

**“Spiritual Maturity: Connection with God by Waiting in Patience”**

**Intro:** We have come in our study of James and SPIRITUAL MATURITY to the final chapter: Chapter 5.

Let's note from where we have come, and to where we are going in our final lessons.

Chapter 1: Spiritual Maturity is CONFIDENCE IN TRIALS - “consider it all joy...”

Chapter 2: Spiritual Maturity is CONVICTION IN ACTION - “faith without works is dead”

Chapter 3: Spiritual Maturity is CONTROLLING OF WORD and DEED - “no one can tame the tongue.”

Chapter 4: Spiritual Maturity is CLEANSING OF SELF - “cleanse your hands... purify your hearts ...”

Chapter 5: Spiritual Maturity is CONNECTING WITH GOD in emulating specific characteristics and passions that our His. We will look at 5 such connection points:

In overview of the chapter – note that the first 6 verses address not “brethren” but “you rich” (5:1)

James is not writing the rich, but as the brethren read this section they see God's heart and future for the arrogant rich, and so they (we) see God's lessons for us regarding how we use our wealth

Following these 6 verses, James again addresses the brethren specifically (v. 7) and finishes the letter by giving FIVE commands of duty. Each of these five CONNECT with God for our MATURITY.

1. (v. 7-8) **BE PATIENT** in waiting for the coming of the Lord – just as God is PATIENT with us
2. (v. 9-11) **DO NOT COMPLAIN** (no whining) against one another – just as God doesn't whine about us
3. (v. 12) **LET YOUR YES BE YES** (mean what you say) in all – just as God is truth
4. (v. 13-18) **PRAY** fervently - just as God communicates with us
5. (v. 19-20) **TURN A SINNER** from error - just as God is Savior to all men in heart and action

**OUR TEXT: JAMES 5: 1-8**

- 1 Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries which are coming upon you.
- 2 Your riches have rotted, and your garments have become moth-eaten.
- 3 Your gold and your silver have rusted; and their rust will be a witness against you and will consume your flesh like fire. It is in the last days that you have stored up your treasure!
- 4 Behold, the pay of the laborers who mowed your fields, and which has been withheld by you, cries out against you; and the outcry of those who did the harvesting has reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.
- 5 You have lived luxuriously on the earth and led a life of wanton pleasure; you have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter.
- 6 You have condemned and put to death the righteous man; he does not resist

you.

- 7** Be patient, therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord Behold, the farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains.
- 8** You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

### **V. 1-6 Unlike the rest of James**

Written to “you rich” – not “brethren” (see again in v. 7)

Scathing / seething in its language and tone

Speaking of the ungodly (non-believer) rich / note: 2 distinct classes rich/poor in that day

And yet addressing the “brethren” to teach of the danger of riches and its misuse

*Luke 6:24 [Jesus:] But woe to you who are rich, for you are receiving your comfort in full.*

*Luke 18:24 [Jesus:] ...How hard it is for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God.*

*1 Timothy 6:10 For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil . . .*

### **V 1 If the UNGODLY RICH ONLY KNEW**

1. Weep (sob uncontrollably) (2) Howl (in agony) for miseries to come (speaking of hell)

### **V 2 3 KINDS of WEALTH (and decay) (3 “G” words) in James’ world**

1. Grain (“riches”) - which would “rot”
2. Garments – which would become “moth-eaten”
3. Gold/silver which would “rust” or corrode

Trusting in these as “your riches” will ultimately “consume your flesh like fire”

### **V 2 b - 6 4 SINS of the UNGODLY RICH**

#### **1. Hoarding** (“stored up your treasure” – v. 2b)

Luke 12 – parable of the rich man who built bigger barns

*Luke 12:21 So is the man who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God*

Comic example of Uncle Scrooge or the Scrooge of Dickens’ “Christmas Carol”

#### **2. Exploitation** (“pay ... withheld by you” – v. 3) Outcry – and God has heard!

Lord of Sabaoth = Lord of Hosts

*Leviticus 19:13 You are not to oppress your neighbor, nor rob him. The wages of a hired man are not to remain with you all night until morning.*

