith. That's how it grows.

A God-given faith that is purified in the refining pot of trials can move mountains. That's a doubtless faith.



James 1:9

1:9 Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation,

- Whether a man is poor or rich, he can obtain lasting spiritual benefits from the trials and crises of life.
 - When a **lowly brother** finds himself dissatisfied and discouraged, he can always rejoice that he is a child of God.
 - **The lowly brother** probably has no control over his humble circumstances. There is no reason to believe he is lazy or careless. But God has seen fit to place him in a low income bracket and that is where he has been ever since.
 - Perhaps if he had been rich, he never would have accepted Christ.
 - Now that he is in Christ, he is blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies.
 - What should he do? Should he rebel against his station in life? Should he become bitter and jealous? No, he should accept from God the circumstances over which he has no control and rejoice in his spiritual blessings.
- Too many Christians go through life rebelling against the position that God has put them in on this earth.
 - Girls with a flair for baseball wish they were boys.
 - Young people wish they were older, and old people want to be younger.
 - Short people want to be tall, and tall ones wish they weren't so conspicuous.
 - Some people even say, "I wish I were dead!"
- All this is absurd! The Christian attitude is to accept from God things which we cannot change. They are God's destiny for us, and we should make the most of them for His glory and for the blessing of others. We should say with the Apostle Paul: "By the grace of God I am what I am" (1Co 15:10).
- As we forget our disabilities and lose ourselves in service for others, we will come to realize that spiritual people love us for what we are, not for our appearance, for instance.

James 1:10-11

1:10 but the rich in his humiliation, because as a flower of the field he will pass away.

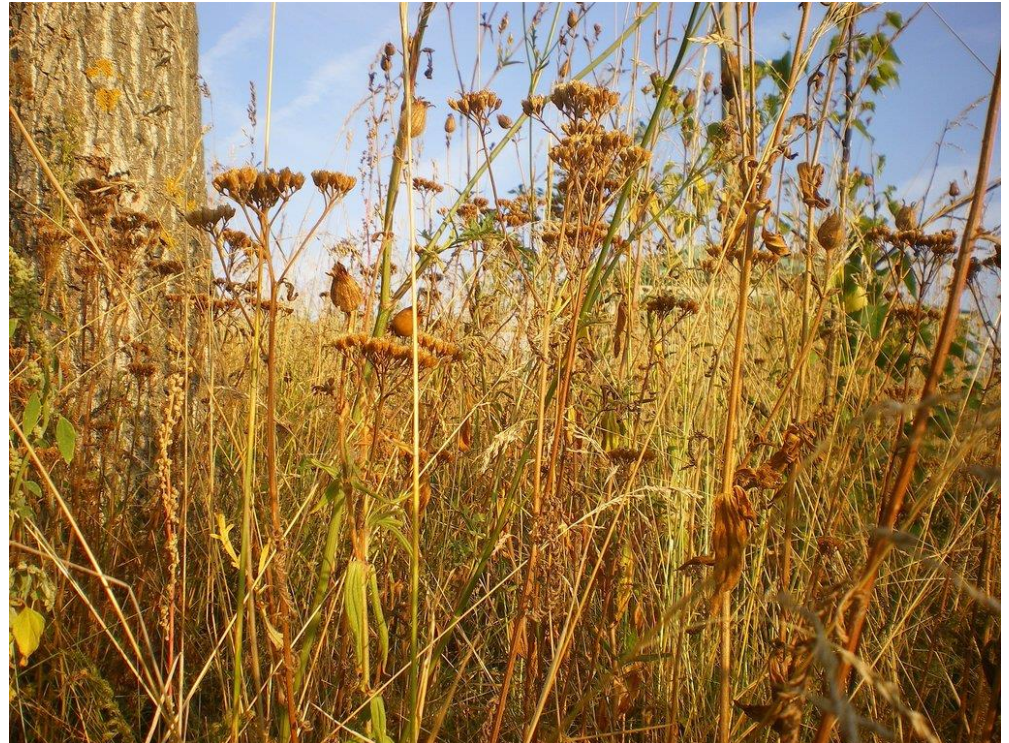
1:11 For no sooner has the sun risen with a burning heat than it withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beautiful appearance perishes. So the rich man also will fade away in his pursuits.

- James does not say, “Let the rich man rejoice in his riches.” Rather he says that the rich can rejoice that he is made low or humbled.
- He agrees with Jer 9:23-24: Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise *man* glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty *man* glory in his might, Nor let the rich *man* glory in his riches; But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I *am* the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the LORD.
- The rich man may actually find real cause for rejoicing should he be stripped of his material possessions.
 - Perhaps business reverses would bring him to the Lord.
 - Or if he is already a Christian, then he could take joyfully the spoiling of his goods knowing he has in heaven a better and more enduring possession.
 - Earthly riches will pass away, like the flower of the field.
 - If a man has nothing but material wealth, then all his plans will end at the grave
 - James mentions the withered grass as an illustration of the fleeting life of a rich man and the limited value of his riches.
 - He will fade away in the midst of his pursuits.
 - Neither sun nor scorching wind can affect *spiritual* values. Any trial that takes away our love of passing, earthly things and sets our affections on things above is a blessing in disguise. Thus the same grace that exalts the lowly humbles the rich. Both are cause for rejoicing.

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James 1:12

1:12 Blessed *is* the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

- In concluding his discussion of trials, James pronounces a blessing on the person who stands up under afflictions.
- When such a man has stood the test or has been approved, he will receive the crown of life.
 - The crown is a victor's wreath, to be awarded at the Judgment Seat of Christ.
 - Eternal life is not the reward for enduring trials
 - But those who have endured with faith will be honored for that kind of life, and will enjoy a deeper appreciation of eternal life in heaven.
 - Everyone's cup will be full in heaven but people will have different sized cups—different capacities for enjoying heaven.
 - This is probably what is in view in the expression crown of life; it refers to a fuller enjoyment of the glories of heaven.

Conclusions

- How do we react when various forms of testing come into our lives?
 - Do we complain bitterly against the misfortunes of life?
 - Or do we rejoice and thank the Lord for them?
 - Do we advertise our trials or do we bear them quietly?
 - Do we live in the future, waiting for our circumstances to improve, or do we live in the present, seeking to see the hand of God in all that comes to us?
 - Do we indulge in self-pity and seek sympathy or do we submerge self in a life of service for others?