

James 5:9-10
How to Face Trials Patiently - 2

1

Introduction

Trouble is an inevitable part of life, and the universal experience of it reflects the reality that we live in a fallen, cursed world.

In addition to the normal trials of life, believers face persecution for the cause of Christ. The church will face rejection by the world because it rejects the gospel (Matt. 5:10–12).

2

Introduction

James gives six practical perspectives enabling believers to patiently endure trials: anticipate the Lord's coming, recognize the Lord's judgment, follow the Lord's servants, understand the Lord's blessing, realize the Lord's purpose, and consider the Lord's character.

3

James 5:7-11

Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See *how* the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. ⁸ You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

⁹ Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door! ¹⁰ My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience. ¹¹ Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end *intended by* the Lord—that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.

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Recognize the Lord's Coming

James 5:7-8

Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See *how* the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. ⁸ You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

The first reason James gives for enduring hardship is the anticipation for Jesus' return. His return is imminent. That means He can return at any time. Maybe He will return today. We can all hang on just a little bit longer!

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Recognize the Lord's Judgment

James 5:9

Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!

James depicts the Lord Jesus Christ as the Judge about to enter the judgment hall. The hope of the return of Christ provides comfort in the midst of trials. There is also the sobering reality that when Jesus returns, He will "judge the living and the dead" (2 Tim. 4:1; 1 Pet. 4:5; Acts 10:42).

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Recognize the Lord's Judgment

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Living in difficult circumstances can cause a believer to become frustrated and lose patience. The term "**grumble**" means "**to groan within oneself**," "**to complain**" or "**to sigh**". It is so easy to complain and groan during trials.

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Recognize the Lord's Judgment

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It is also easy to complain "**against one another**" especially against those who appear to be suffering less than we are or who seem to be adding to our trouble. This "**grumble**" is a bitter, resentful spirit that manifests itself in one's relationships with others.

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Recognize the Lord's Judgment

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The reason that James' readers were to avoid this bitter attitude and complaining was "**lest you be condemned**". Paul echoes this same thought in Phil 2:14-16. Those who do not know the Lord will face final judgment and its resulting sentence to eternal damnation.

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But even believers will be judged. Paul wrote, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10; cf. Rom. 14:10; 2 Tim. 4:7-8). This is not a judgment of salvation; it is at that time our work will be tried by fire (1 Cor. 3:15-16).

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The immanency of Christ's return is seen in the fact that "the judge is standing at the door". Both the encouraging hope of Christ's return as the end of suffering and the recognition of future judgment for believers' works should produce patience in suffering.

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Follow the Lord's Servants

James 5:10

My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience.

To further encourage believers to endure unjust suffering, James pointed out the example of the prophets who had endured suffering with patience. "Suffering" is a compound word "evil" and "to suffer". "Patience" translates a word which refers to patience with people.

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The prophets serve as an example of those who patiently endured evil treatment from people because they spoke in the name of the Lord. To speak was their function (cf. Jer. 20:9), as the often-repeated Old Testament phrase “thus says the Lord” attests. The name of the Lord represents all that He is, does, and wills. The prophets were God’s spokesmen.

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The rejection of God’s spokesmen is a familiar and tragic theme in Israel’s history. Jesus denounced the Pharisees as the “children of them which killed the prophets” (Matt. 23:31). Later in that chapter, Jesus described Jerusalem (symbolic of the entire nation of Israel) as the city “the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! ”
(v. 37).

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Stephen, on trial before the Sanhedrin, challenged them, “Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers” (Acts 7:52; cf. Neh. 9:26; Dan. 9:6).

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The persecution endured by Israel's prophets is a sad litany of rejection and abuse. Moses had to put up with the stiff-necked, rebellious Israelites who left Egypt (Ex. 17:4). David was hunted by Saul as remorselessly as one hunts a partridge in the mountains (1 Sam. 18:5–26:25). Elijah faced hostility from the evil king Ahab (1 Kings 18:17; 21:20) and his wicked wife, Jezebel (1 Kings 19:1-2).

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Jeremiah endured opposition throughout his ministry (cf. Jer. 18:18; 20:1-2; 26:8; 32:2; 37:13-16; 38:1-6; 43:1-4; 44:15-19), bringing him such sorrow that he became known as the weeping prophet. Ezekiel endured the death of his wife during the course of his ministry (Ezek. 24:15-18).

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Daniel was torn from his homeland as a young boy and later thrown into a den of lions because of his faithfulness to God (Dan. 6:1ff.). Hosea endured a heartbreaking marriage (Hos. 1:2), Amos faced lies and scorn (Amos 7:10-13), and John the Baptist was imprisoned and beheaded for his testimony to God's truth (Matt. 14:10).

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Hebrews 11 commends a host of prophets who, although not as well known as those just mentioned, were no less faithful. The patience under trials exhibited by those faithful prophets should provide encouragement for believers to run the Christian race with diligence and faithfulness (Heb. 12:1), no matter how severe the persecution.

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So What ...

You and I are no different. We are each to live our lives with faithful endurance. The prophets were men like ourselves. They trust God for their strength and endurance during trials. If they could do it, so can you.

I do not know what you are facing, but we are all here to support and encourage you. As God told Joshua, "Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go" (Joshua 1:9).

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