*Proverbs 3:27-28 Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it. Do not say to your neighbor, “go, and come back, and tomorrow I will give it,”*

#### **3. Wanton pleasure** – luxuriant living – v. 5 (lit: “delicate”)

Like fattening your hearts for slaughter

#### 4. Oppression of the righteous (“condemned and put to death” – v. 6)

#### God’s advice for the Christian wealthy:

*1 Timothy 6:17 Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God ...*

**V 7-8** give us the FIRST command of how we are to react to the oppressive rich or, Q: What do we do when “it’s not fair”?

#### **BE PATIENT IN WAITING - a sign of SPIRITUAL MATURITY**

1. A TRIPLE command - 3x in verses 7 and 8
2. “Patient” = (lit.) “long-tempered”  
speaking primarily of people, where “endurance” speaks more of circumstances
3. “Therefore” (v. 7) refers to the patience with the unfairness of life and the oppression of the rich

#### **WE CONNECT WITH GOD BY BEING PATIENT** – because HE is patient with us

*2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance.*

*Romans 2:4 Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?*

#### **SPECIFICALLY, WE ARE TO BE PATIENT IN WAITING FOR THE LORD’S RETURN**

1. There are 3 Bible words for the “coming” of the Lord
  - a. From which we get “epiphany” – a brief encounter with God
  - b. From which we get “apocrypha”- a triumphant, ultimate encounter
  - c. (v. 7) “Parousia” = physical encounter “being alongside” INTIMATE
2. The Bible always wants us to consider the Lord’s coming “at hand” (v. 8) or “right at the door” (v. 9) This awareness of His soon coming is meant to keep us pure.

*1 John 3:3 And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.*

#### 3. EXAMPLE OF THE FARMER

- a. **WAITING IS FOR THE PRODUCE** - God is using this time on earth (trials, unfairness, “junk”) to produce in us the likeness of Christ  
We must not “rush” the process or be impatient.  
The yield is worth the wait.

#### b. **WAITING FOR THE RAINS**

Early rain (Oct/Nov) to germinate the seed (salvation and stability)

Late rain (April/May) to mature the grain (sanctification and maturity)

- c. **WAITING THOUGH DISCOURAGEMENT** “strengthen your hearts” (v. 8)

Being patient through the “junk” of life, the unfairness, the trials and tribulations is what GOD WANTS US TO DO AND BE

No, life is not “fair.” Yes, people will take advantage of you. No, my happiness is not the goal of life –

it is my SANCTIFICATION (becoming like Jesus) Or, SPIRITUAL MATURITY

### **Quotes on PATIENCE**

*We could never learn patience if there were only joy in the world.*

Patience serves as a protection against wrongs as clothes do against cold. For if you put on more clothes as the cold increases, it will have no power to hurt you. So in like manner you must grow in patience when you meet with great wrongs and they will be powerless to vex your mind.

*Have patience with all things, but chiefly have patience with yourself. Do not lose courage in considering your own imperfections but instantly set about remedying them. Every day begin the task anew.*

Have courage for the great tasks of life and patience for the small ones; and when you have laboriously accomplished your daily task, go to sleep in peace. GOD IS AWAKE.

PLANT AND NOURISH THE SEEDS of God’s truth in your life

LET THE RAINS OF LIFE be seen as positive – “consider it as joy”

LET THE NEARNESS OF HIS RETURN keep you pure from sin

STRENGTHEN YOUR HEARTS – don’t get discouraged – God is your encouragement

CONNECT WITH GOD – knowing He is patient with you, so be patient with Him

And HANG IN THERE – with a firm grip on the reality of the worthy goal, or crop to come

### **JAMES, Chapter 1 (My Paraphrase)**

1. To my Jewish brothers of all twelve tribes, wherever you might be after having been forced out of your homeland – this letter is from James, a servant of God and the Lord Jesus Christ, by calling and by choice. Dear brothers:

#### **Confidence in Trials**

2-4. Take a different perspective at the many trials you face, seeing the positive in them, rather than the negative. One, your faith is being proven and strengthened. And two, you are developing endurance for the long haul of life. Don’t balk at being tested, but hang in there, letting the tests accomplish their Godly purpose: your maturity, that you may be spiritually “buff” without flabbiness or weakness of character.

