

James 5:11  
How to Face Trials Patiently - 5

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## **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).

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## 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.

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### 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. <sup>8</sup> You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

<sup>9</sup> Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door! <sup>10</sup> My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience. <sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>8</sup> 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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## **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 encourage believers to endure unjust suffering, James pointed out the example of the prophets who had endured suffering with patience.

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## **Understand the Lord's Blessing**

James 5:11a

Indeed we count them blessed who endure.

The fourth motive for patiently enduring trials is the knowledge that God blesses those who have endured. "Endure" refers to patiently persevering difficult circumstances. People who endure are the objects of divine favor.

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## Understand the Lord's Blessing

James 5:11a

Indeed we count them blessed who endure.

God's blessing does not come to people who do great things, but to people who endure. Those who will receive the greatest blessing in the life to come are those who have endured the greatest suffering in the present world (cf. Matt. 20:20-23). The hope of blessing now and in the future glory should motivate suffering Christians to patient endurance.

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## Realize the Lord's Purpose

James 5:11b

You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end *intended* by the Lord.

The incredible story of the endurance of Job amid his trials was one of the most popular stories in Jewish history. Job endured unimaginable, unexplained suffering. He faced the fierce attacks of Satan, the loss of his children, his wealth, his health, his reputation, and, worst of all, his sense of God's presence.

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## **Realize the Lord's Purpose**

James 5:11b

You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end *intended* by the Lord.

It is true that Job vocalized his misery (3:1-11), bemoaned the false counsel of his misguided comforters (16:2ff.), and cried out in confusion to God (7:11-16). Yet “through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God” (Job 1:22; cf. 2:10). Job’s triumphant statement “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him” (13:15) exemplifies his patient acceptance of his trials.

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## **Realize the Lord's Purpose**

James 5:11b

You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end *intended* by the Lord.

The “end” or purpose of the Lord’s dealings with Job provides hope for all who patiently endure suffering. There were at least four important divine purposes for Job’s suffering: to test his faith and prove it genuine; to thwart Satan’s attempt to destroy that faith; to strengthen Job’s faith and enable him to see God more clearly; and to increase Job’s blessedness. All those purposes were realized because despite all his trials Job remained loyal to God. The book of Job closes by enumerating God’s blessing of his loyal, faithful servant (Job 42:10-17).

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## **Realize the Lord's Purpose**

James 5:11b

You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end *intended* by the Lord.

The example of Job encourages those suffering trials to patiently endure, realizing the Lord's purpose is to strengthen them, perfect them, and, in the end, to richly bless them. In the words of the apostle Paul, "God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28).

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## **Consider the Lord's Character**

James 5:11c

That the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.

James closed his exhortation to patiently endure trials with a reminder of the character of God. It is not uncommon for those in the midst of severe trials to question whether God really cares about them. But in all their trials, believers can take comfort in the truth that "the Lord is very compassionate and merciful". That is the clear testimony of the Old Testament (e.g., Ex. 33:18–19; 34:6; Num. 14:18; 2 Chron. 30:9; Neh. 9:17; Ps. 86:15; 103:8; 111:4; 112:4; 116:5; 145:8; Isa. 30:18; Lam. 3:22–23; Jonah 4:2).

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## **Consider the Lord's Character**

James 5:11c

That the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.

“Compassionate” literally means “many-boweled,” reflecting the Hebrew idiom which spoke of the bowels or stomach as the seat of emotion. To say that God is “many-boweled” is to affirm that He has an enormous capacity for compassion.

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## **Consider the Lord's Character**

James 5:11c

That the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.

That God is merciful is the unmistakable teaching of Scripture (cf. Ps. 86:15; Ezek. 39:25; Luke 1:78; Rom. 9:16; 11:30, 32; 12:1; 15:9; 2 Cor. 1:3; Eph. 2:4; Heb. 2:17; 1 Pet. 1:3; 2:10). Because of God's great mercy, Peter exhorted believers, “[Cast] all your care upon him; for he care for you” (1 Pet. 5:7; cf. Ps. 55:22; Phil. 4:6). Believers' suffering elicits a merciful, compassionate response from their heavenly Father (Ps. 103:13).

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## **So What ...**

Any trial, suffering, or persecution that Christians face can be patiently endured by anticipating the Lord's coming, recognizing the Lord's judgment, following the example set by the Lord's faithful servants, understanding the Lord's blessing, realizing the Lord's purpose, and considering the Lord's compassionate, merciful character. Those who do so will be able to say triumphantly with the psalmist, "For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for life; Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning" (Ps. 30:5).