

Triumph Through Trouble - 3
James 1:9-12

1

Introduction

Trials are an essential means that God uses to perfect our Christian character. We have learned that we are to rejoice in the midst of trial. We are not to rejoice because trials come, but because of their possible benefits. James gives us five keys for persevering through trials. We have learned that we are to (1) have a joyful attitude (2) an understanding mind, (3) a submissive will, and (4) a believing heart.

2

James 1:9-12

Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation, ¹⁰ but the rich in his humiliation, because as a flower of the field he will pass away. 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.

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.

3

The Means of Perseverance

It is a reality that the believer will face difficult circumstances in life. The question is not if one will face problems, but how will one respond. Our response will be an outward declaration to our inner faith and dependence upon God. James gives help and encouragement to the Christian facing trials in order that they will be able to stand fast and persevere to the glory of Christ.

4

A Humble Spirit

James 1:9-10

Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation, ¹⁰ but the rich in his humiliation, because as a flower of the field he will pass away.

The fifth means to persevere through trials is to have a humble spirit. James addresses "the lowly brother". This refers to a brother who is economically poor. This represented most of the scattered and persecuted Jewish believers to whom James wrote. Many of these persecuted Jews had been well off financially. Many had their homes and other possessions confiscated and others had to leave them behind when they fled their persecutors.

Tradition states that the daughter of "Joseph of Arimathea", the rich man who gave his tomb to Jesus, was forced to beg for bread in the streets because their possessions were confiscated by the Sanhedrin.

5

A Humble Spirit

James 1:9-10

Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation, ¹⁰ but the rich in his humiliation, because as a flower of the field he will pass away.

Despite present circumstances, however, such a believer was to "glory in his exaltation". It needs to be recognized that the believer of low degree is exalted as a child of God. He can rejoice in the countless blessings that come to God's child.

The world may consider the brother of low degree as worthless, but in the eyes of God, he is exalted. He may be hungry, but he has the bread of life. He may be thirsty, but he has the water of life. He may be poor, but he has eternal riches.

Men may cast him aside, but he has been received into the presence and fellowship of God. He may have no home on earth, but he has an abiding place in heaven.

6

A Humble Spirit

James 1:9-10

Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation, ¹⁰ but the rich in his humiliation, because as a flower of the field he will pass away.

When God allows his children to suffer and face loss, it is for the purpose of making them spiritually mature. This is a blessing of infinitely greater value than anything that has been lost or has wanted but never possessed. The believer who is deprived in this life can accept that temporary and insignificant loss because he has a future divine inheritance that is both eternal and secure (**1 Peter 1:3-6; 1 John 3:1-3; Romans 8:16-18**).

7

A Humble Spirit

James 1:9-10

Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation, ¹⁰ but the rich in his humiliation, because as a flower of the field he will pass away.

In verse 10, James presents the other side of the principle. Just as the one who is materially poor should rejoice in his spiritual riches, that materially rich man should rejoice in his humiliation. The idea is that a believer who is materially well off, healthy, and otherwise physically blessed should rejoice when trials come, for they teach him the temporary nature of those material things and their inability to give inner and lasting satisfaction or help. Both he and his possessions are like flowering grass and will pass away. (Also see 1 Peter 1:24 cf. Isaiah 40:6-7).

8

A Humble Spirit

James 1:10b-11

because as a flower of the field he will pass away. 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.

Man has a natural tendency to trust in material things. James draws attention to this danger of wealth. He points to their temporariness and emphasizes the danger of trusting in them. Here a picture is painted of the flowers and grasses of Israel. They flourish in February and dry up by May. The loss of material things is meant to drive the rich person to the Lord and to greater spiritual maturity, blessing, and satisfaction. At this point both poor and rich are exactly alike. Neither material possessions nor lack of them is of any ultimate consequence. What is important is a trusting relationship with Jesus, who showers all of His children with spiritual wealth that will never diminish or fail to satisfy. As the poor brother forgets all his earthly poverty, so the rich brother forgets all his earthly riches. The two are equals by faith in Christ.

9

A Humble Spirit

James 1:10b-11

because as a flower of the field he will pass away. 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.

When you lose a loved one, wealth is of no comfort. When you lose your health or are betrayed by a friend, money cannot buy you peace of mind or decrease the pain. Trials are the great equalizers, bringing all of God's children to dependence on Him. Wealth does not bring God closer, nor does poverty keep Him away. We need to remember to encouragement of Hebrews 4:16, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. "

10

The Reward for Perseverance

James 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.

“Blessed is the man that endures temptation”. The word “blessed” here is the same word used in Beatitudes. Blessed means more than mere happiness or a carefree life. It carries the idea of profound inner joy and inner satisfaction that only the Lord is able to bestow on those who faithfully and patiently endure trials. 1 Peter 1:5-7 states, “(You) who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.⁶ In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials,⁷ that the genuineness of your faith, *being* much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

11

The Reward for Perseverance

James 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.

The one who perseveres under trial is the man who never relinquishes his confident trust in God. This man has been approved by passing through the test with his faith intact. The principle is simple: perseverance brings God’s approval, and His approval brings the crown of life. The word crown here represents the wreath placed on the victor’s head in athletic events. Here it shows God’s approval, for it gives evidence of eternal life. Perseverance **does not result** in salvation and eternal life, but it is the result and evidence of salvation and eternal life.

12

The Reward for Perseverance

James 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.

James also associates faithful perseverance under trial with genuine love for God. Perseverance is one of the surest evidences of those who love Him. Love and genuine faith are often associated together. 1 John 5:3 states, “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous”. (Also see 1 John 4:8, 16, 1 Peter 1:8, and 1 Cor. 16:22).

13

So What ...

Not everyone who has made a “profession of faith” is a true Christian. It is not the profession, but the faith that brings about salvation. Many have attested to having faith (believing that it is truth) in Christ and His Word. Yet their lives declare that they really do not believe for they are building their lives on another foundation. How a person handles trials and their love and obedience to God and His word, are outward declarations of their faith. Those who endured trials to God’s glory have demonstrated that their faith is genuine, and they are building their lives on a foundation which cannot be moved.

14