5. Remember, if you need wisdom (and who doesn’t?), just ask God, who gives it abundantly and without making you feel bad for asking. Just ask, and Godly wisdom will indeed be given to you.

6-8. But you have to ask, really believing the answer will come. No doubting allowed! Because if you doubt, you are acting just like the waves of the sea blown around by the wind – up one minute with your belief and down the next with your doubts. This kind of supposed “faith” won’t get you anything from God. He doesn’t accept on-again, off-again faith, which by the way, indicates instability in other areas of life.

### **Confidence in Status**

9-10. Hey, believing brother - how about this for God’s “upside down” perspective on wisdom? If your earthly status is on the “humble” side, be proud that you are standing rich and tall in God’s spiritual kingdom. And if your earthly status is on the “well off” side, be proud that in God’s kingdom you are just a spiritual beggar. After all, your earthly status is about as secure as flowering grass in the heat of the sun.

11. See the picture? Just like the sun rises, so does your status. Then comes the “Santa Annas” of life – and just like the grass withers and the flower falls, so does your status wither and fall. What once appeared beautiful is no more. Our status, and the futile pursuits of achieving it, will soon fade away.

12. So what’s worth achieving? - persevering through the trials of life and proving your Godly character through it all. This is how you will receive the true “crown of life” – God’s heavenly reward – which He promises to each one of His lovers.

### **Confidence in Temptation**

13-16. I don’t ever want to hear you saying, “I am being tempted by God.” One, evil can never tempt a perfect God. And two, a perfect God could never lower Himself to tempt any one. Rather, it’s really you that brings on temptation by your own luring lustfulness. Sin comes when you give in to temptation by acting on your lust. And when that sin gets full sway in your life it kills your relationship with God. My dear, believing friends whom I love - don’t be sucked in by temptation!

17. Everything that is good is a perfect gift, especially given to you from God. “Good” is never by accident. The Giver is always our Heavenly Father, and like a bright light he never wavers or compromises in His delivery of good.

18. God exercised His Divine prerogative when He chose to pull us into truth by the power of His Word. This was so that we Jewish believers could be considered as the first ones to receive His special blessing of spiritual victory.

### **Confidence in Reactions**

19-20. Now I’m going to tell you something you already know, but you must apply it to your reactions. One, be quick to listen to others and especially to God. Two, be slow to voice your opinion. And three, put any tendency to anger on a slow fuse. Pleasing God and getting angry never go well together. The short version: open your ears, close your mouth and chill your anger.

21. You know all that leftover filth of the old life that’s still seeps out? Dump it in the spiritual trashcan. You know God’s Word that He has planted deep inside of you? Humbly receive its wisdom and let it save you from drowning in your own foolish reactions.

## **Confidence in Religion**

22. It is delusional to think that you are religious by merely hearing the Word, believing it, and participating in a few religious activities. Rather, you prove and demonstrate your true religion by living out the Word actively in every area of your life.

23-24. Hearing the Word and not doing it is like looking at yourself in a mirror and not fixing what needs fixing. Why even look, if you just go away unchanged and oblivious to the need?

25. God's Word is the perfect rulebook for life, with rules to set you free, not tie you down, and therefore worthy of a long and hard look. If you let those rules sink in, and turn your thinking into meaningful action and change, your life will surely be blessed for it.

26. Do you think that your religion is healthy? Then put it to the test by whether you can control your tongue. If you can't, not only is your religion worthless, but you're deceiving yourself into thinking your religion is OK. It's not.

