

The Epistle of  
**James**  
New Testament Letters Series



**Lesson 6—Having a Faithful, Trusting, and Prayerful Life**

**Focus: Ch. 5 v.1-20**

**1. God’s rebuke to those wealthy who selfishly oppress the poor (v.1-6)**

- a. *The Holy Spirit, through the Lord’s brother, James, spoke out strongly in no uncertain terms against the corruption and sins of many who were among the wealthy classes! “Come now you rich, weep and howl...” (v.1). There was no mincing of words; no sugar coating of the plain truth; no soft, pleasing, conciliating words escaped from the pen of James! With boldness and powerfully direct words the brother of our Lord cut right to the heart of the sin and corruption existing among the richer classes. He did not aim to please them by soft and flattering words or entreaties like so many of today might do, but rather, he spoke with that holy boldness born of the Holy Spirit which was necessary to please God and to rebuke the popular sins of men. **A messenger of God should never withhold their tongue from speaking what is necessary to cut against sin.** Sin must be rebuked in all its forms—open and popular though it may be; held by the rich, by the poor, or any other, it must still be rebuked. The Scriptures say, “Cry loud, spare not, lift up your voice like a trumpet and show my people their transgression...[or] sin” (Isaiah 58:1).*
- b. **“The Laborer is worthy of his hire” and “a false weight is an abomination to the Lord” (Luke 10:7; Proverbs 11:1).** *Workers deserve to be paid what they are worth and God commands that all business should be done with fairness to others! “Love your neighbor” and even “your enemy” God says! We should love every soul. Anything less would be sin in us. When one holds back the wages of another and practices fraud of others merely to get extra coins for themselves, God becomes angry at the injustice which was done, and He will repay it. James noted that this was the case with many (5:4). Selfishness, pride, greed, and covetousness were the sins at the heart of this corruption and injustice! Men lived in vanity, extravagance, and luxury all to the fattening of their own souls while others suffered around them. **This is one of the great sins of today too! God has always had a great heart to care for the poor, and has even desired that the rich would take up the work of helping the poor** so that the character and heart of the rich would learn to be more considerate of others. The Law spoke on this (See Deuteronomy 15:7-11). **God hates the sin of covetousness and selfishness** which has existed among many of the rich. **Jesus rebuked it sharply (Luke 12:15-21).** Wealth or earthly riches can bring with them a whole host of dangers to our souls (1 Timothy 6:9, 10). **The Bible does provide some good models of wealthy men who were “rich toward God” (Luke 12:21)** and not selfish with their means, such as the converted and repentant Nicodemus; Zacchaeus, after his conversion, Joseph of Arimathea, and also Job (in the Old Testament). Job was quite wealthy but was also a very generous and righteous man toward God and others. **He sought out the cause the poor and looked for ways to help the needy (Job 1:1-3; 29:16).** This life-style and character was very pleasing to God! However, these kind of men are most certainly few and far between!*

**2. Being a patient and honest servant of the Lord—Bearing Trials! (v.7-12)**

- a. *(v.7,8) Believers, like farmers in the field, must know how to be patient. All good things will come in their proper time and season. We must patiently do our work, and wait for these good things to come. Each rain comes in its season, etc. As we wait for the Lord’s return we should “establish” our hearts—let our hearts be firm, prepared for, and trusting in the Lord. Surely, He is coming soon! Let us be ready and laboring for Him!*

- b. **An extra word on patience:** *Being patient is an important virtue to have in any situation. Though often in our world today you or I may be pushed to live a busy and hectic life that sometimes (or often in some cases) may cause our patience to run thin. Patience is one of the fruits of God's Spirit and we definitely need to have it! (See Galatians 5:22). Besides just praying and reading the Bible for more patience in our lives, there are some additional things we can also do. The value of our quiet time with God cannot be underestimated. It is essential. We can also remember that the Creator Himself has designed our bodies which are firmly connected with our mental and emotional status. If we lack nutrition, exercise, water, sunshine, temperance in work or other habits, fresh air, rest, the above trust in God, then we can be sure that our bodies, minds, and nerves will suffer. We will feel the stress and push for time; our emotional state will be weary and imbalanced. All these things lead us away from a patient life-style and will cause to be impatient. We need to care for these things, seek God, and take care of our bodies and minds. Then you will truly have the blessed patience that God desires to produce in you!*
- c. (v.9-11) **Having a grumbling and complaining attitude is not of God.** *We should not be like that for it is displeasing to God, and it is contagious to others, affecting them in a negative way. This type of evil speaking or complaint can only spread from one person to another and will bring down the mind from where it ought to be, and from the contemplation of God, His goodness, and His holy themes. This spirit does NOT represent God rightly and it is sure to bring more unhappiness, misery, and doubts to others. It does not express love or joy to God, nor does it show forgiving and peaceful love to man. Therefore, it reeks of sin. The Bible says, "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice" (Philippians 4:4). Since it is impossible to "rejoice in the Lord," or to lead others to do so, while you are busy grumbling and complaining about things, then we ought not to be found doing it. Grumbling and complaining was once a highly contagious sin in Israel that led to the whole nation wandering aimlessly in the desert for 40 years before finally dying there as a punishment, and answered prayer, from God. (See Numbers 14).*
- d. (v.12) *James concludes this section with a call for straight forward and honest speech. A Christian's word should be their bond. This exact teaching was also given very clearly by Jesus Christ in His greatest of all sermons—the Sermon on the Mount! (See Matthew 5:33-37). What we speak should be straight forward and honest.*

### 3. The healing power of prayer, praising, trusting, and seeking God! (v.13-18)

- a. (v.13-16) *The Bible teaches that God's power and connection to Him through prayer are vitality important for bringing health and healing to our bodies. The power of God is an incredible power and He brings healing to those are in need. At different times and in various ways we see that God works miracles to save the sick. He does this among many—both inside His fold of believers, and outside (in order to reach them). Anointing with oil and praying for one, was often done. God's promises and even methods for healing are outlined in Mark 6:13; 16:18. God worked many such miracles through the Apostle Paul (Acts 19:11,12). Sometimes we see that God heals before us, other times it seems He does not, for whatever reason. Ultimately, we must know that the Lord wants to save us both spiritual and physically. He will give us healing in these areas (5:15,16). Isaiah 38:1-8 gives us the story of King Hezekiah and how God healed him and spared him for another 15 years because of his prayer. The Bible also points out how that we should trust in God and His ability far more than any physician of the world (2 Chronicles 16:12).*
- b. *Don't ever underestimate what the prayer of faith can do (v.16-18). We may think "who are we" but even all the people before us, such as those in the Bible, were just but men. We too may have experiences just like them through faith in God!*

- 4. **Rescuing the erring (v.19, 20)** *As a brother or sister in the faith we should realize that we have a loving responsibility to look out for one another. We should not be condemning and judgmental of others, but if we see someone obviously wandering down a wrong path that would lead to destruction then we ought to, out of Christian love, say someone about it, in a loving way to them that can be of help and of soul-saving power. This is a delicate work and the manner in which it is done should be a careful one. In love, humility, and self-sacrifice, reach out to others!*

### Questions for the Heart:

**Is it your desire and choice to live a faithful, trusting, and prayerful life together with God? \_\_\_\_\_**