27. I'll tell you what real religion is about. It's about practicing love and care for those with special needs – like children without parents or women who have lost their husbands. Bottom line, true religion is keeping yourself pure from the wickedness of the world!

## **JAMES, Chapter 2 (My Paraphrase)**

### **Conviction in Equality**

1. Don't you dare call yourself a believer in our amazing Lord and Chosen One, Jesus, if you treat people differently based on their appearance or background.

2-4. Here's a test. If one person walks into to your church service looking like "a million" and another comes in looking like a "bum," will you treat them the same? Or will you give special attention or seating to the one looking great and ignore the other, even making him or her sit in a place where they might not so easily draw attention. If you'd honestly treat them differently, you fail the test. You would be making an ungodly judgment based on unfair distinctions.

5-7. As my brothers in the Lord, I really do love you. So, listen up. Don't we read that God so often has chosen the poor in wealth to be rich in faith and receive His kingdom inheritance? This is exactly what God promises to all who love Him. It doesn't make sense to dishonor the poor person. More often than not, it's the rich one who will give you a hard time, even pulling you into court or using your precious Lord's name in vain.

8-9. The highest law of God's kingdom is this: "Love others as you would want to be loved." If you do this, you're right on. But if you love people differently based on externals, you're practicing sin and guilty of breaking God's #1 law.

10-11. Here's the hard fact. Even if you were to keep all of God's law perfectly, one sin (like favoritism) makes you guilty of all in God's eyes. God forbids adultery, just like he forbids murder. But if you are clean regarding adultery, yet commit murder – you're guilty of adultery, and all the other laws as well. Ouch!

12-13. Now don't be frozen with fear in your words and actions toward others – God's royal law of love is meant to motivate and free you, not condemn you. If you show no mercy, then mercy won't come your way. But if you learn to show mercy in your assessment of others, that demonstration of mercy will trump any judgment that is due you.

### **Conviction in Works**

14. Tell me, fellow Christians, what is "saving faith?" If someone claims to be a Christian by their faith, and yet there is little visible sign of that faith in their actions, it seems to me that kind of faith is useless faith – not "saving faith."

15-16. For example, if a believing brother lacks some basic necessity such as clothing or food and you essentially tell him "blessings on you, I hope you'll be okay!" and don't make an effort to meet his need, I say your supposed faith is a sham.

17. The principle is this: Faith, if it isn't backed up by action, is dead faith.

18. Now, I can just hear someone say, "Some Christians are more private, and some are more outgoing in expressing their faith." Well, if you're one of those "private in your faith" types, I dare you to prove your faith without any action, while I prove my faith to others by living it out in action.

19-20. You believe that God is one? That's good, but think of this: the demons, as they shudder, believe the same (and they're not believers!). Can't you admit that believing alone without actions to back it up means nothing?

21-23 After all, haven't we heard Father Abraham was "justified by faith" when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? His faith and works "teamed up" so that his behavior proved his belief to be authentic. This was the fulfillment of the Scripture that says, "And Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness." Remember, this faith matched with action resulted in Abraham being called the friend of God.

24. So here's the principle said another way: A man is made right with God by action that demonstrates inward faith, and not by action less faith.

25. Another example would be Rahab, who was once a harlot. But she too was justified, (that is, made right with God) by her works. Remember, she received and hid the spies, and then let them exit by a safe way.

26. To say the principle a final way: Just like a body without a spirit is lifeless, so also faith without demonstrative action is lifeless.

### **JAMES, Chapter 3 (My Paraphrase)**

#### **Control of Giftedness**

1-2. Think long and hard about whether God has called you to be a teacher of His Holy Word. Why? First of all, God will give teachers a stricter judgment when it comes to handling His Word. Secondly, we are all sinners. (And this implies that a teacher will be rightly held to a higher standard by his students, as well.) And thirdly, since teaching

uses a lot of words and many words lead to certain stumbling, a teacher will never be perfect in his teaching.

### **Control of Tongue**

3-4. A little bit in a horse's mouth brings its whole body to obedience. Note too that great ships can hold their course in a strong wind when directed by just a small rudder controlled by the will of the captain.

5-6. Likewise, our little tongue boasts of grandiose things. It's like a tiny spark starting a huge, out of control forest fire. Our tongue is like a fire in many ways, a showcase for evil as it burns and ignites. Just like raging fire defiles all in its path, the tongue's out of control wagging defiles our entire person. Like flames, our words can chart a fiery course, fueled by the very fires of hell.

7-8. Every kind of dangerous and poisonous wild animal, whether beast, bird, reptile or sea creature, can be and has been tamed to some degree. But no one can tame his tongue from danger and poison. It just won't stop wagging and making trouble.

9-10. Think of the inconsistency. Out of the tongue comes both blessing of our Lord Heavenly Father and cursing of men, made in God's image. What hypocrisy that the same mouth both blesses and curses. Fellow Christians, this is plain wrong!

11-12. A fountain can't give both fresh and bitter water. Neither can a fig tree produce olives, or a vine give figs. And the ocean will never give us fresh water. Think about it!

### **Control of Wisdom**

13. Come on, be smarter than that! Do you want to be considered wise? Then let your behavior show your wisdom and let your gentle consideration of others prove your wisdom.

14-16. The two biggest opponents to Godly wisdom are bitter jealousy and selfish ambition. If these two creep into your heart don't be arrogant and call them what they're not. They only bring the wisdom of this world, wisdom of your natural self and wisdom of the demon world. Where you find jealousy and selfish ambition you will find chaos and evil cropping up everywhere.

17. Here are the sure signs of Godly wisdom: first and foremost, it is always uncontaminated in its morally purity. A Godly decision then fosters healthy relationships, is considerate of the implications to others, makes good sense, is accompanied by additional blessings, shows consistency and impartiality in its implementation and rings true in its authenticity. It just plain acts and feels right.

18. Long and short, if you plant seeds of consideration for God and others you will eventually reap a harvest of what is right in the eyes of God and others. Now that's how to control wisdom (and the tongue)!

## **JAMES, Chapter 4 (My Paraphrase)**

### **Cleansing of Acquiring**



1. Where do you think all our bickering and infighting comes from? It comes from the fight within ourselves – the fight between wanting to please God and wanting to please our own selfish desires.

2-3. Here's the predictable pattern: You really want something you don't or can't have, so you do whatever it takes to get it – sometimes going as far as murder! You get envious of others who have it. You still can't get it, so you bicker and quarrel. You don't even think to ask God for it. And if you do ask Him, you don't get what you're asking for because your motives are all wrong, asking out of selfishness.

### **Cleansing of Compromising**

4. You might as well be called what you are: spiritual adulteresses! Don't you realize that when you "play around" with this sinful world that you are being unfaithful to God and rousing His anger? Simply put, to be a friend of this world is to make God your enemy.

5. God pulls no punches in the Scripture when He says that He is the jealous lover who will tolerate no rival to the Holy Spirit He has put within us.

### **Cleansing of Priding**

6. The great news: God gives grace, and more grace. The only stopper to this grace is pride, since God only gives grace to the humble of heart.

7. So here are the 3 keys to God's grace and humility of heart: #1: Let God control your life. This means you must resist the devil's every attempt to usurp that control. Firmly tell him "no" and he will leave you alone.

8-9 #2: Develop a close relationship with God. If you do this, God will make His nearness known to you. Remember, since you are sinners by nature, be sure to let Him "clean up your act." And since you are hypocrites by nature be sure to let Him clean up your hearts as well. Sin is no joke – so grieve over your sin with sincere sorrow and even tears, repenting from your sin so you can be close to God.

10. #3: Change your attitude from self-serving to others-serving. If you humble yourself in this way before God, he will surely raise you up to new heights of spiritual maturity.

### **Cleansing of Judging**

11. Don't "put down" a fellow Christian. If your words cut a brother down, criticizing his actions by your standards, in reality you are cutting down and judging the very law of God. You become a critic of the law rather than a doer of the law.

12. Don't forget – the universe has room for only one Rulemaker and Critic of our souls – the very One who has the unique right to save or destroy a soul (God himself!). So, give up your judgmental attitude.

### **Cleansing of Determining**

13-14. Come on now, don't be self-determining your future by saying things like: "today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a place and spend a year or so doing business that will make us money." You don't even know what will happen to you

tomorrow, much less today. Your life is like a puff of smoke that briefly appears and then is gone.

15-16. Rather, reflect an attitude of God-determination by saying something like: “If the Lord wills it we shall live and do this or that.” Otherwise you are being boastful and arrogant, and this is sin, plain and simple.

17. So here’s the important principle, you could call “the sin of omission”: To know the right thing to do, and then fail to do it, is sin. Think about it!

## **JAMES, Chapter 5 (My Paraphrase)**

### **Connection with God by Waiting in Patience**

1-6. You who are rich in this world should be crying your eyes out and howling in misery because of what will soon befall you when this life is over. Your money will rot away, and your clothing will be as though they were devoured by moths. Your rusted gold and silver will testify against you, consuming your flesh like fire. It’s your hoarding that will haunt you in these last days. Likewise, your extortion of money owed to those who labored on your behalf to build your wealth will shout against you. And yes, the Lord of Hosts has heard this outcry. You have lived in earthly luxury, brazenly indulging yourself in whatever you wanted – but you have just been fattening your souls for slaughter. All the while there have been good and Godly examples around you – yet you have ignored them, condemned them and even killed them, though they have done nothing to resist or hurt you.

7-8. So, brothers and sisters, here’s what you must do in light of all this. First, you must endure these injustices patiently until our Lord returns. Just like the farmer waits for the soil to yield precious produce, patiently waiting for the early and late rains, so you must also be patient in waiting for the soon coming of the Lord, strengthening the resolve of your heart all the while.

### **Connection with God by Not Whining**

9. Secondly, it would be easy to take out our impatience on one another, but don’t be a whiner. If you’re a complainer you will be judged for it. You want motivation? Then picture God the Judge standing right at your door!

10-11. For an example of being patient and not whining, take our fellow brothers, the prophets who spoke on behalf of God. Take heed that their endurance was worthy of God’s blessing, and consider this for yourself. We all know that Job is remembered for his endurance. But don’t forget how it all turned out for Job when God showed him compassion and mercy in response to that endurance.

### **Connection with God by Saying Meaning What I Say**

12. Thirdly, and most importantly, don’t feel a need to strengthen the promise of your word by making an oath, either swearing by God or something else on this earth. Simply mean what you say, always making good on your word. Live by your “yes” and your “no,” otherwise you might be forced to hold to it before a judge – not a good witness!

## **Connection with God by Wrestling in Prayer**

13-15. In addition, be a warrior in prayer If you're hurting, take your hurt to God in petition. If you're doing well, sing your joy to God in praise. If you're struggling spiritually, ask your church leaders to gather around you to pray for the oil of the Spirit to heal and revive you, in the name of the Lord. You can be sure that a believing prayer will receive its intended request, whether it be restoration of the sick, raising up from weakness or forgiveness of sins committed.

16. So be sure to admit your sins to one another and take them to the Lord in prayer so that you may be properly "doctored" from your sinfulness. Know this confidently - the prayer of a righteous child of God can make a real difference.

17-18. Don't forget the example of Elijah, a man with a sinful nature like ours yet made righteous by God's grace. He prayed in earnest for God to hold back the rain and the drought lasted three and a half years! And when he prayed again for it to rain, it poured, bringing forth the fruit of the earth. Think about it!

## **Connection with God by Rescuing a Soul**

19-20. And here's my final challenge for growth in your spiritual maturity. If a fellow brother or sister strays from God's truth, endeavor to carry out a rescue mission. If you are successful in turning one from error, you will both save this one from ruining his testimony for God as well as prevent many other sins from occurring that would otherwise have been committed – both results well worth the effort!